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## Of Neere Neighbors: Sacrament and Sociality in the Drama of Islamic Conversion, C.1600-1640

Stephanie Kucsera

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

“OF NEERE NEIGHBORS”:  
SACRAMENT AND SOCIALITY IN THE  
DRAMA OF ISLAMIC CONVERSION, c.1600-1640

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO  
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL  
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

PROGRAM IN ENGLISH

BY

STEPHANIE L. KUCSERA

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For Grandma.

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation traces scenes of Christian-Muslim conversion across representative works by William Shakespeare, Robert Daborne, Philip Massinger, and Richard Brome to examine how the popular drama of the early seventeenth century participates in English political and ecclesiastical discourses about the meaning of interfaith conversion and its stakes for the construction and stability of late-Reformation English national identity. I argue that the structural and stylistic changes that define each drama's distinct presentation of interfaith conversion may be understood as engaged in the still-evolving debates over the Church of England's sacramental theology and ceremonial practices—the very ritual actions that could render the meaning of conversion legible for a community—in light of simultaneously-shifting English relations with the Ottoman Turks and the independent Islamic states of North Africa. In complicating traditional readings of both the trajectory of Anglican reform and patterns of English interaction with Islamic North Africa and the Levant, this dissertation challenges popular critical readings of these plays that maintain the absolute and irredeemable alterity of the “other.” Instead, these texts' images of conversion reveal a far greater range of responses to interreligious encounter than a simple opposition of “us” and “them.” Ultimately, these texts serve less to vilify Muslims in moments of heightened international tension than to highlight the stakes inherent in changes to English theology and ecclesiology for responding to the conversion of English Christians.



## INTRODUCTION

“To know what was generally believed in all ages, the way is to consult the liturgies.”<sup>1</sup>

— John Selden, *Table Talk*

England at the turn of the seventeenth century was a nation obsessed with conversion: kinds of conversion, causes of conversion, processes of conversion, the effects of conversion, stories of conversion, the rhetoric of conversion. In light of the protracted, and often recursive, trajectory of the Protestant Reformation in England across the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, though, it is perhaps unsurprising that early modern English writing demonstrates a recurring interest in the navigation of both ecclesiastical and spiritual change. On the one hand, conversion could possess a highly public dimension, especially when it referred to changes in religious or confessional affiliation during this period. Within living memory, England had gone from a highly conservative Roman Catholicism to Catholicism under the supreme head of the king; to a tentative Protestantism when, at the direction of King Henry VIII, England officially turned from a Roman Catholic nation to a Protestant nation in 1534; to a more radical Protestantism under Edward VI beginning in 1547; to a renewed Roman Catholicism under Mary Tudor after Edward’s death in 1553; and then, with Elizabeth’s ascension in 1558, to Protestantism once again. In the space of some twenty-five years, then, England itself converted three times. But while conversion could center on the highly politicized, polemical divisions between Roman Catholics and Protestants, on the other hand, conversion could also refer to “the achievement—

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<sup>1</sup> John Selden, *Table Talk* (London: 1689) cited in Edward Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1997): 17.

or perhaps better, the reception—of salvation, [as] an experience that occurs without any specific or explicit change in denominational identity.”<sup>2</sup> For the early modern English, such a spiritual conversion was defined by “its inward turn, its focus on consciousness, subjectivity, and interiority.”<sup>3</sup> For some English Christians, though, religious conversion was more properly understood as comprising *both* an inward and outward alteration: inward renewal under the influence of grace required the outward setting aside of former outward standards of behavior (sometimes the adoption of different standards of religious belief and activity), but the outward could also compel a change in the inward. In either direction, an intimate interconnection was suggested between the two.<sup>4</sup>

But while the early modern English were forced to navigate the shifting currents of the Protestant Reformation in terms of its impact upon internal English politics, ecclesiology, and spirituality, it was also necessary to contend with the effects of reform as they were further impacted by a changing international scene. One source of apprehension was the fear of Roman Catholic enemies abroad who would threaten to re-convert Protestant England by the sword. Most memorable, perhaps, was the Spanish Armada episode in 1588, but fears of a Roman Catholic re-conversion were no less felt, when, in the 1620s, the Spanish Match was vehemently resisted by sectors of the English public. Meanwhile, the early decades of the Thirty Years War (1618-1648) in Northern and Central Europe provided a grim example of the kind of widespread violence and political instability threatened by Christian in-fighting and unresolved confessional

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<sup>2</sup> Jeffrey S. Shoulson, *Fictions of Conversion: Jews, Christians, and Cultures of Change in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013): 22.

<sup>3</sup> Molly Murray, *The Poetics of Conversion in Early Modern English Literature: Verse and Change from Donne to Dryden* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009): 7. Michael Questier, *Conversion, Politics, and Religion in England, 1580-1625* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996): 58. Shoulson, *Fictions*, 22.

<sup>4</sup> Questier, *Conversion*, 58.

division. But beyond the interconfessional conflicts plaguing Christian Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the early modern English also had cause to fear the possibility of conversion at the hands of the imperial power of the Ottoman Turks, for example, who were conquering Christian territories in Europe and the Mediterranean.

Anglo-Islamic relations assumed a heightened sense of immediacy by the mid-seventeenth century in light of both internal, ecclesiological developments and changes in the patterns of English international relations. Indeed, questions about the character, construction, and stability of an English Christian identity that had been sparked by the Protestant Reformation compounded in urgency as, outside the borders of England itself, a religiously fractured and politically fraught Christian Europe was not particularly successful combatting the united and efficient Islamic Ottomans in the Near East and North Africa. Moreover, by the middle of the seventeenth century, English defections to Barbary or Ottoman piracy had been on the rise for decades, and the captivity and coerced conversions of Englishmen in the Barbary States had reached unprecedented levels. Even within England itself, the state was forced to fight a two-fold battle against the threat of an encroaching Islam: first, in the form of returning English renegades ransomed from captivity in North Africa who would then attempt reconversion upon arrival home (while for the home community questions about the veracity of these conversions lingered) and, second, in the form of the increasing presence of resident foreigners in port cities like London and Bristol who, more often than not, retained their own religion.

As Anglo-Islamic contact increased during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, English fascination with Islamic culture was both recorded and intensified in an outpouring of texts that considered the power of non-Christian religio-political groups to influence Eng-

land's sense of identity, not to mention its sense of security in a developing global scene. To the early modern English, to be English was to possess an identity that was defined as much by religious as civic commitments, but an identity defined in this way was certainly bound to raise uncomfortable questions: If being English meant belonging to the Church of England, did converts become one's countrymen? What were the formal terms of citizenship? Who was one's neighbor? Conversely, did the conversion of Englishmen compromise Englishness? Was conversion complete and permanent? How could one tell? When faced with questions like these, ones that do not rest easily within one neat and bounded discourse, we are prompted to consider the pivotal role that conversion played in not only the traversing of religious and political boundaries, but also the degree to which competing understandings of how conversion itself worked—how it should be enacted, who was eligible, how effective it was, what its effects were—attempted to (variously) establish and stabilize those same boundaries.

While the broad topic of Anglo-Islamic relations has certainly been examined and is gaining in popularity, there are few critical studies of the ways in which the religious conversion of an Islamic non-Christian was used not only to tell a story about evolving English religious-political self-identification, but also to test changing or competing ideas about incorporative flexibility of the English state and the English Church. To be sure, the idea that identity in the early modern period could not be sealed within regional boundaries—that “conceptions of the self cannot exist without the Other”—is not exactly new.<sup>5</sup> Samuel Chew's early study of England and Islam opens with the assertion that “the Moslems were never, in the Near and Middle East, whol-

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<sup>5</sup> Robert J. Topinka, “Islam, England, and Identity in the Early Modern Period: A Review of Recent Scholarship,” in *Mediterranean Studies* 18 (2009): 114-130, 114.

ly absent from the anxious thoughts of Elizabethan travelers.”<sup>6</sup> But as Robert J. Topinka rightly points out, early modern travelers “did not anxiously ponder the East in isolation; as England increasingly interacted with Islam, Islam increasingly played a role in shaping English identity.”<sup>7</sup> Indeed, since Edward Said gave primacy to the role of the “Islamic Other” in shaping European self-conceptions, scholarship has highlighted the ideological formation of European identity in the early modern period, an identity “not formed behind cultural lines but forged in the clash between cultures.”<sup>8</sup> In the wake of Said’s work and, later, in response to the development of post-colonial theory and New Historicism, historians and literary critics became far more sensitive to the transactions of knowledge and power that existed between what was thought to be “a dominant, colonizing ‘West’ and a colonized and subjected ‘East.’”<sup>9</sup>

To some scholars early modern representations of Muslims seemed “textbook examples of the ‘demonization of the other’ and thus ripe for analysis in terms of Said’s East-West binary,” as Linda McJannet has observed.<sup>10</sup> In fact, the highly critical summaries of “Turkish plays” provided by Chew may have laid the groundwork for accepting a Saidian view of them; moreover, as a motive for what was read as literary distortion and stereotyping, “nascent imperialism had more critical appeal than mere ignorance or stereotypes allegedly inherited from medieval religious polemic.” What Said’s thesis seemed to provide was “historical continuity with the dis-

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<sup>6</sup> Samuel C. Chew, *The Crescent and the Rose* (New York: Oxford UP, 1937): vii.

<sup>7</sup> Topinka, “Islam, England, and Identity,” 114.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 114. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).

<sup>9</sup> Matthew Dimmock, *New Turkes: Dramatizing Islam and the Ottomans in Early Modern England* (New York: Routledge, 2005): 6.

<sup>10</sup> Linda McJannet, et. al. “Islam and English Drama: A Critical History,” in *Early Theatre* 12.2 (2009): 183-193, 185. See also Linda McJannet, *The Sultan Speaks: Dialogue in English Plays and Histories about the Ottoman Turks* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

courses of colonialism generally.”<sup>11</sup> This has understandably been the case particularly in the pervasive critical tendency to read the marginalization of “Moors” in the terms of the legacy of colonialism and modern racial discourse or, as Ania Loomba puts it, in light of the intersections among “empire, race, colonialism, and cultural difference.”<sup>12</sup> Critics like Loomba, such as Kim F. Hall, Jack D’Amico, Sujata Iyengar, and Laura Bovilsky, though, anachronistically locate “imperialist expansion” in the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods (emphasizing the notion of England as a society exercising “cultural hegemony” and driven by “the economics of imperial trade”) and exaggerate England’s presence abroad (referring to “budding colonialism” and an “expanding colonial empire”).<sup>13</sup> Even so, such influential studies interrogating the place of the Moor in early modern drama have had an undeniably significant part to play in a reconsideration of those previously unexamined early modern “others.” Owing some debt to New Historicism’s preoccupa-

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<sup>11</sup> McJannet, et. al. “Islam and English Drama,” 185.

<sup>12</sup> Ania Loomba, “Shakespeare and Cultural Difference,” in *Alternative Shakespeares*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Ed Terrence Hawkes (London: Routledge, 1996): 162-187. See also: Eldred D. Jones, *Othello’s Countrymen: The African in English Renaissance Drama* (London: Oxford UP, 1965). A.G. Barthelemy, *Black Face, Maligned Race: The Representation of Blacks in English Drama from Shakespeare to Southerne* (London: Louisiana State UP, 1987). Jack D’Amico, *The Moor in English Renaissance Drama* (Tampa: University of South Florida Press, 1991). Kim F. Hall, *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1995). Ania Loomba, *Shakespeare, Race, and Colonialism* (New York: Oxford UP, 2002).

<sup>13</sup> Hall, *Things of Darkness*, 56. Jack D’Amico, *The Moor in English Renaissance Drama* (Tampa: University of South Florida Press, 1991): 61-62. Aside from the brief examples offered here (studies worth mentioning in the present context for the rooting of their readings in a problematic assignation of English cultural hegemony in foreign spaces in the early modern period), the criticism being traced across the Introduction does not primarily address studies of cross-cultural encounters not directly focused on Islam and England. For a more thorough consideration of the intersections between English imaginings of Islam and/or racial discourse, for example, see Chapters 1 and 4 of this dissertation. See also Geraldo U. de Sousa, *Shakespeare’s Cross-Cultural Encounters*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002). Sujata Iyengar, *Shades of Difference: Mythologies of Skin Color in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005). Laura Bovilsky, *Barbarous Play: Race on the English Renaissance Stage* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).

tion with the reclamation of such figures, as well, these texts provided an appreciation of the figure of the Moor that otherwise went without sustained study.<sup>14</sup>

However, along with this investment in the recuperation of the presence of the “other,” came the implications of Stephen Greenblatt’s “threatening Other” thesis—the idea that self-fashioning is achieved in relation to that which is perceived as “alien, strange, or hostile.”<sup>15</sup> It should come as no surprise, then, that the steadily growing body of work on Anglo-Islamic relations (and English self-definition in light of that relationship) has been preoccupied with discerning early modern drama’s construction, definition, and marginalization of an “other” to the neglect of other ways of being in community and other ways of imagining both intercultural contact and self-definition.

Indeed, that framework has proved difficult to replace. While both the application of Said’s “Orientalist” thesis to the early modern period and the post-colonial theory that drove many of those studies have since been shown to be inappropriate models for examining pre-colonial English engagements with religious and political alterity, the tendency for literary criticism to read English self-definition as a process of “othering” persists. As Matthew Dimmock has noted, even much of the relatively recent work on English conceptions of “self and other” is so entangled in the ramifications of both Said’s and Greenblatt’s theses of the absolute alterity of the “other” that these studies end up reinscribing binaries of a powerful “us” and a vanquished “them” onto early modern sensibilities—sensibilities that actually encompassed a far greater range of responses to interreligious encounter. The sort of studies to which Dimmock points ne-

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<sup>14</sup> Dimmock, *New Turkes*, 11-12.

<sup>15</sup> Moreover, “[t]his threatening Other—heretic, savage, witch, adulteress, traitor, Antichrist—must be discovered or invented in order to be attacked and destroyed.” Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980): 9.

glect to consider the ways in which the early modern English imagined their interactions with the Islamic world differently depending on shifting contexts and needs.

John Gillies, Jane Hwang Degenhardt, and Dennis Austin Britton, for example, have certainly attempted to root their examinations of Anglo-Islamic contact more firmly in appropriate pre-colonial contexts. Gillies resituates the meaning of “otherness” in early modernity as matter of literally belonging to the margins of contemporary maps, suggesting that geography was “a complex and dynamic imaginative quantity with a characterological and symbolic agenda.” But, for Gillies, it is an agenda cementing the “generic exoticism or exteriority” and “inherent transgressiveness” of the non-European at every turn.<sup>16</sup> Degenhardt rightly exposes the contemporary reality of English vulnerability in the face of Ottoman power, but she nationalizes the Islamophobia her study examines when she neglects the ways in which different English interests imagined Muslims differently.<sup>17</sup> Britton considers England’s interest in the processes of religious conversion, but he then posits a single, uniform response from the Church of England about the dangers posed by converts when baptism is understood to be unnecessary, ignoring the shifting English responses to sacramentalism and the efficacy of ritual across time.<sup>18</sup> While each of these examples avoid the anachronistic pitfalls of Said’s “Orientalism” and the application of post-colonial theory to early modernity, Islam is nonetheless rendered simply a “marginalized other” in the project of English self-definition.

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<sup>16</sup> John Gillies, *Shakespeare and the Geography of Difference* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1994): 3, 26-28.

<sup>17</sup> Jane Hwang Degenhardt, *Islamic Conversion and Christian Resistance on the Early Modern Stage* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2010).

<sup>18</sup> Dennis Austin Britton, *Becoming Christian: Race, Reformation, and Early Modern English Romance* (New York: Fordham UP, 2014).



In short, while historical studies of English politics, trade, and colonial ventures have since “undermined the early modern application of Said’s division between East and West along lines of power, objectification, and dominance,” literary studies that allow for the evolving, frequently conflicted, and even contradictory place of the early modern “other” remain “comparatively sparse.”<sup>19</sup> Work by Daniel Vitkus, Matthew Dimmock, Johnathan Burton, and Benedict S. Robinson stand as good examples of literary studies that have begun to engage with a wider range of responses to the Islamic world but, to date, it is Nabil Matar’s three-part project on England and Islam that offers one of the most comprehensive critiques of criticism that implicitly replicates Said’s thesis as it imposes later English objectifications of Islamic culture onto early modernity.<sup>20</sup> Matar argues that the early modern English were acutely aware of their *own* marginalization on the fringes of European mercantilism and colonialism and that “the Muslim had a power of self-representation which English writers knew they had either to confront or engage.”<sup>21</sup> But while Matar’s series is striking for the depth and variety of historical documentary evidence examined, he largely discounts drama as a worthwhile object of study and instead understands early modern drama as merely a vehicle for an ongoing “frenzy of racism and bigotry” while maintaining that political, mercantile, and religious documents offer us a far more complex

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<sup>19</sup> Dimmock, *New Turkes*, 9.

<sup>20</sup> Daniel Vitkus, *Turning Turk: English Theater and the Multicultural Mediterranean, 1570-1630* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003). Matthew Dimmock, *New Turkes: Dramatizing Islam and the Ottomans in Early Modern England* (New York: Routledge, 2005). Jonathan Burton, *Traffic and Turning: Islam and English Drama, 1579-1624* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005). Benedict S. Robinson, *Islam and Early Modern English Literature: The Politics of Romance from Spenser to Milton* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007). Nabil Matar, *Islam in Britain, 1558-1685* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1998), *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery* (New York: Columbia UP, 1999), and *Britain and Barbary, 1589-1689* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005).

<sup>21</sup> Matar, *Islam in Britain*, 12.

picture of interreligious engagement.<sup>22</sup> But “[i]n a world of expanding globalism” in which “lines demarcating self and Other quickly became blurred,” was drama so disconnected from those other spheres of cultural influence?<sup>23</sup> If we can allow a complex variance of opinion in the fields of politics, economics, and religion, this range should also be detected in the drama of the era.<sup>24</sup>

In order to trouble totalizing narratives about English responses to Muslims and to the Islamic world—let alone English imaginings of Muslims and the Islamic world as they appeared in popular drama—it is necessary to remember that “[t]o speak of the Other, one must first identify the self, but locating the point at which self becomes Other, West becomes East, is problematic if not impossible.”<sup>25</sup> Or, as Jonathan Burton puts it, we need to consider why and how English images of Muslims could range “from others to brothers.”<sup>26</sup> In the midst of political change and religious reform in England, fundamental questions about group membership and social formation were posed repeatedly during this period, within and between political and religious discourses. Like Julia Reinhard Lupton, we should be prompted to seriously consider the ways in which the religious and/or cultural “other” could be incorporated into an ideally homogenized national body just as often as we imagine his expulsion or marginalization. Examining the processes and stakes of religious conversion is ideally suited to such a project because conversion itself enacts

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<sup>22</sup> Matar, *Islam in Britain*, 12.

<sup>23</sup> Topinka, “Islam, England, and Identity,” 114.

<sup>24</sup> Studies such as those by Richmond Barbour and Emily C. Bartels, for example, have done much to correct for both Matar’s disdain for dramatic representations of the Islamic world and the anachronistic picture of English cultural hegemony in “colonial” spaces. Emily C. Bartels, “Othello and Africa: Postcolonialism Reconsidered,” in *William and Mary Quarterly* 54 (January 1997): 45–64 and *Speaking of the Moor: From Alcazar to Othello* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008). Richmond Barbour, *Before Orientalism: London’s Theatre of the East, 1576–1626* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2003).

<sup>25</sup> Topinka, “Islam, England, and Identity,” 118.

<sup>26</sup> Burton, *Traffic and Turning*, 12.

a fundamental change in identity, facilitating a crossing of religio-political borders; in other words, conversion is essentially engaged in the work of turning an “other” into an “us.” So, as Lupton reminds us, approaching early modern drama with respect for the “other” does not absolve us from carefully dealing with the problem of religion and the non-uniformity of religious experience in history.<sup>27</sup> With that idea in mind, it seems that the long and fitful early modern debates over Anglican ceremonial and sacramental practice—the means by which conversion was understood and mobilized—could help us examine the texture of early modern English senses of national belonging. More specifically, both the actual processes and imaginings of the conversion of the non-Christian other could help us examine the range of possibilities for cultural association and the incorporative flexibility of the English state.

Since early modern literary criticism’s “turn to religion,” studies of early modern English nationhood and national imagining have begun to widen their scope in three important and inter-related ways.<sup>28</sup> First, current criticism is more amenable to challenging theoretical positions that assume the secularity of early modern English culture and the secularizing work of the early modern public theatres. Second, this willingness to re-engage “religion as religion” in respect to early modern cultural dynamics expands the avenues of inquiry available for examining the forces at work in the consolidation and (re)definition of the early modern English nation during the long course of the English Reformation. While perhaps it is more accurate to say that “interpretation of religious material and contexts never really ceased in early modern literary study,” they had been undeniably pushed to the side by “most New Historicists and cultural materialists who

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<sup>27</sup> Julia Reinhard Lupton, *Citizen-Saints: Shakespeare and Political Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005): 9.

<sup>28</sup> Ken Jackson and Arthur F. Marotti, “The Turn to Religion in Early Modern English Studies,” *Criticism* 46.1 (2004): 167-190.

pursued other topics and, when they dealt with religious issues, quickly translated them into social, economic, and political language.”<sup>29</sup> Finally, critical frameworks that maintain the vitality and influence of religious experience in early modern culture allow a shift away from an almost exclusive focus on national history plays as the best dramatic genre for the interrogation of national self-definition, opening our scope of analysis onto Shakespearean drama not traditionally read as being invested in English religio-political concerns and onto lesser-examined non-Shakespearean drama that is highly invested in cultural change in its own right.

At this time it is necessary to point out that while plenty of literary studies interested in cultural change and national character in English early modernity exist, the majority of these studies are situated within a critical camp whose emphasis was on the ideology of communities that grew out of the commitments of Marxism and New Historicism. Before literary criticism’s “turn to religion,” Walter Cohen, Louis Montrose, Richard Helgerson, for example, argued for “a secularist perspective on socio-cultural change.”<sup>30</sup> In these foundational literary critical examinations of English national self-imagining, the dramas under consideration were pervasively understood to “demystify [...] the status of divine and immutable truth”: for these critics, the professional drama of the Elizabethan commercial theatres marked a decisive shift in the coordination of playing dimensions, “a reorientation of the dramaturgical axis from the vertical plane, which related earthly events to a divinely ordained master narrative, to the horizontal plane, upon which

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<sup>29</sup> Even though Marxist critic Fredric Jameson has acknowledged religion as the “master code” of early modern culture, as Jackson and Marotti point out. Jackson and Marotti, “Turn to Religion,” 167-168. See also Fredric Jameson, “Religion and Ideology: A Political Reading of *Paradise Lost*,” in *Literature, Politics, and Theory*, ed. Francis Barker (London: Methuen, 1986), 40.

<sup>30</sup> Louis Montrose, *The Purpose of Playing: Shakespeare and the Cultural Politics of the Elizabethan Theatre* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996): 32. Walter Cohen, *Drama of a Nation: Public Theater in Renaissance England and Spain* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1985). Richard Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

human characters interact within an imagined social space.”<sup>31</sup> Drama was read as a participant in the secular and secularizing progress of early modern English nationhood.

That texts were examined by these critics as historically determined and determining modes of cultural work in an ideological field in which individual subjectivities and collective structures were understood to be mutually shaped offered a necessary corrective to un-historicized criticism.<sup>32</sup> At the same time, though, we cannot take “a smugly rational stance in approaching the religious culture(s) of an earlier era.”<sup>33</sup> As Ken Jackson and Arthur F. Marotti suggest, “it simply seems a critical and scholarly mistake to turn our attention away from the history of established religions and religious institutions” and to “detach the heart and inspiration of religion from religion itself”—Shakespeare and his contemporaries did “most of [their] dramatic thinking in religious terms that cannot be disconnected from the long and rich history of religious practices and set of interpretations that were available to [them],” as entwined with other socio-political systems as those religious practices and interpretations may be.<sup>34</sup> Work by Jeffrey Knapp, Huston Diehl, and Jennifer Waldron, for example, instead insists on the investment of reformed religion in England (officially Protestant and pervasively Calvinist) in issues of national-level cultural change and the ways in which a Protestant and Protestantizing theatre engaged those changes in turn.<sup>35</sup> But can we continue to privilege the successful “triumphing” of Calvinist

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<sup>31</sup> Montrose, *Purpose of Playing*, 98.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 2-3.

<sup>33</sup> Jackson and Marotti, “Turn to Religion,” 182.

<sup>34</sup> Ken Jackson and Arthur F. Marotti, “Introduction” in *Shakespeare and Religion: Early Modern and Postmodern Perspectives*, ed. Ken Jackson and Arthur F. Marotti (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011): 8-9.

<sup>35</sup> How that investment looked, though, varies across the criticism. In Knapp’s estimation, religion provided rationale and Christian motive to the early modern English theatre, and religion “had a crucial say in the creation of

sensibilities as a *fait accompli* in sixteenth and seventeenth century English culture, brushing aside the continued existence of religious complexity—indeed, even Protestant complexity—within the English state?

If we are to trouble totalizing narratives about English responses to Muslims and to the Islamic world in the pursuit of national self-definition, it seems problematic to address that totalizing reading with either the totalizing framework of a secular and secularizing theatre or with the equally totalizing framework of an unambiguously Calvinist state and a thoroughly Protestantizing theatre. In doing so, we risk missing the rich complexity of a long English tradition influencing varied imaginings of Islam in a period of English Christianity that was itself defined by complexity and contradiction.<sup>36</sup> When we make room in our investigations of English national selfhood for readings of drama that take seriously the ways in which constructions of English-

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plays, in their content, and, by extension, in their presumed social effects” for the English nation in the process of (re)defining itself (9). Knapp’s core argument for the social functioning of early modern plays is that much of the drama produced during the Elizabethan era aids the Elizabethan state’s construction of its vision of a moderate and religio-politically conforming community. Diehl argues that “Elizabethan and Jacobean drama is both a product of the Protestant Reformation—a reformed drama—and a producer of Protestant habits of thought—a reforming drama” (1). For Diehl, the popular drama of early modern England—the tragedies in particular—was a thoroughly Protestant and Protestantizing phenomenon (5). In Waldron’s estimation, the early modern public theatres adopted the human body as an essential vehicle for engagement with a distinctive strand in the Protestant imaginary: English Renaissance playwrights—heavily influenced by Calvinist understandings of human bodies as “lively images of God” directly opposed to temples and idols made by human hands—mobilized distinctly “Protestant attempts to claim the body for the project of reform” (18). Jeffrey Knapp, *Shakespeare’s Tribe: Church, Nation, and Theatre in Renaissance England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002). Huston Diehl, *Staging Reform, Reforming the Stage: Protestantism and Popular Theater in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1997). Jennifer Waldron, *Reformations of the Body: Idolatry, Sacrifice, and Early Modern Theater* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

<sup>36</sup> Certainly, we might look for examples of religious complexity in the Protestant-Roman Catholic divide of perennial interest to literary critics, but this subject has been thoroughly treated elsewhere. Instead, while the present study will take interest in the Anglican Church’s medieval heritage, it will ultimately place most of its emphasis on examining intra-Protestant complexities and, indeed, the complexities that lingered (and sometimes exploded) within the Protestant Church of England itself. For examples of criticism that reads the early modern theatre’s engagement with Protestant-Roman Catholic tensions, see Ed. Claire McEachern and Debora Shuger, *Religion and Culture in Renaissance England* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997). Michael O’Connell, *The Idolatrous Eye: Iconoclasm and Theater in Early-Modern England* (New York: Oxford UP, 2000). Arthur F. Marotti, “Performing Conversion,” in his *Religious Ideology and Cultural Fantasy: Catholic and Anti-Catholic Discourses in Early Modern England* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005). Jennifer R. Rust, *The Body in Mystery: The Political Theology of the Corpus Mysticum in the Literature of Reformation England* (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 2014).

ness intersected in significant ways with the ever-changing, ever-contested religious landscape of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, investigations into the ceremonial life of the Church of England offer a natural way to recover competing modes of constructing the body and character of the early modern English nation. Here, this dissertation is influenced by theorists of English nationhood such as Adrian Hastings and Anthony W. Marx who defend the instrumentality of vernacular religion in the construction and definition of the early modern English nation and, relatedly, popular senses of English national identity.

Most fundamentally, Hastings reminds us that the discourse of nations and nationalism is entirely appropriate to early modernity and that, second, its medieval origin is dependent upon not only ancient precedent and the development of vernacular literatures but, significantly, biblical religion. Contra Benedict Anderson and other “modernist” theorists of nationhood, Hastings points out that, by the high Middle Ages, Englishmen had long felt *themselves* to be a nation.<sup>37</sup> As far back as the Anglo-Saxon period, even, England was self-imagined in biblical terms as an island nation under God in the manner of ancient Israel, subject to the same conditions of privilege and punishment.<sup>38</sup> Ancient Israel itself, conceived as a unity of people, language, religion, and government, served as a mirror for English national self-imagining in a Reformation-era, English Protestant imagination largely through new English-language Bible translations, *The Book of Common Prayer*, public sermons, and works of popular piety.<sup>39</sup> According to Hastings,

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<sup>37</sup> Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion, and Nationalism* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1997): 15. See also Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Revised ed. (New York: Verso, 2006).

<sup>38</sup> Hastings, *Construction of Nationhood*, 17. For more on the intersections of nation and religion, see also Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 1991) and *Chosen Peoples: Sacred Sources of National Identity* (New York: Oxford UP, 2003).

<sup>39</sup> Hastings, *Construction of Nationhood*, 24.

the sixteenth century explosion of vernacular literatures paired with radical religio-political change marks an anchoring of nationhood for the English people via biblical reference to nations.<sup>40</sup> On the other hand, Anthony W. Marx maintains that European nationalism emerged in early modernity as a form of mass political engagement based on religious conflict, intolerance (often fanaticism), and exclusion.<sup>41</sup> National cohesion must always be actively constructed, and it was in this early modern cultural-political climate that “intolerance and the exclusion of religious minorities” from participation in the nascent nation-state provided the glue to bind together the remaining religious-majority populations in the forging of popular nationalist sentiment. Vernacular works of popular piety that so interested Hastings for their ability to cohere a people with a common history into a nation, in Marx’s view, draw their very power from their capacity for exclusion. Protestantism and its logocentric ethos were particularly adept at exploiting the new English print market, adopting vernaculars for polemical ends to the gradual erosion of a unified, sacred community of Christendom and the re-sacralizing of the Protestant English nation.

Under each of these theoretical apparatuses, though—both of which, in different ways, maintain religion as operative in the (re)formulation of early modern English national identity—attention is placed exclusively upon the operation of texts as texts, as things to be read, as opposed to a framework for words and action. If theorists of early modern nationhood are interested in the construction of early modern English community in the ways that the early modern English themselves conceived of its construction—in the ways in which community was constructed, articulated, and maintained—greater attention should be given to the role of English liturgy as a means of persuasion no less important than the English Bible, the *Book of Homilies*, or Foxe’s

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>41</sup> Anthony W. Marx, *Faith in Nation: Exclusionary Origins of Nationalism* (New York: Oxford UP, 2003): 10.



*Book of Martyrs*. Judith Maltby explains that *The Book of Common Prayer* itself is first and foremost liturgy; that is, “‘work’ intended not so much to be read in a passive sense, but to be used, performed, experienced.” The *Prayer Book* is more than a text. Rather, it “provided a framework of words and actions to address a wide range of human needs and was intended to involve its participants fully. Worshippers are participants in the ‘work’ of liturgy, not [strictly] observers.”<sup>42</sup> Yet the role of liturgy as instrumental to the (re)formation and articulation of an English sense of self has been overlooked by both theorists and literary critics, despite the fact that “there was probably no other single aspect of the Reformation in England which touched more directly and fundamentally the religious consciousness of [...] clergy and laity, than did the reform of rituals and liturgy.”<sup>43</sup> Liturgical reform was an expression of a community’s beliefs, as well as a shaper of them—“the relationship is always a dynamic and interdependent one, and one in which it is not always possible to distinguish between cause and effect.”<sup>44</sup> For early modern theologians and political theorists themselves, the liturgy of the Church and its accompanying sacraments and ceremonies not only reflected a godly community, it helped to foster such community.

But the English liturgy was a changing thing, and precisely because the ritual life of the Church of England was revised with fairly astonishing rapidity, formularies like *The Book of*

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<sup>42</sup> Judith Maltby, *Prayer Book and People in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1998): 3. See also Edward Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1997). Richard D. McCall, *Do This: Liturgy as Performance* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007). David I. Kertzer, *Ritual, Politics, and Power* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1988). Adam B. Seligman, et. al. *Ritual and Its Consequences: An Essay on the Limits of Sincerity* (New York: Oxford UP, 2008).

<sup>43</sup> Maltby, *Prayer Book and People*, 4. As early as the 1970s, Christopher Haigh, for example, also questioned the effectiveness of preaching as the best instrument for inculcating sophisticated Protestant theology among the people and instead drew our attention to the role of liturgy as a means of importing, through repeated words and actions, the basic tenants of the reformers. Christopher Haigh, *Reformation and Resistance in Tudor Lancashire* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1975).

<sup>44</sup> Maltby, *Prayer Book and People*, 4.

*Common Prayer* can provide excellent insight into the theological and political positions governing the public and official face of reform in England in a given period. In addition, they provide an important point of comparison with other documents interested in the uses of ritual action to declare and create community. In fact, the multiple editions of the *Prayer Book* are only one example of the recovery of overlooked primary sources at work in this dissertation's expansion upon Hastings', Marx's, and Maltby's earlier investigations into the vernacular sources of English national imagining. Of particular interest to the present study is the recovery and analysis of neglected or under-examined conversion sermons and rites of conversion as performed texts in their own right, but also as texts that are engaged with the theology of the *Prayer Book* and the Articles, as texts that support or challenge their vision of English Christian communal belonging. The scope of related documents can then be expanded again to include polemical pamphlets, theological treatises, travel logs, poems, and ballads, all similarly interested in engaging the religious climate set by those official publications.

Furthermore, reorienting our attention so as to examine religious, performed texts as sources that support and expand upon theoretical readings of nationhood through vernacular literatures also highlights the particular selection of plays that will stand as representative examples in this study. Certainly, there are many other sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English plays broadly interested in Anglo-Islamic relations. Jonathan Burton has noted that over sixty dramatic works featuring Islamic themes, characters, or settings were produced in England between 1579 and 1624, for example.<sup>45</sup> From Christopher Marlowe's *Tamburlaine the Great, Parts 1 and 2*

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<sup>45</sup> Burton, *Traffic and Turning*, 11. Burton also discounts the drama of the Caroline period. For his part, Topinka surveys English interaction with the Islamic world between 1560 and 1630 because "while the latter date preceded the rise of the British Empire as a global power, the former saw a rise in English trade along the Barbary Coast and thus a rise in cross-cultural encounters with Islam." Topinka, "Islam, England, and Identity," 114-115.

(c.1587–1588) to Robert Greene’s *Orlando Furioso* (1594), from Day, Rowley, and Wilkins’ *Travels of the Three English Brothers* (1607) to Thomas Heywood’s *The Fair Maid of the West, Parts 1 and 2* (1602, 1630), the Islamic world had long been an audience favorite on the early modern English stage. However, the plays selected for consideration in this study highlight the necessity to reexamine the construction of English national selfhood through performed texts like liturgies, sermons, and sacraments. Indeed, these dramatic texts mobilize their interest in the construction of English identity specifically through their reimagining of ceremonial events as they, too, tapped into contemporary debates over the meaning and enactment of ritual action. Moreover, the selection of plays here allows us to glimpse not only a wide range of opinion on Anglo-Islamic relations (political and theological) but also a wide range of identities affected by religio-political change (Islamic converts to Christianity, Christian converts to Islam, converts re-converted, and even variations on senses of “conversion” itself).

So in a departure from those popular critical frameworks outlined above, this dissertation examines the ways in which the English plays of the period from approximately 1600-1640 assumed a place in contemporary debates on sacramentalism and ceremony and their meaning for the conversion of the Islamic non-Christian. In addition, this project analyzes how readings of the early seventeenth century theatre’s interest in Islamic conversion change across time when the mutually-informing civic and religious discourses that shaped how the post-Reformation early modern English understood themselves as a collective community are brought to the critical forefront. This study aims to recuperate the complex implications of drama that compelled English audiences confront the shifting connections between politics, faith, and a sense of national cohesion in the face of what was often perceived to be an expanding religio-political threat. To

that end, this dissertation will examine constructions of early modern English national identity taking place via the navigation of religious difference onstage, exploring that activity of identity-building when it reads scenes of ritually-mobilized conversion and its attendant cultural “turning” found in early seventeenth-century plays invested in constructing imaginative responses to the expanding power of the Islamic world.

The evolving seventeenth century religious scene, recurringly preoccupied as it was with shifting understandings of Church ritual—particularly the proper performance and efficacy of the sacraments of the Church—was deeply interested in exploring the methods and effects of conversion because it was ritual action that had the power to render the meaning of conversion legible for a community in light of simultaneously-shifting English relations with the Ottoman Turks and the independent Islamic states of North Africa. Across the Elizabethan period and into the later 1630s, the Church of England was embroiled in conflict over the proper performance and efficacy of religious ritual; by the Jacobean period, this conflict was largely fed by growing discontent with the strongly Calvinist interpretive consensus at work in the Church of England that advocated for revisions to the Reformed theology that had been official policy under the Elizabethan Settlement. This evolution must be traced precisely for its importance to understandings of religious conversion: by the later 1630s, the royally-backed, Arminian-leaning faction maintained (in what was perceived by their opponents to be an uncomfortably Roman Catholic fashion) that traditional sacramental practice was not only instrumental in the building of English national community, but that it was necessary for the successful reception of new or returning members to the English polity. Against this ecclesiastical backdrop, a change in religio-political identity was not only acted and made apparent for the community through the performance of

ritual, it was fundamentally enacted via the (re)assertion of sacramental efficacy. Differences in the ways that Islamic conversion is then presented in the drama of the period c.1600-1640 are revealed to be purposeful and meaningful, and we can best understand the significance of those differences in light of early modern English religio-political controversy. In other words, changes in the drama reflect and reflect upon changes in the religio-political climate of England.

Ultimately, and in contrast to prevailing critical trends, this project maintains that while the stage was sometimes engaged in the imaginative construction of Christian triumph over an Islamic threat, early seventeenth century English plays also imagine new realities in which the conversion and assimilation of the foreign and religious other is not exclusively villainized, dangerous, and unsuccessful. To the contrary, the drama just as often imagines Islamic conversion that is assimilative, restorative, and successful. The contrasts between these two modes of representation track onto those same debates over Church of England ceremony briefly traced above, requiring that we turn our attention towards the reconfigured ritual activity of the Church of England. Religion (especially the ritual practices of baptism and the Eucharist) became an ideal (visual, dramatic, socially and politically meaningful) way to test competing visions of Christian faith and politics: could religious others be unambiguously converted and renegade Christians be successfully brought back into the national fold? When early modern dramas of conversion are placed within the context of pressing early modern concerns for the post-Reformation (re)construction of English nationhood—significantly still a nationhood constituting a unity of Church and state—scenes of religious conversion often tell a story less about “othering” and more about “Englishing.”

Because this project addresses the same issue as it evolved across time, it uses four case studies to highlight how early seventeenth century theatrical approaches to the question of English national identity and Islamic conversion varied according to currents in English religio-politics, namely those debates centered on the proper enactment and effects of Anglican ritual across the Elizabethan, Jacobean, and Caroline periods. William Shakespeare's *Othello* (c.1601-1604), situated on the hinge between two regnal periods, and thus two distinct trends in English religio-politics, stands as a particularly useful place to begin this examination. *Othello* is then followed by two Jacobean dramas: the thematic work of Robert Daborne's *A Christian Turned Turk* (c.1609-12) will reflect back on the Elizabethan situation of *Othello* and look forward to the very late Jacobean work of Philip Massinger's *The Renegado* (1624). Finally, Richard Brome's *The English Moor* (1637) will serve as this study's Caroline example of the English theatre's evolving interest in Islamic conversion and will prompt a reconsideration of the thematic work of *The Renegado*. In short, training our attention to variances in attitude across time (and to the ways in which those attitudes are recycled to deal with new religio-political problems) can help us make sense of the evolution of stories with similar cultural baggage in later periods. Shakespeare's *Othello* certainly does not imagine the conversion of the Moor in the same way or to the same end as Brome's *The English Moor*. As Matthew Dimmock suggests, against a shifting international background of contradictory political and ideological machinations, it is essential to recognize the diversity of perspective offered in early modern drama, "a medium through which a remarkable variety of cultural anxieties and beliefs could be addressed" with sometimes hugely varying imagined solutions.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Dimmock, *New Turkes*, 18.

On the one hand, the chronological window of this project is fairly narrow. However, this narrow concentration not only highlights the outpouring of dramas concerned with Islamic conversion broadly conceived (as will be outlined in the chapter summaries below), it draws our attention to the outcropping of those sacramentally-inflected dramas which find their way onto the English stage at this time and pushes the period under consideration into the reign of Charles I (a stretch of English ecclesiological development and Anglo-Islamic interaction usually glossed over in literary studies). Indeed, each of the three regnal periods under consideration are distinctive not only for their shifting diplomatic relationship with North Africa and the Levant but also for their ongoing contribution to the long, often conflicted, processes of English reform. It is no coincidence that the moment of English early modernity from approximately 1600 to 1640—which saw not only a nearly relentless vacillation in English responses to the Muslim world under the later years of Elizabeth’s reign, the reign of James, and then that of Charles—produced such a proliferation of dramas that entered into conversation with this charged and changing international scene. While the organization of each chapter considers English internal and international politics and, then, religious change, this is purely for the sake of clarity and organization. Certainly, these were not separate discourses in the period under consideration, as the developing argument of each chapter will make clear; far from being separable or neatly-bounded discourses, English politics and ecclesiology were mutually-informing as the early modern English saw the boundaries between these conversations as both fluid and interconnected.

To that end, Chapter 1, “Performing Baptism, Crossing Boundaries in *Othello*,” reads Othello’s conversions in light of the problem of English responses to internal and external encounters with “the Moor” as conditioned by debates over sacramental ritual in the Church of

England at the turn of the seventeenth century; indeed, the play often uses one set of concerns to interrogate the effects and consequences of the other. In the wake of protracted debates over, and revision to, the liturgical structure of *The Book of Common Prayer* and its sacramental order in the Elizabethan period and, later, in anticipation of the revisiting of those debates at the Hampton Court Conference of 1604, Shakespeare's play structures the driving themes and images mobilizing Othello's conversions around the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century baptismal debates. In *Othello*, the titular convert's making and unmaking as both a Christian and a member of Christian society are structured around Shakespeare's creative adaptation of the "seals and symbols" of baptismal theology, the ancient explanatory metaphors of the sacrament of Christian initiation.

Chapter 2, "Performing Apostasy, Disrupting Order in *A Christian Turn'd Turk*," examines the power of ritual for constructing religio-political relationships against the backdrop of an evolving Anglo-Ottoman scene. Where Shakespeare interrogates a comparatively narrow set of questions about the efficacy of baptism as informed by competing perspectives on the proper enactment of the ritual of Christian initiation in the wake of the English Reformation, Daborne widens the scope of this pressing concern for the efficacy of ceremonial action beyond the strictly baptismal. Daborne constructs his far more explicit treatment of conversion such that it plays upon contemporary Anglican debates over ceremony as useful for the construction and maintenance of English religio-political order itself—debates ironically exacerbated by the Hampton Court settlement's desire to enforce a uniformity of ecclesiastical practice. Moreover, where Othello's conversion is primarily interested in exploring the power of the English Church and state to facilitate the orderly reception of the Islamic "other" into the English commonwealth and



to instill Christian virtue in the convert himself, Ward's conversion ceremony offers a meditation on the power of ritual action, for good *or* ill: to forge new bonds of allegiance, certainly, but also to dispose the heart towards vice and towards the denial of an Englishman's proper allegiance to God, king, and country.

Chapter 3, "Performing Reconversion, Recovering Communion in *The Renegado*," illuminates the danger to political, religious, and personal bodies that preoccupied James I within the contentious religious and political landscape of seventeenth-century England itself. At home, the Jacobean commonwealth was attempting to determine just how elastic its domestic body could be imagined to be and exactly how that body could incorporate ecclesiastical non-conformists in the face of prolonged doctrinal controversy over soteriology and sacrament centered on England's involvement at the Synod of Dort (1618-1619). In one sense, Grimaldi's apostasy via Eucharistic disruption and redemption via ceremonial reenactment in *The Renegado* allows for the exploration of the Jacobean-era desire for a unified Christian state invested in conformity to the ceremonial and the sacramental mandates of the Church of England as its means of construction and maintenance, discourses that frequently turned on a Eucharistic point. At the same time, Grimaldi's ceremonial redemption is posited as a correction to the damaging and damning ceremony at work in *A Christian Turn'd Turk*.

Chapter 4, "Performing Moorishness, Debating Spectacle in *The English Moor*," not only interrogates England's ever-conflicted ideas about actual Moors as developed in previous chapters, it reactivates England's use of the trope of the "Moor" in intra-Christian polemic, drawing connections among Moorishness, unreformed religion, and theatricalism. Whereas Chapter 3 explores whether English Christians willing to embrace a renewed emphasis on the benefits of cer-

emony and ritual that had been challenged by the Reformation could help to bolster the body politic troubled by religious apostasy, *The English Moor*'s explicit interest in the effects of performance will reassert the need to continually keep one eye on the highly theatrical valences of "conversion," most especially the delight in theatricalism and changeability that so troubled Puritan opponents of both the theatre and the new face of the Anglican establishment of the 1630s. As an Englishwoman converts herself into a Moor, willingly assuming the physical manifestation of religious and cultural "otherness," the anxieties surrounding conversion that had previously only been dealt with in foreign spaces enter into the English body politic itself and pose pressing questions about the use and effects of ceremony and spectacle.

In complicating both traditional readings of the patterns of English interaction with Islamic North Africa and the Levant and the trajectory of Anglican reform, we may see that these texts' images of conversion reveal a far greater range of responses to interreligious encounter than a simplistic opposition of "us" and "them." Ultimately, these dramas serve less to vilify Muslims in moments of heightened international tension than to highlight the stakes of changes in English theology and ecclesiology for responding to the conversion of English Christians, warning divided Englishmen against the dangers of a commonwealth still mired in controversy over the meaning and uses of ritual itself. Dramatic literature thus lends valuable insight into popular engagement with debates over changes in the Church of England and their stakes for social incorporation—especially when the work of socio-political boundary-crossing in the drama itself is sparked or facilitated by ritual and sacrament.

## CHAPTER 1

### PERFORMING BAPTISM, CROSSING BOUNDARIES IN *OTHELLO*

“Blessed be God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to the riches of his mercy has preserved in his church this sacrament [...] and has made it free to all nations and classes of mankind.”<sup>1</sup>

— Martin Luther, *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*

“There is not any man of the Church of England but the same man is also a member of the commonwealth, nor any man a member of the commonwealth which is not also of the Church of England [...] no person appertaining to the one can be denied to be also of the other.”<sup>2</sup>

— Richard Hooker, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*

In Act II of *Othello*, impending war with the Turks calls the Venetian navy to Cyprus, the vulnerable island outpost standing at the threshold between Christian Europe and the expanding power of the Islamic East. The journey itself is fraught with peril, though, as the Venetian fleet is “parted / With foul and violent tempest” on its passage through the Mediterranean and, while the “desperate tempest hath so banged the Turks / That their designment halts,” neither do the Venetians emerge from the storm unchanged (2.1.33-34). Iago takes full advantage of the sea voyage’s dislocating effects to implement a plan to destroy the Moorish general, enacting revenge upon Othello for his earlier promotion of the young lieutenant, Michael Cassio. After instigating a round of drunken street brawling that leaves Cassio conveniently stripped of his officer’s rank, Iago counsels the young Florentine that, in order to win the Moor’s good opinion once again,

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<sup>1</sup> Martin Luther, *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church* in *Luther’s Works*, ed. and trans. Helmut T. Lehmann and Abdel R. Wentz (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1959): 36.18.

<sup>2</sup> Richard Hooker, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity: An Abridged Edition*, ed. A.S. McGrade and Brian Vickers (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1975): 8.1.2.

Cassio should enlist the help of Desdemona: “Confess yourself freely to her,” Iago advises, “importune her help to put you in your place once again” (2.3.313-314). For to win the Moor back to Cassio’s side,

‘tis most easy  
Th’inclining Desdemona to subdue  
In any honest suit. She’s framed as fruitful  
As the free elements: and then for her  
To win the Moor, were’t to renounce his baptism,  
All seals and symbols of redeemed sin,  
His soul is so enfettered to her love  
That she may make, unmake, do what she list,  
Even as her appetite shall play the god  
With his weak function. (2.3.334-343)<sup>3</sup>

From this point forward, the play signals a sustained engagement with the *unmaking* of Othello’s identity, the *making* of which had preoccupied the play’s earlier action in Venice (1.3). In Iago’s monologue, several elements which had been central to the constructive fashioning of Othello’s identity as an individual navigating a transition between two cultures, building intimate and public relationships, and asserting his military authority and active presence in the Venetian state are placed in close relation to each other, and all are revealed to be important moving pieces in his impending destruction. Here, Iago effectively reveals the interconnectedness of Othello’s identity as a baptized Christian, the overwhelming power ascribed to his love for Desdemona, the sexual fidelity (or lack thereof) of marital partners (Desdemona will appear to take up Cassio’s suit to satisfy “her body’s lust”), and the ever-present rhetoric of color as multivalent descriptor of

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<sup>3</sup> All in text citations of *Othello* are from William Shakespeare, *Othello*, ed. E.A.J. Honigmann (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2001). While for the purposes of my argument here I will follow the dominant critical consensus on the play’s date of composition and first performance, it should be acknowledged that the dating of *Othello* has been contested (a proposed dating of c.1601-1602 versus a traditional dating of c.1603-1604). For a reasonably concise rationale for an earlier date of composition (from mid-1601 to mid-1602) and 1602 as the most probable year of the play’s first performance, see E.A.J. Honigmann’s appendix to the Arden Third Series’ *Othello*. See E.A.J. Honigmann, “Appendix 1: Date” in William Shakespeare, *Othello*, ed. E.A.J. Honigmann (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2001): 344-350.

physical and moral states (Iago will “turn her [white] virtue to pitch,” for example) (2.3.352, 355). Markers of Othello’s self that had seemed fixed begin to unravel.

*Othello* is a drama of conversion in both the broadest and narrowest senses. As the play invests itself in questions of changeability and the transformation of the individual, the play simultaneously draws on early modern English anxieties about (and attraction towards) the potentially transformative effects of contact with radically different cultural and religious systems. In *Othello*, both the danger *and* the allure of Islamic power are balanced by the counterweight of Christian society’s imagined influence over Muslim society resulting in an intricate network of moral, sexual, and religious uncertainty in which (more often than not) carefully constructed binaries collapse, unveiling not hard-and-fast oppositions but, as Virginia Mason Vaughan rightly maintains, relationships that “in reality [were] complex and multifaceted.”<sup>4</sup> It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that Shakespeare’s drama, like the culture that produced it, would deal in the conflation of various tropes of conversion to make sense of widespread socio-political changes: transformations “from Christian to Turk, from virgin to whore, from good to evil, and from gracious virtue to black damnation” are all enacted side-by-side and just as often layered on top of each other as the rhetoric of one conversion is used as explanation for another.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, sexual infidelity was often described with the vocabulary of “turning,” whose primary usage at the time the *Oxford English Dictionary* records as the action “To induce or persuade to adopt a (different)

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<sup>4</sup> Virginia Mason Vaughan, *“Othello”: A Contextual History* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994): 27.

<sup>5</sup> Daniel Vitkus, *Turning Turk: English Theater and the Multicultural Mediterranean, 1570-1630* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003): 78.

religious faith [...] to convert.”<sup>6</sup> It is difficult to speak of conversion in one sphere without being compelled to examine its overlap with another.

That such a ready overlap exists between the vocabularies of religious conversion and sexuality is perhaps a useful insight into the emergence of two dominant critical trends in the study of Othello’s conversions. Among the multiplicity of interconnected factors revealed in 2.3 as key components in the complex making and unmaking of Othello, recent criticism has overwhelmingly opted to place its emphasis upon the conversion of Othello via Iago’s exploitation of the Moor’s sexually and/or racially embodied difference. Both of these critical models, highly influenced by the legacy of post-colonial criticism, have had a significant impact on readings of *Othello*, producing studies that perennially engage with the destructive “re-conversion” of Othello from a virtuous lover and Christian soldier to an enraged murderer with, as Daniel Vitkus puts it, “particular attention to the sense of conversion as a sensual, sexual transgression” with strong conceptual ties to early modernity’s evolving discourse of race.<sup>7</sup> A brief survey of the major threads of this criticism will help to establish the existing parameters of the conversation.

John Gillies, for example, maintains that while geography in Shakespeare’s plays can imaginatively account for “a peculiar combination of contexts: geographic, ethnographic, political, domestic, and sexual,” Gillies uses this interest to read *Othello* such that Othello is the physically-other barbarian from the (indeterminate) edges of the civilized world, infiltrating the privileged spaces of Venice, and generating confusion in his transgressive and polluting marriage to

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<sup>6</sup> "turn, v." *OED Online*. September 2016. *Oxford University Press*. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/207669?rskey=qnBAvT&result=1&isAdvanced=true> (accessed October 04, 2016).

<sup>7</sup> Vitkus, *Turning Turk*, 84.

his European partner Desdemona.<sup>8</sup> For Gillies, Othello's tragedy follows straight from the overwhelming hubris (read: the transgressiveness) of his otherness and his intrusion "into the bosom of the Venetian family."<sup>9</sup> The combination of Othello's "uncompromisingly Negroid appearance," the "pollutiveness of his visage," and the "extreme indecorum of his paring with Desdemona" all amount to a consistent and persistent sense of anthropologist Mary Douglas' concept of "pollution danger" which Othello as "other" inevitably symbolizes.<sup>10</sup> In this case, difference is body-bound and inherent. For her part, Kim F. Hall picks up the themes of sexual politics and difference so prominent in Gillies' reading and interrogates the allusions to blackness that abound in Renaissance texts.<sup>11</sup> She argues for a vital link between England's expansion into realms of difference and otherness (through exploration and, she claims, colonialism) and the highly charged ideas of race and gender which emerged from those colonial encounters. Hall's reading of *Othello*, then, is particularly interested in Othello's downfall as a result of his doomed marriage to Desdemona and traces "the ways in which [differences in] gender and race reconstitute each other."<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> John Gillies, *Shakespeare and the Geography of Difference* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1994): 25.

<sup>9</sup> Gillies, *Geography of Difference*, 26-27.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 26-28. See also Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge, 1979).

<sup>11</sup> Kim F. Hall, *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1995): 8. Hall's criticism responds to both Leslie A. Fielder and Karen Newman. For Fielder's earlier insistence on the importance of "others" in Shakespeare sans the racial politics of this presence, see Leslie A. Fielder, *The Stranger in Shakespeare* (New York: Stein and Day, 1972). For Newman's attempt to offer a corrective to Fielder's reading (which desired to disassociate *Othello* from Anglo-American racial formations), see Karen Newman, "'And was the Ethiop white': Femininity and the Monstrous in *Othello*" in *Shakespeare Reproduced: The Text in History and Ideology*, ed. Jean Howard and Marion O'Connor (New York: Methuen, 1987): 141-162.

<sup>12</sup> Hall, *Things of Darkness*, 182.

Ania Loomba's indebtedness to both John Gillies' and Kim F. Hall's theses is apparent in her work which brings together post-colonial theories, feminism, and responses to recent trends in historiography. As contact with radically different cultures increased over the course of the seventeenth century, Loomba argues, notions of racial identity rigidified: "ideologies of racial differences [...] hardened as a direct response to racial and cultural crossovers."<sup>13</sup> Loomba seems to temper the rigidity of Gillies' model when she acknowledges that colonial enterprises "facilitated contact and exchange," but she concludes that it was ultimately a deep fear of becoming like "the Other" that generated the need for a rigidly defined discourse on racial alterity.<sup>14</sup> For Loomba, the play is "both a fantasy of interracial love and social tolerance and a nightmare of racial hatred and male violence."<sup>15</sup> She maintains that "the real tragedy in the play" lies in the fact that its hierarchies of race and gender are internalized by Othello himself: "Iago's machinations," she says, "are effective because Othello is predisposed to believing his pronouncements about the inherent duplicity of women and the necessary fragility of an 'unnatural' relationship between a young, white, well-born woman and an older black soldier."<sup>16</sup> In other words, "Othello is a victim of racial beliefs precisely because he becomes an agent of misogynist ones."<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Ania Loomba, "Delicious traffick': racial and religious difference on early modern stages," in *Shakespeare and Race*, ed. Catherine M.S. Alexander and Stanley Wells (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000): 209.

<sup>14</sup> Loomba, "Delicious traffick," 201.

<sup>15</sup> Ania Loomba, *Shakespeare, Race, and Colonialism* (New York: Oxford UP, 2002): 91. See also Margo Hendricks, "Surveying 'race' in Shakespeare," in *Shakespeare and Race*, ed. Catherine M.S. Alexander and Stanley Wells (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000): 12; G.K. Hunter, *English Drama 1586-1642: The Age of Shakespeare* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997) and *Dramatic Identities and Cultural Tradition: Studies in Shakespeare and His Contemporaries: Critical Essays* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1978).

<sup>16</sup> Loomba, *Shakespeare, Race, and Colonialism*, 91

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.



Daniel Vitkus takes up Loomba's concern for Othello's self-destructive obsession with race and sexuality. Vitkus argues that Othello's "loss of identity" (as opposed to a change in, or transformation of, his identity) is precipitated by his failure "to know Desdemona, and [so] she is converted in his mind from virgin to whore. His fear of female sexual instability is linked in the play to racial and cultural anxieties about 'turning Turk'—the fear of a 'black' planet that gripped Europeans in the early modern era as they faced the expansion of Ottoman power."<sup>18</sup>

Like Vitkus, Jane Hwang Degenhardt links sexual bodies to the intersection of religion and politics in *Othello* when she explores modes of Christian resistance to Islamic conversion in light of the rising prominence of English trade with the Ottomans. Degenhardt traces what she sees as the "gendered effects of apostasy," arguing that the temptation to convert appears "inextricably linked with sexual desire": here, (sexualized) Christian bodies become sites where wars waged against the Ottomans are lost or won.<sup>19</sup> In light of her emphasis on the physicality and racial implications of conversion, Degenhardt reads *Othello* such that, while the play explores the Pauline ideal of a universal fellowship of faith, it falls back on "the tangible materiality of physical differences to stabilize identity against conversion."<sup>20</sup>

Following those studies by Vitkus and Degenhardt—which clearly link problems of religious conversion to race and, usually by extension, to sexual politics—Dennis Austin Britton recognizes that, often in the period and in the drama, the "tension between black skin and a

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<sup>18</sup> Vitkus, *Turning Turk*, 78. Vitkus does not elaborate upon what he means by "a 'black' planet." See also the earlier article version of this argument which becomes *Turning Turk*'s chapter 4: Daniel J. Vitkus, "Turning Turk in Othello: The Conversion and Damnation of the Moor," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 48.2 (Summer 1997): 145-176.

<sup>19</sup> Jane Hwang Degenhardt, *Islamic Conversion and Christian Resistance on the Early Modern Stage* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2010): 2.

<sup>20</sup> Degenhardt, *Islamic Conversion*, 28.

Christian interiority [...] needs to be constantly negotiated, explained, [and] addressed.”<sup>21</sup>

Whereas the Church of Rome had asserted that Christian identity begins with baptism, Britton argues that the Church of England in the sixteenth century began denying the necessity of baptism and instead treated Christianity as a racial characteristic.<sup>22</sup> Because, in Britton’s estimation, Othello’s Christian identity was never secure, he reads Othello’s marriage as the perfect target for Iago’s “de-conversion” of the Moor on Cyprus.<sup>23</sup> “To undo Othello’s conversion,” argues Britton, “Iago disrupts the romantic ties between Othello and his wife. [...] If romantic love can cement a religious identity, Iago shows that dissolving the relationship between Othello and Desdemona can undo Othello’s Christian identity.”<sup>24</sup>

What these studies bring to light is that the idea of transformation that terrified and titillated Shakespeare’s audience was—perhaps even beyond any specific fears of racial or sexual confusion which were undoubtedly real—“a fear of the loss of both essence and identity in a

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<sup>21</sup> Loomba, “Delicious traffick,” 211.

<sup>22</sup> Dennis Austin Britton, *Becoming Christian: Race, Reformation, and Early Modern English Romance* (New York: Fordham UP, 2014). However, I want to argue that Britton’s assertion of the Church of England’s position on the (non) necessity of baptism is based on an historical and theological misreading. Indeed, the Socinians, a group whose roots lay in the outbreak of sectarian Anabaptism influenced by Zwinglian thought in the sixteenth century, claimed that only the first generation of converts should receive the sacrament of baptism, the children being baptized already in their forefathers. Zwingli himself claimed that the children of Christians are no less children of God than their parents are; hence, birth to Christian parents within the “covenant” community seemed to convey membership in that community automatically. In other words, birth to Christian parents already constituted their election, and so baptism was simply an external sign of what was true already. However, the Church of England never officially adopted this position—the notion that baptism was non-essential for children born to Christian parents was rejected as a heresy. Traditionalists and mainstream reformers alike maintained the Scriptural necessity of baptism. See G.W. Bromiley, *Baptism and the Anglican Reformers* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1953): esp. 93; Maxwell E. Johnson, *The Rites of Christian Initiation: Their Evolution and Interpretation* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1990): esp. 244.

<sup>23</sup> Britton, *Becoming Christian*, 136.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

world of ontological, ecclesiastical, and political instability.”<sup>25</sup> It is acknowledged that the play is embedded in a changing cultural moment and an age of emerging global contact. Moreover, it is in these studies’ specific emphasis on the anxieties attendant upon thinking about the individual body in this period, whether as a racially-othered or sexually-othered body, and its subsequent relation to the collective social body, that they perform their most pressing and timely work; they compel the reader to confront contemporary systems of marginality and exclusion that operate with an early modern heritage. However, these studies’ approaches to the individual, marginal body as site-of-confusion-and-otherness are perhaps still too rigid to satisfactorily account for the dynamic negotiations of individual and group identity at work in the play and in the period. The intersections at which identity is constructed are dynamic ones: to emphasize only the combinations that produce a stranger who is absolutely and irredeemably “other” is to ignore the ways in which the literature of early modern England offers glimpses of other ways of being, some more flexible than we have been conditioned to expect.

At the same time that the scene of Iago’s plotting in 2.3 foregrounds the centrality of interracial marriage, sexual infidelity, and the social dynamics of color, this scene also illuminates a need to expand studies of *Othello* more fully into the intersection of the religious and the political. More specifically, Iago’s monologue demands that criticism engage with Othello’s conversions in terms of the shifting negotiations between the interconnected operation of the personal body and the religio-political body. If, as Iago claims, Desdemona, because of Othello’s disproportionate and all-consuming love for her, could convince Othello to do just about anything, even “to renounce his baptism / All seals and symbols of redeemed sin,” then it is worth examining exactly why that specific example does so much work for Iago, how it so effectively gets to

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<sup>25</sup> Vitkus, *Turning Turk*, 78.

the highest stakes—the most extreme example—of what Othello’s unmaking could look like or could be. Conversely, if the undoing of Othello’s baptism stands as the consummate example of his potential destruction, it should also illuminate Othello’s earlier assimilation and the operation of his first conversion. Othello’s transformations could then be understood as structured around his baptismal identity. Finally, that structuring would inform an audience’s sense of the stakes attendant upon Othello’s conversions, stakes for the body of a Christian community—as much as for the individual—that cannot be glossed over.

On one level, *Othello* explores the stakes that the conversion of the Moor entailed for an English commonwealth that was still a unity of Church and state. To the early modern English, to be English was to possess an identity that was defined as much by religious as civic commitments, but an identity defined in this way was bound to raise uncomfortable questions: If being English meant being belonging to the Church of England, as Richard Hooker boldly asserted, did converts become one’s countrymen? Was conversion complete and permanent? Without the conversion of the religious “other,” could a nation like England (or a city-state like Venice) include racial, cultural, and religious differences and retain its identity? These were pressing questions as, outside the borders of England, a religiously fractured and politically fraught Christian Europe was not particularly successful at combatting the united and efficient Islamic Ottomans in the Near East or the Moors of North Africa. In addition, the problems (both real and imagined) of a Moorish presence in England in the form of resident foreigners in port cities like London and Bristol were also acutely felt.

At the time of *Othello*’s composition, Englishmen were well aware that the Muslim world was an expanding political and economic power bringing a competing faith with it. But if the

reality was that more Christian Englishmen were converting to Islam in North Africa and the Levant than Muslims were becoming Christians in England, many of the early seventeenth century's dramas of Islamic conversion imagine a different story—one in which the conversion of the Muslim is welcomed and successful. *Othello* interrogates the fear-driven failure of the Moor's conversion, certainly (the play is, after all, a tragedy), but the play also delights in conversion's possible success, in imagining how a Moor could be *of* Venice (or implicitly even of England). While *Othello* addresses English concerns surrounding European contact with Islam and Moorishness, on another level *Othello* is also a part of an incorporative dramatic tradition that imagines the power an English Church and state to make brothers out of others.

To that end, the driving themes and images structuring Othello's conversions are drawn from the debates over the proper enactment and efficacy of the baptismal sacrament that preoccupied the Church of England across the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. In *Othello*, the titular convert's making and subsequent unmaking as both a Christian and a member of Christian society are structured around Shakespeare's creative adaptation of the "seals and symbols" of baptismal theology, the ancient explanatory metaphors of the sacrament of Christian initiation: signation (or signing with the cross) and its attendant association with the ancient practice of marking soldiers or slaves with a sign of service and a seal of ownership, submersion in water and its connections with both ritual cleansing and God's mighty acts of the Old Testament (the flood and the Red Sea), and the image of baptism as death into Christ or being washed in the blood of Christ. As the Church's traditional "seals and symbols of redeemed sin" are adopted as the play's symbolic economy, these symbols get "un-metaphored"—in other words, they are rendered literal and theatrically visible—such that Othello's conversion and assimilation into

Venetian society are mobilized by a literalized enactment of those metaphors. Conversely, Othello's destruction and estrangement from the social and political life of his adopted society are structured around Iago's undoing of those literalized metaphors, just as reforming voices in the Church of England pressed for the further dismantling of the traditional symbolic economy of the baptismal sacrament.

Debates over the baptismal form in the early modern Church of England are significant because they reveal the implications of ritual practices for the constitution of the early modern community: far from rigid and impermeable, "cultural boundaries are fluid, cross-cultural relations improvised, and the Moor's place in Europe neither predetermined nor precluded."<sup>26</sup> Othello's demise is not inevitable. The Moor is not in possession of "irrevocable non-Christian origins."<sup>27</sup> Othello's tragedy is not a predetermined outcome of an inherent alterity, whether that alterity is based upon originary religious identity, ethnicity and nationality, or color. Othello's demise happens because the traditional framework that would have worked (unequivocally) to effect the Moor's reception into the community was being dismantled from within. Altering the perspective of our reading in such a way as to take account of the religious practices structuring the reception of the convert into the religio-political life of the commonwealth has the potential to upset totalizing readings of the absolute and unassimilable alterity of the Moor.

**"an extravagant and wheeling stranger": English Politics and the Islamic "Other"**

To better understand the often conflicted representation of the Moor of Venice in *Othello* and to think about the Moor's place in the civic life of his adopted society, it is helpful to look briefly—and, most importantly, comparatively—at patterns of contact and diplomacy between

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 159.

<sup>27</sup> Burton, *Traffic and Turning*, 252.

England and Muslim states between the reigns of Elizabeth I (r.1558-1603) and James I (r.1603-1625). English responses to the Islamic world were far from static and more prone to variance in opinion than many critics would like to suggest, and England's mercantile and diplomatic relations with the Muslim states under both Elizabeth and James are particularly indicative of those attitudes. To some degree, early modern English attitudes toward "Moors," "Saracens," and "Turks" did continue to rely on the recycling of the polemical legacy of the early crusades and its "dominant formulation preoccupied with the abominable anti-Christian figure of 'Mahomet' and his damned and vicious adherents."<sup>28</sup> But despite the strength of the negative images of the Moor as barbarian, devil, or infidel, English observations of the Moors, the Ottomans, and other Islamic powers are just as often shaped in more positive ways in the period of Elizabeth's reign, usually in response to the political reverberations of the Protestant Reformation and to meet the demands of national self-interest. These networks of interaction and patterns of thought complicate popular readings of the English demonization and "othering" of their Islamic neighbors and lay the groundwork for a context in which the imagining of the successful conversion and accommodation of the Moor could actually make sense—could be imagined as a viable possibility—as opposed to remaining purely the stuff of theatrical fantasy.

One instructive place to begin, then, might be to note the existence of extensive contacts in trade and diplomacy between England and North Africa from c.1550-1603, a relationship that was affected, in large part, by England's changed and charged relationship with European nations remaining loyal to the Church of Rome after Henry VIII's break with the papacy in 1534. While there is evidence that some small-scale trade with Morocco had begun as early as 1548

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<sup>28</sup> Matthew Dimmock, "Hakluyt's Multiple Faiths" in *Richard Hakluyt and Travel Writing in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Daniel Carey and Claire Jowitt (New York: Routledge, 2016): 221.

under the stringent Reformed regime of Edward VI (r.1547-1553), and Richard Hakluyt records in the 1598-1600 second edition of *The Principall Navigations* what he calls “the original of the first voyage for traffique into the kingdom of Marocco in Barbarie” as commencing in 1551, it is nearly impossible to understand Elizabeth’s positive mercantile and diplomatic dealings with the Islamic world without touching upon England’s simultaneous antagonism towards much of Roman Catholic Europe broadly and Spain, in particular.<sup>29</sup>

Under the leadership of Elizabeth, anti-Catholic and anti-Spanish prejudices were integral parts of the good relations between England and North Africa in the latter half of the sixteenth century.<sup>30</sup> As the Reformation prompted a new rhetoric of equivalence in which Roman Catholics and Protestants maligned each other as “Turks,” England’s political maneuverings in these circumstances brought about diplomatic and mercantile alliances with “the infidel.”<sup>31</sup> Elizabeth found that she could overlook the strict prohibitions against a Christian nation providing munitions to Islamic states, for example, after her excommunication from the Roman Church in Feb-

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<sup>29</sup> Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques & Discoveries of the English Nation*, 12 vols. (Glasgow: MacLehose, 1904): 4:138. Dimmock, “Multiple Faiths,” 221.

<sup>30</sup> Jack D’Amico, *The Moor in English Renaissance Drama* (Tampa: University of South Florida Press): 7. In fact, outside of England, relationships with different Muslim powers had become a part of the web of rivalry between European powers a bit earlier: in 1535 Francis I of France (r.1515-1547) concluded an alliance with the Ottoman sultan Suleiman the Magnificent (r.1520-1566) against the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V (r.1519-1566). Hugh Goddard, *A History of Christian-Muslim Relations* (Chicago: New Amsterdam Books, 2000): 117.

<sup>31</sup> For example, Protestants during the English Reformation often described the opposition to Roman rule and religion as a crusade against the “second Turk,” and described Muslims themselves as the “Eastern whore of Babylon” (for additional examples, see Chapter 2 of this dissertation or Daniel J. Vitkus, “Introduction” in *Three Turk Plays of Early Modern England: Selimus, A Christian Turned Turk, and The Renegado*, ed. Daniel J. Vitkus (New York: Columbia UP, 2000): 7-8). This conflation of Islam and Catholicism, even of Ottoman and Roman tyranny, found perhaps its most memorable voice in Martin Luther. In 1518 Luther explicitly linked Islam and Catholicism arguing that “[b]oth [...] are of one lord, the devil, since the pope is a liar and the Turk a murderer” (cited in Kenneth M. Setton, “Lutheranism and the Turkish Peril,” *Balkan Studies* 3.1 (1962): 151). In fact, the *Table Talk*—a collection of Martin Luther’s quotations compiled by Johannes Mathesius and only published in 1566—Luther is recorded to have said that “Antichrist is at the same time the Pope and the Turk. A living creature consists of body and soul. The spirit of Antichrist is the Pope, his flesh is the Turk. One attacks the Church physically, the other spiritually” (qtd. in Vitkus, “Introduction,” 8).



ruary of 1570.<sup>32</sup> Following Pope Pius V's excommunication of the queen, England was no longer obliged to adhere to the papal ban on trading with the Muslims which was promulgated on a yearly basis on Holy Thursday in the papal bulls *In Coena Domini*. Beginning with Pope Paul II (r.1464-1471) in 1470, these bulls placed an interdiction on trade of materials that could be used for military purposes by Muslim powers: "We excommunicate and anathemize all those who supply or convey to Saracens, Turks, and other enemies and foes of the Christian name [...] horses, arms, iron, ironwire, tin, steel, and every other kind of metal, and war engines, timber, hemp, ropes."<sup>33</sup> In addition to an opportunity for the English to gain in opposition to papal authority, encouraging the solidification of England's new friendships with the Islamic world in the latter half of the sixteenth century was also the sense of immediate danger of attack from Catholic Spain.

By 1579, English merchant Roger Bodenham, then living in Seville and trading with Fez, could passionately defend the desirability of an English partnership with a North African state in order to protect English shipping, as well as to attack Spanish fleets on their way back from the

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<sup>32</sup> Pope Pius V's bull, *Regnans in Excelsis*, declared "Elizabeth, the pretended Queen of England and the servant of crime," to be a heretic and released all her subjects from any allegiance to her, even when they had "sworn oaths to her," and excommunicated any that obeyed her orders. Elizabethan animosity toward Spanish Catholic powers partly stemmed from Spain's involvement in the issuing of the bull: The Papacy had previously reconciled with Mary I, who returned the Church of England and Church of Ireland to Catholicism. After Mary's death in November 1558, however, Elizabeth's Parliament passed the Act of Supremacy of 1559, which re-established the Church of England and Church of Ireland's independence from papal authority. This bull can be seen as an act of retaliation for the religious settlement, but as it was delayed by eleven years it was most likely instigated by pressure from Philip II of Spain or Mary, Queen of Scots, both of whom had an interest in overthrowing Elizabeth. In 1588, Pope Sixtus V, in support of the Spanish Armada, renewed the bull of excommunication against Queen Elizabeth I for the regicide of Mary. Patrick McGrath, *Papists and Puritans under Elizabeth I* (Poole, England: Blandford Press, 1967): esp. 69. Excerpts from *Regnans in Excelsis* as translated in McGrath.

<sup>33</sup> *The Papal Bull, "In Coena Domini," Translated into English. With a Short Historical Introduction, etc.* (London: 1848): 13 cited in Christopher Toenjes, *Islam, the Turks and the Making of the English Reformation: The History of the Ottoman Empire in John Foxe's Acts and Monuments* (New York: Peter Lang, 2016): 9. Despite the papal ban, Genoa had capitulations with the Ottoman Empire dating as far back as 1352 and Venice in the late 1380s. See James Mather, *Pashas: Traders and Travelers in the Islamic World* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2009): 32.

West Indies via the Canary Islands. Such a league or treaty, “being secretlye brought to conclusion,” would “choake all the Spanish trafique through the Straites and alonge the coastes and iselandes,” the culmination of which, in Bodenham’s opinion, could be the use of the Moroccan ruler Ahmad al-Mansur (r.1578-1603) to invade Spain “at our eleccion of tymes.”<sup>34</sup> Most tellingly, however, Bodenham’s argument for such an advantageous mercantile match is inseparable from his religio-political commitments, going so far as to cite the Massacre of Paris as sufficient justification for the use of any means necessary to fortify a noble opposition to Catholic “tyranny.”<sup>35</sup> While neither Elizabeth nor al-Mansur were yet willing to directly antagonize the Spanish, by the early 1580s the Barbary Company was manipulating the official trade of saltpeter and gold (for the English) for arms and timber for galley building (for the Moroccans) between the two kingdoms. Bodenham’s defense of an alliance with the Moors is indicative of the extent to which English Protestant prejudice against Islam might be overcome when faced with the threat of Catholic Spain. In the England of Elizabeth I, the king of Spain is the dangerous and irreligious adversary, and the Moorish king—far from a dark and devious “other”—is an amicable and useful ally against a common enemy.

While Othello is obviously a Christian by the time the action of the play commences (Iago’s desire that Othello “renounce his baptism” would make no sense if there had not been one), Othello still retains some stigma of his native Moorishness with all of its attendant ambiguity. No matter his at-least-nominal Christian identity and Venetian residence, to Iago Othello is alternately “his Moorship,” “the Moor,” and “lascivious Moor,” epithets used with a dizzying

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<sup>34</sup> For Roger Bodenham’s letter, see Henry de Castries, *Les Sources Inédites de L’Histoire du Maroc* (Paris: E. Leroux Luzac, 1918): 1:364-366 cited in D’Amico, *The Moor*, 21.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

array of connotations, from skin color to foreignness to moral character (1.1.32, 39, 124). But while this marker of difference, which haunts Othello at the beginning of the play, would seem to preclude the Moor's accommodation in the Venetian polity, this is not the case. Before the Moor's tragic end, critics should recognize Othello's active participation in Venetian society. Indeed, Emily C. Bartels has also asked us to reconsider the Moor's strangeness. Taking her cue from the play's subtitle, she asks, "[I]s the Moor necessarily out of place in Venice?" What are we to make of the mixed characterization of Othello as at once an "extravagant and wheeling stranger," but also "of Venice"?<sup>36</sup> Bartels asserts that "from a Mediterranean perspective, the idea that a Moor once lived in Venice was not as much a cultural curiosity as it was a fact of life. To be a 'stranger' there was not perforce to be estranged, to be a 'Barbarian' not perforce to be 'barbarian.'"<sup>37</sup> So too has Jack D'Amico interrogated the Moor's place in the "relatively open community" of Venice "that welcomes strangers" and "is willing to recognize their inherent national values and even to give them a certain legal and social status within the city-state."<sup>38</sup>

The idea that a Moor could traverse the lines of nation and politics to assume responsibility in a society not originally his own was not entirely unheard of in England, either. In 1591, one "Hamet, a distressed Turk" petitioned Queen Elizabeth to permit him to fight with her forces

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<sup>36</sup> Emily C. Bartels, *Speaking of the Moor: From Alcazar to Othello* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009): 158.

<sup>37</sup> Bartels, *Speaking of the Moor*, 158.

<sup>38</sup> D'Amico, *The Moor*, 163. Although, at the same time that D'Amico is interested in the specific situation of the Moor in Venice, he also maintains that figures such as Aaron in *Titus Andronicus*, Cleopatra in *Antony and Cleopatra*, and Othello are "a type familiar to his audience" that Shakespeare made use of to bring "his audience closer to understanding the relationship between a great power [Rome, Venice] and those who are *caught up* in that power's expansion" (162, emphasis mine). This seems to reinscribe the anachronistic reading of the powerless East in early modernity.

against the Spaniards.<sup>39</sup> How Hamet came upon this proposal is unclear, but it was not unprecedented in England for an alien to assist in military action: from 1575 to 1588, immigrants were repeatedly made to join in national defense, and in 1596 it was reported that the English fleet that had attacked Cadiz had been accompanied by five galleys from Barbary.<sup>40</sup> Othello may be a foreigner, but the world of the play seems to operate with a political code much like that of the current policy of the English queen. In particular, the Moor's usefulness to the Venetian polity echoes the pattern of international alliances enacted against a common enemy in the style of Elizabeth and al-Mansur. Othello is welcome in Venice, as far as the Duke is concerned, because his martial prowess and loyalty to their anti-Turkish cause make him useful. Even Iago acknowledges this: as insufferable as he may find Othello to be, "for their souls / Another of his fathom they have none / To lead their business [...] to the Cyprus wars" (1.1.149-151, 148). Accommodations can be made for "Valiant Othello" who must be "straight employ[ed]" in the Venetian state's united fight "[a]gainst the general enemy Ottoman" in a political maneuver that would have looked very much like the one the English queen herself was currently undertaking (1.3.49, 50). In early seventeenth century England, room could be made for Moorishness in the face of a much more pressing problem—Spain.

Over the next two decades, Elizabeth and al-Mansur continued to develop the diplomatic-trade relationship which culminated in the memorable Moroccan embassy to London in 1600-1601.<sup>41</sup> The delegation of sixteen men (the ambassador Abd el-Ouahed, two merchants, an inter-

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<sup>39</sup> *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, Elizabeth* (London: 1591): 3:109 cited in Nabil Matar, *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery* (New York: Columbia UP, 1999): 20.

<sup>40</sup> Matar, *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen*, 20.

<sup>41</sup> The Moorish embassy to London, while the most famous, was not the first. Moorish representatives arrived in 1551, a Turkish envoy in 1579 and 1580, an ambassador from Morocco in 1589, and another Moroccan ambassador

preter, and twelve others) arrived at Dover on 15 August 1600 and stayed for six months.<sup>42</sup> This extraordinary visit—for which the explicit purpose remains hazy (the “Busines hath bene very secretly handled”)—understandably inspired great popular interest as these foreign Muslim visitors were thrust into the public eye.<sup>43</sup> On the anniversary of the queen’s coronation on 17 November, for example, a celebratory spectacle was planned at Whitehall for which “a speciale place was builded onely for them [the Moroccan ambassador and his retinue] neere at the Parke doore to beholde the dayes triumph.”<sup>44</sup> It was considered an honor “that nations so far remote, and everyway different, shold meet here to admire the glory and magnificence of our Quene of Saba.”<sup>45</sup> Of course the Moorish visitors were as much a part of the spectacle as they were spectators, seeing and being seen by the English crowds. The customs and religious practices of the Moorish visitors continued to be of great interest to the English public far longer than the afternoon’s display of the ambassador lasted, however. One interested, noticeably objective observer noted the dietary customs and religious practices of the Moroccans: the visitors slaughter their own meat, and “turn their faces eastward [*sic*] whenever they kill anything. They use beades and pray to saints.”<sup>46</sup> If English reports like this are demonstrative of English attitudes, they are demonstrative less of outright popular hostility towards the presence of Muslims in England and

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in 1595. Elizabeth was the only English monarch to entertain so many Muslim ambassadors. For information on these visits, for which not much information survives, see Matar, *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen*, 33-34.

<sup>42</sup> D’Amico, *The Moor*, 35.

<sup>43</sup> The visit seems to have had something to do with Elizabeth’s intervention in a disagreement between al-Mansur and “the Turke” (the Ottoman sultan) to whom “a Brother of this king of Barbaries is fled to complaine against him.” *Letters and Memorials of State*, ed. Arthur Collins (London: Osborne, 1746): 2:212-214 cited in D’Amico, *The Moor*, 36.

<sup>44</sup> De Castries, *Les Sources Inédités*, 2:203 cited in D’Amico, *The Moor*, 36.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:192.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:203.

the performance of their ritual practices than they are of English national pride: in the same report, it is humorously recorded that some men of the Moroccan embassy were said to have accused others of poisoning their interpreter (who did die while in England) and one of the merchants of their party “lest he [the merchant] should manifest Englands honor to their disgrace” after “he [the interpreter] commended the estate and bountie of England.”<sup>47</sup>

Beyond simply refocusing our attention on the reality of trade and diplomatic relations between England and the Muslim world in the sixteenth century (an idea that most recent criticism has allowed for, as well), encounters like those between the Moorish party and the English public are significant because they highlight the variability of English attitudes towards the complex figure of the Muslim in the English imaginary.<sup>48</sup> This interest in the Moroccans in their midst demonstrated by seventeenth century Londoners should also be understood as part of a longer tradition of interest in Islam and Muslim culture, not all of which adopts the universally demonizing and exclusionary rhetoric of such interest to literary scholarship. Criticism routinely points to such texts as John Pory’s English translation of Leo Africanus’ *Description of Africa* (1600), Richard Knolles’ *The Generall Historie of the Turkes* (1603), and even the earlier *The Historye and Tyrranye of the Turkes*, otherwise known as the *Turkes Storye* of John Foxe’s *Acts and Monuments* (1570 second edition).<sup>49</sup> Texts like these, with their rhetoric of holy war and

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 2:203.

<sup>48</sup> By the end of the sixteenth century, Englishmen had so long been engaged in extensive commercial, diplomatic, and social engagements with the Turks and Moors of the Muslim empires that “[n]o other non-Christian people interacted more widely with Britons than the Muslims of the Ottoman Empire, the Eastern Mediterranean, and the North African regencies of Tunisia, Algeria, and Libya, along with Morocco.” Matar, *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen*, 3.

<sup>49</sup> A clarification of terms should be made here. The early modern texts in question use the term “Turk” or “Turke” not as an ethnic signifier, as would be the case today, but as synonymous with “Islam” and “Muslim” generally, regardless of ethnicity. In medieval and early modern nomenclature, “Turk” was rarely used to indicate ethnic origins.

apocalypticism, further readings of a universal English dread of Islamic peoples. However, texts far more objective in tone were also appearing on the English market. English editions of John Mandeville's influential early fifteenth century book, *Travels*—notable as a comparatively ambivalent example of tolerance in its treatment of Islam and Muslim societies—were widely available by the later sixteenth century, and a number of important works with carefully compiled descriptions of Islamic religious practices, far more extensive and up-to-date than the *Travels*, had been translated into English between the 1550s and the release of the first edition of Hakluyt's monumental *Principall Navigations* in 1589.<sup>50</sup> These even-handed, almost anthropologic, relations of Muslims and Islamic society include Johannes Boemus' lengthy section on Islam in his *The Fardle of Facions* (1555), in which he remarks on Muslims' free almsgiving and tolerance of other religions, and Celio Augustino Curione's *A Notable Historie of the Saracens* (1575). Slightly earlier, Christian Richer's *On the Customs and Manners of the Turks* (1540) gives no hint of Christian imprecation of "the infidel" as its observer accumulates examples to support his assertion that the Turks are a "scrupulously clean and honest people."<sup>51</sup> When Hakluyt began accumulating materials for the new edition of the *The Principall Navigations*, though, the figure of the North African Muslim already occupied a range of positions in English imaginations.

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Toejnies, *English Reformation*, 1. For more on the use of the word "Turk," see also Bernard Lewis, *Islam and the West* (New York: Oxford UP, 1993): 7 and Jonathan Burton, *Traffic and Turning: Islam and English Drama, 1579-1624* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2005): 13.

<sup>50</sup> Moreover, Mandeville makes a careful distinction between Muhammad and his followers in terms of character and alterity. While the "false" Prophet himself is described in accordance with the dominant narrative of deception, vice, and immorality, and thus is made totally alien, Muslims themselves are easily converted. Dimmock, "Hakluyt's Multiple Faiths," 222.

<sup>51</sup> Ibn Warraq, *Defending the West: A Critique of Edward Said's Orientalism* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2007): 155. For a lengthy overview of Western Europe's more balanced, even objective, writings on Islam and the societies of North Africa and the Near East in the early modern period, see Warraq, *Defending the West*, 143-158 and Nancy Bisaha, *Creating East and West: Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

Moreover, at the same time that Englishmen were encountering Muslims abroad through networks of trade and observing a few high-profile Muslims in England through diplomacy, ordinary Muslims began appearing on English shores in increasing numbers and represented the most widely visible non-Christian people on English soil in this period, “more so than the Jews and the American Indians.”<sup>52</sup> While the sum of any unconverted Muslims in an English city probably never reached more than a few score at a time, during the Elizabethan period in its entirety, “thousands of Turks and Moors visited and traded in English and Welsh ports; hundreds were captured on the seas and brought back to stand trial in English courts; scores of ambassadors and emissaries dazzled the London populace with their charm, cuisine, and ‘Araby’ horses.” In these venues real meetings took place between Muslims and Englishmen: “the latter ate at the same tables with visiting ‘Turks’ in London, encountered Barbary pirates in the jails of the southwestern sea towns or coastal villages of Ireland and the Channel Isles, and admired Ottoman *chiauses* in their processions to the Banqueting Hall.”<sup>53</sup> While England was on particularly

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<sup>52</sup> Matar, *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen*, 3. The numerical evidence suggests that early modern Englishmen and women were far more likely to meet or to have met a Muslim than a Jew or an American Indian. For perhaps the most influential reading of the Jews as England’s defining “other,” see James Shapiro, *Shakespeare and the Jews* (New York: Columbia UP, 1996). Shapiro argues that it was precisely the definitional instability of Jews (did they constitute a nation, race, or religion?) that placed them at the center of England’s struggles with its own developing national identity: during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, English questions about chosenness, authority, and conversion could be displaced onto this liminal group. For numbers of Jews in Elizabethan and Jacobean London, see E.R. Samuel, “Portuguese Jews in Jacobean London” in *Jewish Historical Society of England—Transactions* 18 (1953-1955): 171-187 and Theodore K. Rabb, “The Stirrings of the 1590s and the Return of the Jews to England” in *Jewish Historical Society of England—Transactions* 26 (1974-1978): 26-33. See also David S. Katz, *Philo-Semitism and the Readmission of the Jews to England, 1603-1655* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1982).

For accounts of American Indians in England, see Carl Brindenberg, *Jamestown 1544-1699* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1980); Carolyn Thomas Foreman, *Indians Abroad 1493-1938* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1943); Sir Sidney Lee, “The American Indian in Elizabethan England” in *Elizabethan and Other Essays*, ed. Frederick S. Boas (New York: Freeport: 1968). The portrait of the Anglicized and deracialized “Mme. Penobscot” and the 1616 portrait of Pocahontas in full English dress show how Native Americans were perceived in Jacobean England—“they were not recognized for their Indianness, but for the success of the colonists in changing them into ‘civilized’ human beings.” Matar, *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen*, 4.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 5-6.



amicable terms with the Islamic states of North Africa and the Ottoman Empire, Elizabeth not only welcomed Muslim seamen into English coastal towns, English seamen frequently helped Muslim prisoners of war escape Spanish captivity, sometimes bringing these Moorish sailors back to England with them until they could be repatriated back to North Africa: such Christian charity to the “infidels” is striking and shows how much Elizabeth valued cooperation with Morocco.<sup>54</sup> That Muslims were living and working in England should cause us to take seriously the extent to which real-life Moors could cross permeable social boundaries into Christian Europe, making themselves a part of the fabric of English community life even before the more extraordinary processes of formal conversion to Christianity.

In the face of such evidence, it is surprising that some critics have gone so far as claiming that Englishmen knew Muslims only as literary representations and imaginary constructs. G.K. Hunter, for instance, stated that in the Elizabethan imagination, there “seem, in fact, to be Moors everywhere, but only everywhere in that outer circuit of non-Christian lands.”<sup>55</sup> Kim F. Hall later agreed that “English traders went to the markets of Guinea and Barbary, but African traders rarely went to England.”<sup>56</sup> But to numerous Englishmen and women—without even counting the traders, sailors, travelers, and captives who entered into the intimacy of Muslim life abroad—Muslims were people they had known, not just in fantasy and fiction, but with whom they had worked and lived in England. This sort of evidence belies the oft-repeated critical refrain that darker skin and Islamic heritage were absolutely the stuff of exclusion and revilement. Perhaps

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 21. For Elizabeth on the repatriation of Moorish captives, see *Acts of the Privy Council, 1597-1598* (London): 28:408 as cited in Matar, *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen*, 4.

<sup>55</sup> G.K. Hunter, “Elizabethans and Foreigners” in *Shakespeare in His Own Age*, ed. Allardyce Nicoll (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1965): 52.

<sup>56</sup> Hall, *Things of Darkness*, 11. Again, Hall actually makes no distinction between the diverse geographic, political, and religious groups of Africa.

what is most keenly demonstrated here is that while some English polemics reveled in a revived rhetoric of crusade with its black-and-white religio-political ideology, quite literally demonizing the “black infidel” and extolling the virtues of white English Christianity, evidence reveals that just as often Englishmen and women seem to have operated on an everyday basis in practical shades of grey.<sup>57</sup> The positive and negative characterizations that emerge from the first fifty years of sustained Anglo-Islamic contact should be related to the specific, and evolving, historical perspectives of trade, war, and diplomacy, reflecting their multi-faceted “give-and-take of opinion, a frequent counter-balancing of prejudices, the interplay of abstract stereotypes, and the more complex shadings of experience.”<sup>58</sup>

Such a give-and-take of opinion on the Moorish presence in Venice surfaces almost immediately in Shakespeare’s play, as well. At the same time that it becomes clear Othello has established himself as a general of some importance, and just before it becomes known that the Moor has wedded a senator’s daughter, Iago reveals the extent to which the success of Othello’s incorporation into Venetian society has disrupted what Iago takes to be its proper ordering.

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<sup>57</sup> The incidents most frequently deployed in support of critical readings that maintain the narrative of England’s universal attitude of fear and exclusion in relation Muslim peoples should be acknowledged. Those tangled interactions between Protestant England and Islamic North Africa in the later decades of the sixteenth century that I have been tracing here—interactions that included beneficial diplomatic and trade relationships, a wide-spread interest in Islamic culture and government, and a growing presence of Moors within England—produced a variety of opinions and a rich interplay of attitudes that critics assume came to a head in two related incidents near the end of Elizabeth’s reign: Elizabeth’s proclamations for the deportation of “blackamoors brought into this realme, of which kinds of people there are allready to manie, considering how God hath blessed this land with great increase of people of our own nation” in 1596 and again in 1601. However, it must be asked: to whom does this request actually refer? The answers most frequently given include some version of Islamophobia connected to an obsession with the purity of Englishness based on race-as-color: Jack D’Amico, who perhaps deals with this evidence most succinctly, reads these requests as a reflection of the “uneasiness” felt in regard to the presence of Muslims in England fueled by “racial tension and prejudice.” However, there is no evidence that the “blackamoors” brought into England were Muslims at all. Contemporary usage of “blackamoore” referred to “[a] black African; an Ethiopian”—not necessarily a Muslim. Using this text to exemplify English attitudes toward Muslims is slippery and unreliable. Elizabeth’s proclamation quoted in D’Amico, *The Moor*, 32. “blackamoore, n.” *OED Online*. September 2016. *Oxford University Press*. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/19674?redirectedFrom=blackamoore> (accessed September 15, 2016).

<sup>58</sup> D’Amico, *The Moor*, 39.

Othello has rejected the intervention of “[t]hree great ones of the city” who attempt to intervene on Iago’s behalf for the lieutenant’s position, a position for which Iago believes himself uniquely qualified: “I am worth no worse a place,” he says, but Othello, “stuffed with epithets of war” and “with a bombast circumstance,” has managed to derail what the ensign believes is his proper due (1.1.6, 10, 13, 12). With such power to control the ensign’s fate, it is clear that the Moorish outsider has been integrated into the Venetian polity and its echelons of military power in a way that has even been denied to Iago. The passed-over ensign will now attempt everything in his power to turn Othello into a disenfranchised stranger, “to alienate him not only from himself but also from the military and domestic anchors that give him, and Venice, definition.”<sup>59</sup>

But this is a plan that must be actively and relentlessly pursued. We have already seen that the Venetian state has had little problem accommodating the Moor, and so Othello’s exclusion from that society will have to be carefully orchestrated. In a first attempt at such a move, Iago indeed goes straight for the total dehumanization of Othello via the animalistic, color-based rhetoric of perennial critical interest: Othello is the “old black ram,” one half of “the beast with two backs,” and “the Barbary horse” (1.1.87, 115, 110).<sup>60</sup> But with whom does Iago’s derogatory language actually gain any traction? Not with the Duke, the representative of Venetian authority, or with the other senators and gentlemen under his command. Although Othello’s difference cannot be ignored, as far as the Duke and his subordinates are concerned, the failure of Iago’s imagery suggests that racial difference is not enough in itself to justify exclusion from a Chris-

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<sup>59</sup> Bartels, *Speaking of the Moor*, 159.

<sup>60</sup> Othello’s construction as an outsider by virtue of race-as-color has become such a critical commonplace that it is impossible to fully document here. See, however, Michael Neill’s introduction to *Othello* in which he gives a helpful overview of the criticism that discusses race in the play. Michael Neill, “Introduction,” in *Othello*, ed. Michael Neill (New York: Oxford UP, 2006): esp. 113-130.

tian state. Iago does gain some traction with Brabantio. However, Brabantio latches less onto Iago's animalistic, color-coding of difference than onto the rhetoric of Othello's foreignness. Othello is not of their "nation," but "nation" is a particularly slippery signifier (1.2.68). Does Brabantio mean that Othello is not a Venetian native? Othello is not the only non-Venetian here (Michael Cassio is Florentine). Is nation used to signify a religious and/or ethnic community? This may be getting closer to the mark. Yet Othello is not of a different religion. In this case, a shared religious identity still must override non-theological forms of difference in the determination of official inclusion or exclusion from Venetian civic life.<sup>61</sup> Iago slowly decides that perhaps the way to enact his revenge upon the Moor, "[t]o get his place," will be to slowly turn Othello against his wife, preying upon the Moor's "free and open nature / That thinks men honest that but seem to be so"—in other words, Iago suspects that the very "virtue" that the Duke praises in the Moor can become the seed of his undoing, even if the way in which Iago's machinations will be structured has yet to be revealed (1.3.392, 398-399, 290).

If the degree of early modern hatred and fear of the Islamic powers of North Africa and the Levant has had a tendency to be vastly overstated in literary criticism, running the risk of overlooking more ambiguous, even highly amicable relations, so too must caution be used when affirming the other extreme so as not to over accentuate moments of positive encounter between Englishmen and their Muslim neighbors.<sup>62</sup> The year 1603 was an important turning point in the

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<sup>61</sup> Britton, *Becoming Christian*, 113.

<sup>62</sup> Linda McJannet attempts to keep clear of the pitfall of exaggerating the sense of Western "anxiety" or "panic" regarding Islam, the Ottomans, or the Moorish kingdoms through her use of the term "pragmatic ambivalence" to describe the attitude of the English, as opposed to a supposed "ideological consistency." Linda McJannet, *The Sultan Speaks: Dialogue in English Plays and Histories about the Ottoman Turks* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006): 6. McJannet herself adapts this idea from Robert Boerth, "The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World on the State of Marlowe and Shakespeare" in *Journal of Theatre and Drama* 2(1996): 35-58, esp. 39. See also Toenjes, *English Reformation*, 12.

history of Anglo-Islamic relations: it marked the death of both Elizabeth I and al-Mansur, bringing about not only an end to their joint military designs but also an important change in the mercantile dealings between the two countries. Upon his ascension to the English throne, James I immediately expressed his dislike for this English affiliation with “the Turks” and made the dividing line between the two peoples explicitly about religion: at the beginning of his reign, James “denied absolutely” to sign commercial agreements with the Ottomans, “saying that for merchant’s causes he would not do things unfitting a Christian prince,” and so later that same year the Ottomans began attacking English shipping in Alexandria.<sup>63</sup> While the Levant Company had allowed Elizabeth’s subjects to come into close contact with the Ottomans and other Muslims on a peaceful basis, it was now becoming a liability, drastically increasing the possibility of hostilities and leading to the rising frequency of English capture, enslavement, and loss of life on a scale that greatly disturbed contemporaries.<sup>64</sup> However, despite his personal animosity toward Islam, James discovered that it was not in his financial or political interest to hinder the very profitable trade between England and the Near East that was controlled by the Levant Company—in December 1605 James reissued the charter for its continuation despite the dangers that the king’s attitude had begun to generate.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Vitkus, *Turning Turk*, 32.

<sup>64</sup> Toenjes, *English Reformation*, 10. For the rise of Barbary piracy and its implications for English traders, see also Daniel J. Vitkus, “Trafficking with the Turk: English Travelers in the Ottoman Empire during the Early Seventeenth Century,” in *Travel Knowledge: European “Discoveries in the Early Modern Period*, ed. Ivo Kamps and Jyotsna G. Singh (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001): 35-52; Vitkus, “Introduction,” esp. 3-6; Nabil Matar, “Introduction: England and Mediterranean Captivity, 1577-1704” in *Piracy, Slavery, and Redemption: Barbary Captivity Narratives from Early Modern England*, ed. Daniel J. Vitkus (New York: Columbia UP, 2001): 1-40; Mather, *Pashas*, esp. 28-43.

<sup>65</sup> Vitkus, *Turning Turk*, 32.

Perhaps most indicative of these cooling Anglo-Islamic relations is the fact that the early days of the Jacobean period also saw the first (albeit the only, or at least the only extant) call for the colonization of a Muslim territory—a scheme not encountered in the England of Elizabeth I, who much preferred entertaining fantasies of a joint Anglo-Moroccan invasion of Spain.<sup>66</sup> In April of 1603, Henry Roberts, the English representative in Morocco, urged the new King James to undertake a war with the North African state in order to seize hold of Morocco’s extensive trade with Central Africa. At the same time, Roberts imagined the Muslim population of Morocco as one *eagerly awaiting* Christianization. Such rhetoric would shortly become commonplace in English writing about the American Indians, but it was essentially unheard of in reference to the peoples of the Islamic Near East and North Africa (like the rest of Europe, England was, however, witness to a long tradition of holy war rhetoric against Muslims, and calls for the proselytization of Muslims were not uncommon).<sup>67</sup> In the missive, Roberts further ponders “how godly and christianlike yt weare” to draw the Moroccans “from Mahomet to the knowledge of Christ” and urges the king to pursue the project in order to “wynne many thowsand soules to God.”<sup>68</sup> King James, of course, did not attack Morocco—and at no point did he ever respond with royal policy toward such a call for military and colonial efforts in North Africa—but cementing his virtual reversal of Elizabethan foreign policy, the English king signed a new treaty with Spain in 1604.

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<sup>66</sup> Matar, *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen*, 10.

<sup>67</sup> De Castries, *Les Sources Inédités*, 2:222 cited in Matar, *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen*, 10. Toenjes, *English Reformation*, 302.

<sup>68</sup> De Castries, *Les Sources Inédités*, 2:223 cited in D’Amico, *The Moor*, 38.

In 1604 the long Anglo-Spanish War (1585-1604) that so preoccupied the reign of Elizabeth I came to an end and, with it, not only the dream of a continued alliance between England and Morocco, but any possibility of peace with the Ottoman Empire as well. Spain and England agreed to a united resistance to “the Turk,” referring not only to the Ottomans but to all Islamic powers of the Mediterranean.<sup>69</sup> One of the most important supposed benefits of such a peace would be to enable a common crusade against an Islamic world that was pushing back the borders of Christendom (which, for James, needed to be a pan-Christian unity of Protestant *and* Roman Catholic states).<sup>70</sup> In one fell swoop, the king—who as early as 1589 had begun to promote religious reconciliation among Christian nations and express hostility toward the Ottoman sultanate, in particular—reversed his predecessor’s amicable policy toward the Turks and essentially confirmed his conflict with the powers of the Islamic lands as a religious one.<sup>71</sup> Following the ascension of James I to the throne in 1603, it grew increasingly difficult to disentangle English realpolitik from the ideological discourse of religious war with Islam—even if war between James’ England and the Islamic powers of North Africa and the Levant never quite moved to the battlefield.

England’s relationship with the Islamic world across the Elizabethan period and into the early years of James’ rule could be described as nothing short of fluid. However, our acknowledgment of the variability of English responses toward the Muslim “other” should not end simply with an awareness of abrupt shifts in international politics. At the same time that Elizabeth’s

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<sup>69</sup> Robert Watson and William Thomson, *The History of the Reign of Philip the Third, King of Spain* (London: James Eastburn & Co, 1812): 2.

<sup>70</sup> Vitkus, *Turning Turk*, 203 n.6. For more on the foreign policy of James I, see Chapters 2 and 3 of this dissertation, as well as W.B. Patterson, *King James VI and I and the Reunion of Christendom* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1997).

<sup>71</sup> Matar, *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen*, 143.

amicable diplomatic and commercial interactions with Morocco and the Ottomans—relationships that brought more non-Christians to England than was previously assumed—were essentially being reversed by the new anti-Islamic king, Englishmen found themselves confronted by the implicit question of the Turks and Moors who found themselves in England. What was the English response to be? In a polity encompassing a unity of Church and state, could a long-term Islamic presence be acceptable, or even sustainable? Especially when it had been deemed that other non-Christian groups, such as the Jews, were not? In any case, to remain outside the Church of England would mean exclusion from formal civic participation in the life of the commonwealth. If there was to be any hope for making brothers out of others in the case of England's resident Muslim populations, it would have to be through the Church's ceremonies of initiation. Indeed, it was the Church of England's promulgation of the baptismal sacrament that offered a viable method for crossing religious, social, and political boundaries into the life of the English community.

**“th'affairs of state”: Ceremonies and the Construction of the English Commonwealth**

The sacramental life of the Church proves instrumental to the ways in which Shakespeare tests the incorporation of the religiously and physically “othered” Moor into the life of a Christian polity. However, the inseparability of religious, political, and social bodies demonstrated in *Othello* is not insular to the play (or even to early modernity), but in fact mirrors the conceptualization of the relationship between the individual and different kinds of communal bodies undertaken by both English state and Church since the medieval period. For example, pre-modern and early modern permutations of analogies between the living body and political and religious struc-



tures came to designate the state as the “body politic” and the Church as the “body of Christ.”<sup>72</sup>

Even before this, however, the *corpus mysticum* or “mystical body” was one of the earliest figures for a specific ideal of Christian community that “conveys the notion that all the faithful are incorporated into a single body of Christ by participation in the sacraments,” specifically.<sup>73</sup>

Prior to the early modern era and its attendant religio-political upheavals ushered in by the Protestant Reformation, medieval England operated with what David Coleman calls a “sacramental sociology,” an ideological construct which imagines ritual as a perfect means of regulating individual and communal lives.<sup>74</sup> Moreover, says Coleman, the sacraments of the pre-Reformation Church could even be understood on the anthropological level as rites of passage: baptism welcomed the Christian into the community, confirmation represented a further level of initiation, and extreme unction prepared the individual for the journey to the afterlife. The remaining sacraments worked to maintain the structure of society: matrimony supported the generation of new Christians, holy orders reinforced the hierarchy of the Christian community, and the Eucharist served as a powerful foil to the hierarchisation of holy orders, offering “the promise of a radical leveling of society in line with the ideology of theoretical Christianity and an opportuni-

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<sup>72</sup> Jennifer R. Rust, *The Body in Mystery: The Political Theology of the Corpus Mysticum in the Literature of Reformation England* (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 2014): 21. For earlier (and slightly different) readings of the *corpus mysticum* and its intersection with English politics as relevant to Rust’s discussion, see also Carl Schmidt, *Roman Catholicism and Political Form*, trans. G.L. Ulmen (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1996); Ernst Kantorowicz, *The King’s Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1997); Henri de Lubac, *Corpus Mysticum: The Eucharist and the Church in the Middle Ages*, trans. Gemma Simmonds, with Richard Price and Christopher Stephens, ed. Laurence Paul Hemming and Susan Frank Parsons (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007).

<sup>73</sup> Rust, *Body in Mystery*, xi.

<sup>74</sup> David Coleman, *Drama and the Sacraments in Sixteenth-Century England: Indelible Characters* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007): 8.

ty for all subjects to assert a relationship with the divine.”<sup>75</sup> If medieval constructions of community were created through the explicit channeling of sacramentality, then any dramatic presentations of a sacramentally-structured community in early modernity needs to be explored within a context of the wider anxieties about the scope and efficacy of sacramentality that were now being debated in the era of Reformations, especially since these changes and the anxiety they had the potential to produce were undoubtedly a central feature of the cultural landscape of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

England’s official break with the Roman Church in 1534 heralded what would eventually amount to a continued renegotiation of English understandings of the meaning and efficacy of the traditional sacramental system. However, Rust reminds us that this entailed neither an outright, wholesale rejection of that traditional system nor the total take-over of English religion by English politics. As the social and sacramental *corpus mysticum* of the medieval church gradually began to slide into the “more highly politicized body” of the early modern commonwealth, the English *corpus mysticum* ultimately *resisted* “complete colonization by the emergent absolutist politics of early modern England.”<sup>76</sup> The powers of the early modern English Church and state were understood to be coordinate, and this overlap in English spheres of authority influenced everyone: in post-Reformation England, “there is not any man of the Church of England but the same man is also a member of the commonwealth, nor any man a member of the commonwealth which is not also of the Church of England [...] no person appertaining to the one can be denied

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<sup>75</sup> Coleman, *Drama and the Sacraments*, 8.

<sup>76</sup> Rust, *Body in Mystery*, 18, xi.

to be also of the other.”<sup>77</sup> These are not independent but interdependent societies ruled by one head, the Christian ruler of the realm: they may also be understood as two aspects of one society, “being termed a Commonweal as it liveth under whatsoever Form of secular Law and Regiment, a Church as it liveth under the spiritual Law of Christ.”<sup>78</sup>

Because of the inseparability of the political and religious spheres in early modern England, where conflict existed in the Reformation- and post-Reformation English church, this conflict was often fueled by differences in the ways in which the individual was imagined to exist in relationship to his community and how the religio-political dynamics of that community should be structured. The Church of England was, by necessity, an “improvisational experiment in sacred community,” one endeavoring to fashion a visible mystical body out of a series of attempts “to evolve new forms of ‘holy neighborliness’” after a radical cultural upheaval.<sup>79</sup> And so, to a large extent, the debates and controversies over the sacraments in early modern England, both during the sixteenth century and into the seventeenth century, can be understood as part of an extraordinarily complex process whereby questions about the relationship between the individual and the larger community were explored.

As early as 1552, the Second Edwardine Act of Uniformity was able to claim that “due using of the sacraments” (as promulgated by the Edwardian Church) was one of the ways by which “the mercy, favour, and blessing of almighty God is [...] readily and plenteously poured

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<sup>77</sup> Richard Hooker, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity: An Abridged Edition*, ed. A.S. McGrade and Brian Vickers (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1975): 8.1.2.

<sup>78</sup> Hooker, *Laws*, 8.1.2.

<sup>79</sup> Deborah Shuger, “Society Supernatural” in *Religion and Culture in Renaissance England*, ed. Claire McEachern and Debora Shuger (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997): 134.

[upon] this realm.”<sup>80</sup> Under Edward VI, the sacraments became a means by which the realm, rather than merely the individual, could achieve a state of grace. Edwardian sacramentality “privileged the commonwealth over the individual, rhetorically drawing together the mass of individuals into a unified’ whole”—sacramentality was part of the nation-building strategies of the Edwardian regime, and it provided an early indication of one of the ways by which sacramental ideologies were “employed at various points throughout the century to configure the relationship between the individual and society.”<sup>81</sup> Later, the Act of Uniformity of 1559 proclaimed the Church of England under Elizabeth I to be “the sole conduit of English Christianity and enjoined all living within the Crown’s dominions to abide by the ‘public’ worship of the Church.”<sup>82</sup> Thus, in Book V of *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (1597), Richard Hooker argues for the indispensability of the sacraments as a means to shape and reform the outward life of citizens under the Elizabethan settlement, which placed a high premium on the establishment and maintenance of civic coherence through outward religious conformity. According to Hooker, “Inasmuch as sacraments are actions religious and mystical [...] and what every man’s private mind is we cannot know, so neither are we bound to examine, therefore always in these cases the known intent of the Church generally doth suffice, and where the contrary is not manifest, we may presume that he which outwardly doth the work, hath inwardly the purpose of the Church of God.”<sup>83</sup> In one

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<sup>80</sup> Second Edwardine Act of Uniformity as quoted in Coleman, *Sacraments*, 62.

<sup>81</sup> Coleman, *Sacraments*, 63.

<sup>82</sup> Charles W. A. Prior, *Defining the Jacobean Church: The Politics of Religious Controversy, 1603-1625* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005): 24.

<sup>83</sup> Richard Hooker, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity, Book V. The Works of that Learned and Judicious Divine, Mr. Richard Hooker: With an Account of His Life and Death by Isaac Walton*, Vol. II, Ed. John Keble, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1865): 261. Books 1-4 of the *Laws* were published in c.1593-1594 and Book 5 in 1597. Hooker

sense, claims Hooker, because one cannot know another man's mind and heart for certain, the participation in ritual as a member of the communal body serves as the only reliable way to demonstrate one's inner quality.<sup>84</sup> In a second and related sense, ceremony does not only reflect a godly community, it helps to foster such community. In the *Laws*, ritual acts do not merely declare community, but actually create it.

Hooker's *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* casts a dense shadow over conformist texts into the seventeenth century, certainly, but also over all conversations centered on the interconnectedness of religious ceremony and civic bodies well after its composition. Hence William Wilkes could comment in his 1605 treatise *Obedience, or ecclesiastical union* that ceremonies "are the Sinewes by which religion and her rites are made of neere neighbours," and that "distance of Ceremonies will occasion through continuing variation of minds, continual hatred, the mother of sedition."<sup>85</sup> For Wilkes, much like Hooker, the seamless communal enactment of ceremony was necessary for the coherence of the civic body under James I as well, and non-conformity, by contrast, bore the marks of disruption, dissention, and even factionalism. Jacobean conformists, like their Elizabethan counterparts, assumed that a stable polity was defined by something like a consensus or identity of religious interest—individualism and non-conformity "did not come within

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died in 1600, and the remaining three books were not published until the seventeenth century: Books 6 and 8 in 1648 and Book 7 in 1661.

<sup>84</sup> Hooker is essentially "dialing back" more radical Reformed thinking on a much larger conversation during the era of Reformations—the debate over the value of visible signs. In England, earlier Protestant reformers like William Tyndale were openly hostile to the idea that one's faith could be made visible (for example, in visible, sacramental acts like confession and penance). Hooker tempers these arguments.

<sup>85</sup> William Wilkes, *Obedience or ecclesiastical vnion. Treatised by William Wilkes Doctor in Theologie, and one of his Maiesties chaplains in ordinarie* (London: 1605) cited in Prior, *Jacobean Church*, 33 (emphasis mine).

their intellectual purview, nor did any notion of a separation of religious and political authority.”<sup>86</sup>

This early modern English discourse, which so closely connects the personal and the religio-political body in much the same way the medieval English imagined the *corpus mysticum* as a joining of the collective body of the people via participation in Christ’s body through the sacraments, becomes particularly important when entertaining questions about the flexibility and incorporative powers of the English commonwealth. The centrality of baptism and the baptismal rite in the Church of England’s evolving theology and practice across the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries should be recognized in terms of England’s complicated, often contradictory, relationship with resident non-Christians because any viable method of crossing religious, social, and political boundaries to be initiated into the life of the English community would need to be enacted through the sacraments of the Church of England.

So while the rites of Christian initiation have often been interpreted according to what many in anthropological studies disciplines have identified as rites of passage, as previously mentioned, a key distinction should be made. As crucial as the insights of anthropology and ritual studies can be for understanding the particular structure or shape of the rites of Christian initiation, rites of passage, as understood by anthropologists, are about initiating people (who already belong to the community in some way) into a new level of membership or status within that same community. Christian baptism as a rite of initiation, on the other hand, is fundamentally about conversion.<sup>87</sup> “The anthropological analogy with the rites of passage, therefore, is only

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<sup>86</sup> Prior, *Jacobean Church*, 33.

<sup>87</sup> Maxwell E. Johnson, *The Rites of Christian Initiation: Their Evolution and Interpretation* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1990): xv. See also Arnold Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, trans. Monika B. Vizedom and Gabri-

partially true in the case of the Christian rites. The ritual process may be similar, but the contents, goal, and interpretation of that process are not necessarily the same.”<sup>88</sup> Conversion is about entering a new community to which one did not belong before, not even by birth. Moreover, it is essentially impossible to speak of conversion to Christianity without baptism and *vice versa*.

**“all seals and symbols of redeemed sin”: Rendering Baptismal Initiation Visible**

From the earliest days of the church, it was the rites called either *baptisma* (“baptism,” “immersion,” or “dipping”) or *loutron* (“bath” or “washing”) that came almost immediately to serve as the means of initiation into the early Christian community.<sup>89</sup> Whatever the particular gestures of washing employed in the Christian initiation of new converts to the earliest communities may have been, it is clear from the New Testament that the meaning of the chosen ritual actions were understood in a handful of important and interconnected ways: for example, as participation in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, as forgiveness of sins and reception of the gift of the Holy Spirit, and as putting off the “old nature” and “putting on the new” (that is, “being clothed in the righteousness of Christ”). More importantly, though, was the understanding that the convert was being “sealed” by the Holy Spirit.<sup>90</sup> In other words, via immersion in water, converts received a spiritual seal, “the inward stamp of God’s possession, the sign and mark that

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elle L. Caffee (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960) and Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co., 1969).

<sup>88</sup> Johnson, *Christian Initiation*, xvii.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>90</sup> S. Anita Stauffer, *On Baptismal Fonts: Ancient and Modern* (Cambridge: Grove Books, 1994): esp. 9-10. Johnson, *Christian Initiation*, 30.

they are His people. This stamp signified the presence and activity of the indwelling Spirit of God.”<sup>91</sup>

But while the theologians of the age of the Fathers tended to think of the seal imprinted upon the believer as the impress or stamp of the image of Christ set upon the convert’s soul by the agency of the indwelling of the Spirit of God effected by baptism in water, to the great mass of ordinary Christians, however, this concept was too abstract to be properly understood: “[t]he common believer looked for some plain token that he was really sealed for a day of redemption, [...] marked with a sign of his membership of God’s people.”<sup>92</sup> The Israelite bore the outward sign of his membership of the chosen people by the Covenant seal of circumcision, a token by which God recognized and acknowledged His people while, at the same time, it functioned as a visible sign whereby the Israelites might know one another. The new Christian expected to receive a similarly physical sign, a visible symbol. Water baptism itself would hardly meet that need because the symbolism of washing afforded no obvious connection with the idea of God’s ownership.<sup>93</sup>

In order to better describe the operation of the inward sealing of the convert, the early Church developed a host of other images to serve as baptismal metaphors, all of which retain a connection to the concept of the “seal.” For example, the spiritual “seal” shares connotations with the function of a signet ring, the design or inscription which it bears, the stamp that it makes upon wax, and hence a seal which is an authentication, guarantee, or proof. The seal is a safe-

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<sup>91</sup> G.W.H. Lampe, *The Seal of the Spirit: A Study in the Doctrine of Baptism and Confirmation in the New Testament and the Fathers* (London: SPCK, 1951): 6.

<sup>92</sup> Lampe, *Seal of the Spirit*, 261.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 261.



guard or protection against interference. The seal signifies a token of agreement or affirmation, but also a mark of ownership in the sense of stamping or branding.<sup>94</sup> Indeed, there is no single use of the term “seal” even within the relatively limited field of the doctrine of baptism. In every case, though, these meanings are applied metaphorically to describe a purely spiritual activity, the profound idea of the “stamping” of the soul of the believer, effected by the rite of the convert’s baptism in water. One sense of “sealing” must be examined in greater detail, however, because it is out of that explanatory metaphor that the signation of the newly baptized would develop, the part of the baptismal rite that would so preoccupy the theologians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

It is via an inspection of the “sealing” of soldiers that we move closer to recovering the development of a physical, visible “sealing” in connection with the pre- and post-baptismal rites that would accompany the activity of the baptismal washing. In the ancient world, the imperial practice of tattooing soldiers impressed upon the man a sign of his service, a mark of recognition, and a precaution against desertion. From this picture of the soldier stamped with the emperor’s mark upon his hand, brow, or neck, “it is no great distance to the idea of the ‘sealing’ of a religious devotee with the sign or emblem of the god whom he serves.”<sup>95</sup> The conception of the believer as bound, like a soldier or a slave, in loyalty, service, and devotion to his god is even a striking feature of the pagan mystery cults of the ancient Middle East, in which setting a mark upon the body as a sign of consecration to a deity was common, and many early Christian writers keenly redeployed for the purposes of the Church the interlocking conceptions of soldier and devotee found in Hellenistic culture. Indeed, Cyprian derived from the marking of soldiers the

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 12.

metaphor of the Christian *militia*. It is that very idea of the physical marking of the soldier that would come to play an important role in the history of baptism and of the conception of the seal by which a convert is enrolled and “signed on” under the standard of Christ.<sup>96</sup>

The need for an understandable sign by which God’s baptismal activity within His people (His inward activity marking them as His own) could be made sensible exercised a profound influence upon the development of the ritual sealing of the convert with the sign of the cross (usually accompanied by anointing with chrism, or oil).<sup>97</sup> Now, like the tattoo received by the soldier marking him for service, the new convert, too, could receive a physical, visible (albeit not permanently) signation by which to declare his service of the Lord and the change in his own identity. The sign of the cross became a symbol of the refashioning of the believer after Christ’s image through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit effected by the baptismal water and it signified the essential status and character of the new Christian, especially as a token by which the elect were to be recognized at the Last Judgment—like the mark of the soldier from which it takes its origin, the one who bears the seal of the cross is marked for his due reward once his service is completed.<sup>98</sup> To compromise the mark of his service to Christ would compromise the seal by which Christ will recognize and claim His elect as His own. John Chrysostom underlines this sense of the stakes accompanying baptismal signation: just as the tattoo-mark distinguishes the soldier, signifying the obligation of his calling, he warns, “If you desert Christ’s service, you will be detected as a deserter by all men; for the Jews had circumcision as a seal, but we have the earnest

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., xxvi.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 269-271.

of the Spirit.”<sup>99</sup> For Chrysostom, just as a seal is made upon soldiers, so too is the sign of the Spirit visibly impressed upon the faithful.

Signation rendered visible one aspect of what had been sacramentally effected in baptism, and it translated into dramatic form the New Testament teaching that in baptism the believer is made a member of the society of God. On the purely human level, baptismal initiation is an entrance into the visible and earthly community of the Church, with all the privileges and responsibilities that entails. But baptism is also a sign of entry into the people of God in a spiritual sense: as John Knox would later put it, baptism is “the syne of our entrance into the household of God our Father.”<sup>100</sup> What the whole ritual process—broadly outlined as apostolic proclamation, conversion, baptism in water, and accompanying pre- and post-baptismal rites—resulted in was entrance into the life of both a human *and* a spiritual community, two inseparable spheres. It is those pre- and post-baptismal rites that were the visible articulation of such a “full and robust engagement in the Church itself” and its “new ethic and way of life.”<sup>101</sup>

Signation formed part of the regular ceremony of initiation from the Patristic Age onwards until it was discarded by many of the Reformed Churches in the sixteenth century. However, it is necessary to remember that the Church of England was in many ways a deeply conservative institution, and its earliest Protestant influences reflect this general trend toward the traditional. In spite of Luther’s severe criticisms of the medieval sacramental system in general,

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<sup>99</sup> John Chrysostom, “Homily 3.7” quoted in Lampe, *Seal of the Spirit*, 239.

<sup>100</sup> John Knox quoted in Bromiley, *Anglican Reformers*, 17.

<sup>101</sup> Aidan Kavanagh, *The Shape of Baptism: The Rite of Christian Initiation* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1978): 20-23.

he was not very critical of the late medieval baptismal rite that he had known and used. Even in the *Babylonian Captivity of the Church* (1520), Luther praises the baptismal sacrament:

Blessed be God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to the riches of his mercy has preserved in his Church this sacrament at least, untouched and untainted by the ordinances of men, and has made it free to all nations and classes of mankind, and has not permitted it to be oppressed by the filthy and godless monsters of greed and superstition.<sup>102</sup>

In fact, Luther's baptismal rite, his *Taufbüchlein* ("little baptism book") of 1523, though composed entirely in German, was but a minor simplification of the Latin ritual, little more than a translation of the *Latin Magdeburg Rite* of 1497. Luther *retained* the customary pre-baptismal ceremonies of exsufflation, the giving of salt, exorcisms, anointing and signing with the cross, the *effeta* with the use of spittle, the three-fold renunciations of Satan, and the profession of faith. Similarly, baptism with the Trinitarian formula, the post-baptismal anointing, the giving of the white garment, and the presentation of the lighted candle were all retained as well. Luther did, however, insert a prayer of his own composition called the *Sindflutgebet*, or "flood prayer." While based on traditional baptismal imagery, it afforded Luther a chance to foreground his theology of justification, "for baptism [...] signifies that the old man and the sinful birth of flesh and blood are to be wholly drowned by the grace of God."<sup>103</sup> While Luther's understanding of the efficacy of the sacraments had evolved from the traditional Roman Catholic position (an idea to which we will return more fully later), it was because baptism had to be "a true and complete sign of the thing it signifies" that those signs mattered so very much.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Martin Luther, *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church* in *Luther's Works*, ed. and trans. Helmut T. Lehmann and Abdel R. Wentz (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1959): 36.18.

<sup>103</sup> Martin Luther, *The Holy and Blessed Sacrament of Baptism* in *Luther's Works*, ed. and trans. Helmut T. Lehmann and Abdel R. Wentz (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1959): 35.29.

<sup>104</sup> Martin Luther, *The Order of Baptism* (1523) trans. and cited in Johnson, *Christian Initiation*, 242.

The first edition of the English *Book of Common Prayer* (1549), composed by Thomas Cranmer during the reign of Edward VI, was itself very conservative; influenced by Lutheran theology, it borrowed heavily from Luther's *Taufbüchlein*.<sup>105</sup> Much like Luther based his order of baptism on the *Latin Magdeburg Rite*, Cranmer based his on the *Sarum Rite*, the traditional usage of Canterbury. Also like Luther, Cranmer retained the customary pre-baptismal rites including the signing of the cross with oil on the forehead and breast, but he significantly expanded the formula for the rite. While the formula for the anointing under the *Sarum Rite* simply read: "N., I also anoint thee [upon the breast] with the oil of salvation, [between the shoulders], in Christ Jesus our Lord that thou mayest have eternal life and live forever and ever. Amen," Cranmer's version explicitly highlights the gesture's ancient roots in the concept of the Christian *militia* and reminds us of the battle and conflict imagery associated with anointing since the earliest days of the Church: "N., receive the sign of the holy cross, both in thy forehead, and in thy breast, in token that thou shalt not be ashamed to confess thy faith in Christ crucified and go manfully to fight under his banner against sin, the world, and the devil, and to continue his faithful soldier and servant unto thy life's end. Amen." The expansion of the formula for signation and anointing not only highlights the importance and centrality of this aspect of the rite in the developing ceremonial life of the Anglican establishment, its highly militaristic imagery underscores the interconnection between the society supernatural joined by the Christian at his conversion and reminds the initiate of his more literal social responsibilities attendant upon his membership in a Christian commonwealth.

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<sup>105</sup> Johnson, *Christian Initiation*, 258, 241; Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Shaping of the Reformed Baptismal Rite in the Sixteenth Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992): 37.

Emma Smith points out that within Shakespeare's dramatic fiction, no one questions how Othello came to be ensconced in the communal life of Venice, arguing that his "acceptance" goes "without explanation."<sup>106</sup> Emily C. Bartels concurs that "[t]he transition we might otherwise suppose to be a crucial touchstone, the Moor's inauguration as a subject of Venice, does not emerge between these seamlessly conjoined pasts [Othello's re-telling of his "travailous history"] and appears therefore significantly insignificant to his self-defense and definition."<sup>107</sup> Smith is certainly correct in her assertion that no one within the frame of the play's action questions how Othello came to be in Venice, but "the Moor's inauguration as a subject of Venice" does not go entirely without explanation; indeed, the story is one with which the characters themselves are already familiar. In 1.3 the audience is made privy not only to the explanation of how Othello won the love of Desdemona, but also to the tale of how a Moor could win "[t]he trust" of the Duke "for the state affairs," could be "loved" by Desdemona's father, and could even be "oft invited" into the senator's home (1.3.119, 73, 129). Here, when he is compelled to defend himself against Brabantio's accusation of the use of "witchcraft" in the wooing of his daughter, Othello essentially reminds his Venetian listeners that the old senator is plenty familiar with the conditions upon which his "inauguration as a subject of Venice" rested:

Her father loved me, oft invited me,  
 Still questioned me the story of my life  
 From year to year—the battles, sieges, fortunes  
 That I have passed.  
 I ran it through, even from my boyish days  
 To th'very moment that he bade me tell it  
 Wherein I spake of most disastrous chances,  
 Of moving accidents by flood and field [...]  
 Of being taken by the insolent foe

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<sup>106</sup> Emma Smith, *William Shakespeare Othello* (Hordon: Northcote House Publishers, 2004): 41.

<sup>107</sup> Bartels, *Speaking of the Moor*, 170.

And sold to slavery; of my redemption thence  
 And portance in my travailous history. (1.3.129-136, 138-140)

E.A.J. Honigmann notes that “the play prompts us to speculate about [Othello’s] mysterious past” and allows that “the hero’s past plays an integral part in the present”: to that end, he asks, “Is there a connection between his Christianity, his choosing to serve Venice, and his marriage to a white woman?”<sup>108</sup> Honigmann himself posits no answer to this question. However, I argue that not only is there a connection between Othello’s Christianity, his choosing to serve Venice, and his marriage to Desdemona, what Othello is relaying in 1.3 is the precondition for all three: Othello’s “travailous history” is the “un-metaphored” rendering of his baptismal conversion.

Without precluding the degree to which Othello’s narrative re-telling of his “travailous history” is part of his continued self-fashioning after his initial reception into Venetian civic life, the events of that history themselves offer insight into the probable *method* of his reception. In 1.3, Shakespeare frames the Moor’s transition into the life of the Christian polity via a dramatic literalization of sacramentally efficacious baptism and its traditional symbols. Since we have already traced the historic use of both baptism by water and its most important supplementary rite (that of the signing with the cross) up to the early years of the Protestant Reformation in England, we should notice that Shakespeare is careful to literalize each of the baptismal rite’s significant metaphorical connotations. At Desdemona’s “prayer of earnest heart,” the Moor “all [his] pilgrimage dilate[s]: alongside such obviously sensational encounters with “cannibals that each other eat” and “[t]he Anthropophagi, [...] men whose heads / Do grow beneath their shoulders,” the Moor strikingly undergoes “moving accidents by flood” (baptism via submersion in water) and is “sold to slavery” before his “redemption thence” and the assumption of his post in the

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<sup>108</sup> E.A.J. Honigmann, “Introduction,” in *Othello*, ed. E.A.J. Honigmann (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2001): 23.

Christian military (signation) (1.3.153-154, 144-146). Just as great a cause for marvel as Othello's run-in with the monsters at the edge of the map is the conversion of a Moor. "[P]assing strange" as the events of Othello's history appear, when read within the context of the Church's historical use of symbol to render the work of baptism not only comprehensible but visible, their dramatic counterparts here similarly work to enact Othello's extraordinary entry into the life of the Venetian polity via his Christian military service and allow his marriage to Desdemona who "loved [him] for the dangers [he] had passed" (1.3.161, 168). Understood as part of the Church of England's heritage of both medieval Christianity and its conservative early borrowings from Continental Protestantism, the element of the astonishing in Othello's tale—far from merely rendering his tale utterly dubious—should be read as operating within the imaginative space of the miraculous, the purview of the efficacious sacrament, and the stuff of ritual not yet stripped of its power to astonish.

Moreover, considering Othello's crossing into Venetian civic life as structured around an efficacious baptism might also offer a means of further contextualizing Iago's ire over the Moor's disruption of what he perceives as the proper Venetian social order. When the ensign is passed over for promotion in favor of young Michael Cassio, Iago is revealed to be a man fundamentally "possessed by comparison," to borrow Michael Neill's phrase, and nursing a "wounded sense of superiority" in regards to both Othello and Cassio. For Iago, "nothing (and no one) has a value in and of itself but only as a measure or object of comparison."<sup>109</sup> However, all of the methods of interpersonal taxonomy that Iago is willing to invoke in the pursuit of righting the perceived wrong done to him—seniority, merit, color, nationality, even an "overriding faith

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<sup>109</sup> Michael Neill, *Putting History to the Question: Power, Politics, and Society in English Renaissance Drama* (New York: Columbia UP, 2000): 214.



in money”—can only ever be held in tension with the social vision posited by a sacramentally-constructed society.<sup>110</sup> This is not to say that social hierarchy is disregarded in Christian Venice (it certainly is not). However, because baptism is a sacrament of social leveling, much like the Eucharist, valid distinctions made about Othello’s worth that actually come from a place of authority (the Duke) are focused on Othello’s “portance,” namely his virtue—a quality Iago himself has decidedly eschewed (“Virtue? A fig!”)—rather than social standing, status as a resident foreigner, or color (1.1.320).<sup>111</sup> The Duke, Cassio, and Montano press this emphasis upon the tension between inner quality and outer self still further in their excessive praise of Othello’s spotless character: Othello is “brave Othello” whose “virtue” makes him “far more fair than black” (here, the play’s interest in color rhetoric assumes a moral valence), making no mention of a “polluting” bodily otherness (2.1.38, 1.3.291). Desdemona, for her part, maintains that she “saw Othello’s visage in his mind,” echoing the Duke’s emphasis on the quality of Othello’s interiority (1.3.253-255). Iago’s framework for comparison is thus fundamentally different from the framework that structures Othello’s reception into his adopted society—both in the society of God and in the society of Christian Venice.

So while Jack D’Amico argues that Othello “can be invited in[to the Venetian family] because he has become civilized, a Christian of valiant parts who speaks the city’s language,” Othello is invited in because he has become a Christian and now conducts himself in accordance

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<sup>110</sup> Neill, *History to the Question*, 214.

<sup>111</sup> Even with all the baggage sacramental baptism had picked up over its long history, it was still available to all—no one could be denied baptism because of social class, education, legitimacy of one’s birth, or the moral standing of one’s parents. Moreover, baptism retained an essential connection to the New Testament precept that “There is neither Jew nor Grecian: there is neither bond nor free: there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.” Old, *Reformed Baptismal Rite*, 30-31; see also Galatians 3:28.

with the ideal of Christian virtue appropriate to his baptismal identity.<sup>112</sup> If Iago's severing of the Moor from his place in Venetian society and those who "approve the Moor" is to be successful, Iago will not only have to disrupt the authoritative taxonomy of value in Venice—perverting Othello's "free and open nature" into paranoid gullibility—it will have to take into account the means of Othello's previous inclusion into Christian society to begin with, a conversion enacted via an efficacious baptism and the Church's traditional explanatory symbols (2.1.44, 1.3.398).

### **"foul and violent tempest": Debating the Baptismal Signs**

By about the same time that Cranmer was working on the first edition of the *Book of Common Prayer* in England, signation and anointing were beginning to disappear from reformed baptismal rites on the Continent. Indeed, the compelling revision of the baptismal signation and anointing that Cranmer had introduced in England with the first edition of the *Prayer Book* would not continue beyond the 1549 rite because Cranmer's second edition of the *Book* (1552) was heavily influenced by Martin Bucer, disciple of Ulrich Zwingli. If Luther represents a rather conservative approach to the Western liturgical tradition and its understanding of the sacraments, Zwingli, Luther's contemporary, represents a different approach all together. For Zwingli, sacraments do not contain the grace they signify; at best, sacraments can offer to the community "an outward sign that we are incorporated and engrafted into the Lord Jesus Christ and pledged to live [for] him and to follow him," but "the external baptism of water," for example, "cannot effect spiritual cleansing."<sup>113</sup> An idea like this never bodes well for the survival of supplementary sacramental rites. But at Cranmer's invitation, Bucer, by this time a professor at Cambridge,

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<sup>112</sup> D'Amico, *The Moor*, 184.

<sup>113</sup> Ulrich Zwingli, *Of Baptism* (1525) as cited in James F. White, *Documents of Christian Worship: Descriptive and Interpretive Sources* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992): 171.

wrote a critique of the 1549 *Prayer Book*. This 1551 document, ominously titled *The Judgement of Martin Bucer upon the Book of Sacred Rites or of the Ordering of the Church and Ecclesiastical Ministration in the Kingdom of England*, contained several criticisms of the baptismal rite and offered suggestions for its further improvement, the most significant for the present study being Bucer's censure of the giving of the chrisom and the baptismal signation. Predictably, "[t]hough ancient signs," Bucer found them no longer edifying, maintaining that they instead "promote superstition."<sup>114</sup> They had to go. Cranmer's rite was revised and shortened with the retention of only one of Cranmer's introductory exhortations and Luther's Flood Prayer.

These reformed trends were disrupted for a time when Mary (r. 1553-1558) came to the throne and restored the *Sarum Rite* to the Church in England in 1554. At that time the *Book of Common Prayer* followed its users into exile in Geneva, where these English churchmen were influenced by the Calvinism they would later bring home. Mary's untimely death brought both Elizabeth to the throne and those Protestant exiles back from the Continent; the religious policies of England reversed yet again, and in 1559 a new Act of Uniformity (effectively the fourth in a decade) provided for a new, moderately revised *Book of Common Prayer* based on the 1552 version.<sup>115</sup> Some, encouraged by the return of the Latin liturgy, had hoped to align England with the Church of Rome again in practice (if not in politics), while the exiles returned from abroad clamored for a more Genevan form of service to prevail. The queen probably favored the more

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<sup>114</sup> Martin Bucer, *The Judgement of Martin Bucer upon the Book of Sacred Rites or of the Ordering of the Church and Ecclesiastical Ministration in the Kingdom of England written at the Request of the Reverend Archbishop Thomas Cranmer* (1551) in J.D.C. Fisher, *Christian Initiation: The Reformation Period* (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2006): 106-111.

<sup>115</sup> Brian Cummings, "Introduction," in *The Book of Common Prayer: The Texts of 1549, 1559, and 1662*, ed. Brian Cummings (New York: Oxford UP, 2011): xxxiii.

conservative liturgy found in the 1549 version, but her advisers, including William Cecil, urged the 1552 *Prayer Book* as the least difficult political choice.<sup>116</sup>

At the turn of the seventeenth century, the Church of England under Elizabeth was sufficiently flexible to be able to accommodate a wide range of attitudes. But along with debates over the correct form of the sacraments that were slowly being imported from the Continent, sacramental efficacy was the other pressing issue of the day and Anglicans were, perhaps predictably, just as divided. In distinction to Luther's understanding of baptism as the objective, salvific, and effective sacramental act of God through water and the Holy Spirit (which can only be received by humans in faith but is not given as a consequence of their faith), the theology of Zwingli and Bucer tended to emphasize the necessity of duties and obligations on the part of the community as the condition for the initiate's baptism, and so baptism became primarily an oath or a pledge, a sign for the community of the new member's status. Calvin, for his part, had a much higher degree of appreciation for the sacraments as vehicles of God's grace and mercy than either Zwingli or Bucer, as for Calvin the sacraments were "visible Words," or visible testimonies, of God's action in human salvation. But Calvin's theology of baptism cannot be separated from his views on divine election, or predestination: for Calvin, sacraments "do not bestow any grace of themselves, but announce and tell us [...] those things given us by divine bounty."<sup>117</sup> The tortuous trajectory, and sheer longevity, of English debates over sacramental efficacy find their roots in these major strains of Continental Protestant thought.

It is understandable, then, how earlier in the sixteenth century, a traditionalist like Stephen Gardiner could bluntly assert that all are justified "in the sacrament of baptism before we

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<sup>116</sup> Cummings, "Introduction," xxxiii-xxxiv.

<sup>117</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 4.14.1 in White, *Documents of Christian Worship*, 250, 252.

could talk of the justification we strive for.”<sup>118</sup> Cranmer, on the other hand, affirmed something much closer to a Lutheran understanding of the sacrament, though, when he argued that “the washing outwardly in water is not a vain token, but teaching such a washing as God worketh inwardly in them that duly receive the same.”<sup>119</sup> Later, Richard Hooker echoed the Thirty-Nine Articles of 1563 and the revised *Book of Common Prayer* of 1559 when he affirmed that the sacraments are “visible signs of invisible grace.”<sup>120</sup> As far as the Thirty-Nine Articles are concerned, the sacraments are in no sense bare signs, but communicating and “effectual signs of grace and God’s will towards us, by the which he doth work invisibly in us.”<sup>121</sup>

However, beyond the idea that they *do* work to impart grace, *how* and *when* and *for whom* the sacraments work was still debatable to some extent within the English Church: their “efficacy resteth obscure to our understanding,” admitted Hooker, “except we search somewhat more distinctly what grace in particular that is whereunto they are referred and what manner of operation they have towards it.”<sup>122</sup> To that end, some understood that operation of grace as having a double-reference: grace is received when the sacrament is connected to the promise of the Gospel and to the faith of the believer who is the recipient of the sacrament.<sup>123</sup> Others held views similar to the Roman Catholic *ex opere operato* theory: that is, when the outward ceremony is

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<sup>118</sup> Stephen Gardiner quoted in G. W. Bromiley, *Baptism and the Anglican Reformers* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1953): xiv.

<sup>119</sup> Horton Davies, *Worship and Theology in England: From Cranmer to Baxter and Foxe, 1534-1690* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996): 34.

<sup>120</sup> Richard Hooker, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, ed. Christopher Morris (London: Dent & Dutton, 1960): 5.1.3.

<sup>121</sup> Article 25 of the Thirty Nine Articles cited in Davies, *Worship and Theology in England*, 34.

<sup>122</sup> Hooker, *Ecclesiastical Polity*, 5.1.3.

<sup>123</sup> Davies, *Worship and Theology in England*, 34.

duly performed the inward grace is necessarily given unless the recipient puts some obstacle in the way.<sup>124</sup> The sacraments thus serve to convey sanctification on the individual participating in the sacramental action even if the individual's faith is imperfect. Article 25, on the other hand, reveals its Calvinist interest in predestination and election when it maintains that "in such only as worthily receive [the sacraments, i.e. the elect], they have a wholesome effect and operation: but they that receive them unworthily purchase to themselves damnation."<sup>125</sup> Even Hooker, who found participation in the sacraments and ritual of the Church to be of the utmost necessity in creating and maintaining a coherent and stable polity, expressly warned that "all receive not the grace of God which receive the sacraments of his grace."<sup>126</sup>

The Thirty-Nine Articles were written "in a spirit of charity which compared favorably with the anathemas of Trent and the denunciations of the Calvinist Confessions" but, in its efforts to please everyone, this document tended to please few and offered fewer clear, unambiguous doctrinal positions on important issues such as sacramental efficacy.<sup>127</sup> The doctrinal "charity" of the Thirty-Nine Articles actually opened the way for prolonged controversy in the Church of England, and this notion of sacramental efficacy having something to do with (or nothing to do with) the relative worthiness or unworthiness of the recipient would linger as an issue of great importance and would only be compounded by the lasting controversy over the baptismal form. When the proper form and efficacy of the sacraments were debatable *within* the Christian fold, it is easy to see how it was no small leap into the confusion centered on the application and effica-

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<sup>124</sup> Philip Seddon, "Word and Sacrament" in *Celebrating the Anglican Way*, ed. Ian Bunting (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1996): 100.

<sup>125</sup> Davies, *Worship and Theology in England*, 34.

<sup>126</sup> Hooker, *Ecclesiastical Polity*, 5.1.3.

<sup>127</sup> John R. H. Moorman, *The Anglican Spiritual Tradition* (Springfield, IL: Templegate, 1983): 57.

cy of those sacraments for use in the conversion of non-Christians. Who can be converted? Are there peoples who are inherently unworthy to receive the sacraments or incapable of the faith required? For the Protestant Churches, the question was still largely theoretical as they had neither the zeal nor the opportunity for evangelistic work the way that the Roman Catholic Church of this period did, but some had “no doubts that where Jews or Turks did accept the Gospel, the mere profession of faith made them fit subjects for baptism.”<sup>128</sup>

Just as there existed differing responses to the use and efficacy of traditional baptismal symbols, so too was the response to the reception of Turks and Moors into the English Christian fold varied—ideas about the former usually influenced ideas about the latter. Whereas Knolles’ *Generall Historie of the Turkes*, for example, is preoccupied with detailing the implacability of Islam and its fearful ability to convert Christians instead, Meredith Hanmer’s 1586 sermon “The baptizing of a Turke,” on the other hand, expounds upon the power of baptism to enact an effective conversion. Far from exhibiting a racist obsession with the “inextricable links among race, black skin, geography, and religion” and, hence, the inherent ineligibility of some for conversion as has been alleged, for Hanmer, these factors are not determinative of one’s eligibility for conversion and baptism at all.<sup>129</sup> While Hanmer does ponder why religions seem to divide along lines of place (and differences in the physical features of their adherents follow from this), the borders of religion are porous ones: even if “Nigros” were followers of “Mahomet,” says Hanmer, they were *not* irredeemable. Here, Hanmer references the account of Venetian traveler and nobleman Alvise Ca’ da Mosto:

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<sup>128</sup> Bromiley, *Anglican Reformers*, 93.

<sup>129</sup> See Britton’s much different reading of Hanmer in *Becoming Christian*, 116-123.

The Nigros in the kingdome of Senega [...] are not malicious nether stubbornly bent against the Christians [...] The king of Senega was in maner thoroughly persuaded to renounce the laws of Mahomet but he feared his Nobility, and the losse of his Crowne. A nephewe of the kings earnestly intreated Cadamustus [Ca' da Mosto] to deliver there the word of God, so was he in loue with the puritye thereof. Cham the Emperor of the Tartarians confesseth Iesus to be the power and spirite of the great God.<sup>130</sup>

In this example, “Nigros” were worthy of conversion and, by extension, their color did not prevent them from becoming, or desiring to become, good Christians. Moreover, Hanmer gives no indication as to the racial identity of his convert, named Chinano, whatsoever.<sup>131</sup> All we know is that Chinano was a Muslim. Ultimately, Hanmer is delighted to present to his parish “an erring sheepe [...] heretofore by profession a Saracen, addicted unto the superstitious lawe of Mahomet, but now by the ministerie of our hands [...] after publike confession of his true faith in Jesus Christ, receiued into the congregation of the faithful, marked by Baptisme for a vowed professor, and sealed vp [...] for the childe of God.”<sup>132</sup> Noticeably, there is no question that by virtue of his baptismal sealing the “Saracen” here would be fully “receiued” into the Christian community. While disagreements over the proper form and efficacy of the baptismal sacrament were gaining volume in Elizabethan England as the ideas of reformed Protestantism were being imported from the Continent, the political climate was still amenable to Anglo-Islamic contact and that same uncertainty in regards to English doctrinal positions on baptism that caused so much dissention within the Church simultaneously opened a space in which the possibility of the successful conversion of the Islamic “other” could still be entertained.

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<sup>130</sup> Meredith Hanmer, “The baptizing of a Turke A sermon preached at the Hospitall of Saint Katherin, adioyning vnto her Maiesties Towre the 2. of October 1586. at the baptizing of one Chinano a Turke, borne at Nigropontus: by Meredith Hanmer, D. of Diuinitie” (London: 1586): C5r-C5v. Alvise Ca' da Mosto also wrote one of the earliest known accounts of western Africa.

<sup>131</sup> Hanmer uses “Turk” and “Moor” interchangeably throughout the sermon as generic names for all Muslims, not as indicators of specific geo-political or racial groups.



With such a context in mind, it would seem that things could continue to go well for the baptized Moor of Shakespeare's play, too. Despite incurring the displeasure of Brabantio by marrying his daughter in secret and the ire of Iago after passing over the ensign for promotion, Othello is secure in his place in the military order of Venice, indeed "the man commands / Like a full soldier" and is the Duke's handpicked recipient of his "special mandate for the state affairs" on Cyprus (2.1.35-36, 1.3.73). But the moment the Venetian fleet departs for Cyprus, Shakespeare carefully begins to interrogate the means by which Othello had successfully been received into Christian society and through which Othello had fashioned his new identity. If the Moor's efficacious baptism, enacted through the Church's traditional symbolic system, worked to effect his reception into the Christian society of Venice, what could happen for the convert when those "seals and symbols of redeemed sin" are now found to be lacking?

If Venice itself can be (and has been) read as a civilizing and ordered place where ducal authority is an effective check against Brabantio's rage and Iago's envy and where Othello is given access a stage on which to perform his status as a Christian soldier in service to a Christian polity and Cyprus is, by contrast, the outpost on the edge of civilization where the worst Venetian impulses have room to flourish unchecked, the Mediterranean voyage to the island is the watery threshold space in between, the space in which transformation is set in motion. To be sure, this passage is no easy journey for Othello. The "noble ship of Venice" carrying Michael Cassio "[h]ath seen a grievous wrack and sufferance" before landing safely in the Cyprian port, Desdemona and Iago escape ruin in the storm shortly after, but Othello himself remains "lost [...] on a dangerous sea" before finally arriving in Cyprus much later, the last of the Venetian reinforcements (2.1.21-22, 46). In *Othello*, this tempest may seem merely "a convenient solution to the

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<sup>132</sup> Hanmer, "baptizing of a Turke," 2-3.

[plot's] Islamic threat."<sup>133</sup> Indeed, it was well known that both the Turkish army and its provisionally shipwrecked fleet were Shakespeare's imaginings: at the time of the play's composition and performance Cyprus had been firmly under Ottoman control for thirty years, there are no Turks in *Hecatomithi* and, in Cinthio's tale, the Moor and Disdemona "with a sea of the utmost tranquility arrived safely in Cyprus."<sup>134</sup> What specific purpose does the storm serve for Shakespeare? Michael Neill points out that the sea voyage from Venice to Cyprus "amounts to a rite of passage: it is as though some fatal boundary had been crossed" for Othello and the other Venetians, but this observation does not provide any particular access point for interpreting the work of Shakespeare's tempestuous Mediterranean waters.<sup>135</sup>

Shakespeare's audiences, on the other hand, were deeply familiar with the trope of storms and floods and would have been conditioned to expect the tempest which besets the Venetian fleet heading for Cyprus to function with its traditional regenerative symbolism, symbolism developed out of the associations that water came to have in the history of God's mighty acts. For Calvin in his 1536 *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, the Old Testament provided many examples of the paradoxical functioning of water as a symbol of both death and life, as "when the Lord, rescuing his people from the domination and cruel bondage of Pharaoh, made a way through the Red Sea and drowned Pharaoh himself and the Egyptian army."<sup>136</sup> Out of this watery

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<sup>133</sup> Britton, *Becoming Christian*, 134.

<sup>134</sup> Giraldi Chintio, *Gli Hecatomithi* (Decade 3, Story 7), trans. Geoffrey Bullough, in *The Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, 8 vol., ed. Geoffrey Bullough (London: Routledge, 1973): 7:243. Britton also notices some of these differences: see Britton, *Becoming Christian*, 134.

<sup>135</sup> Neill, *History to the Question*, 208.

<sup>136</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 2 vols. ed. and trans. Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015): 1: 4.15.9. See also Exodus 14:21.

destruction, however, comes the rescued Chosen People. Or one could refer to Noah and the Great Flood. Many of those who got caught in the Flood were drowned, but Noah and his family were saved by water. In the New Testament, the conception of a dying and rising again was to be represented in the baptismal act.<sup>137</sup> The symbolism here is such that the baptized person was not merely washed in water (in a kind of ritual cleansing), but he went under the water and emerged again to a new life; this act of submersion and reemerging proclaimed and actualized the basic tenants of the Christian Gospel: that Christ died for humanity's sins according to the Scriptures and that on the third day He was raised again according to the Scriptures.<sup>138</sup> After an initial disruption tinged by fear and uncertainty, the action always moves in the regenerative direction.

Moreover, early modern theatre-goers and readers of poetry would have encountered the regenerative power of the storm in popular literature in which a storm or a shipwreck "dislocates individuals" and then requires or allows for the creation of new identities, usually ones that allow for the healing of both human relationships and relationships to the divine order in the tradition of biblical literature.<sup>139</sup> Here, too, Shakespeare's miraculous Mediterranean tempest, far from being simply a solution to the problem of the Turkish threat, does operate as both a catalyst of, and symbol for, the transformation of individuals and communities. But what happens on Cyprus is the opposite of what early modern audiences, immersed in a deeply religious culture as they were, would have been conditioned to expect. In his *Small Catechism* of 1529, Luther asked, "What does such baptism with water signify?" Even children would have been expected to an-

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<sup>137</sup> Bromiley, *Anglican Reformers*, 21.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>139</sup> "[C]onsider, for example, Pyrocles and Musidorus in Sidney's *Arcadia*, Viola in *Twelfth Night*, Pericles in *Pericles*," the Italians in *The Tempest*, and even the storm off the seacoast of Bohemia in *The Winter's Tale*. Britton, *Becoming Christian*, 134.

swer that “[i]t signifies that the old Adam in us, together with all sins and evil lusts, should be drowned by daily sorrow and repentance and be put to death, and that the new man should come forth daily and rise up, cleansed and righteous, to live forever in God’s presence.”<sup>140</sup> Where destruction by water should always point away from itself to a following vivification, what occurs on Cyprus is the undoing of that expectation. Instead of a fulfillment of identity, Othello’s voyage leads to self-estrangement. Here, the sins and lusts that should have drowned are stirred up. Iago needed a methodological way to dismantle the identity that had worked so well for Othello in Venice, where bestial imagery and a rhetoric of color-based otherness failed to achieve Iago’s desired ends. The “high-wrought flood” on the Mediterranean—instead of offering a familiar, cleansing moment of renewal, a kind of ritual washing—becomes instead a “reverse-baptism” for Othello, one that Iago will turn to his advantage in his revenge against the assimilation of the Moor (2.1.2). From the tempest in Act 2 onward, the traditional operation of the play’s symbolism is slowly dismantled as Othello’s baptism is undone.

### **“Are we turned Turks?”: Disrupting Baptism’s Seals and Symbols**

At the turn of the seventeenth century in England, a wound left unhealed in the body of Christ was beginning to fester. Although the doctrinal attitudes of the bishops and clergy of the Church of England had drifted “leftwards” during Elizabeth’s reign—moving towards a Calvinist theology—the queen had ensured that in outward appearance the English Church remained largely unchanged. It was still an episcopal Church, despite the criticisms of the Presbyterian wing of the Puritan movement, and the forms of service prescribed in the *Prayer Book* (even with its serious revisions during the 1540s and 1550s) still retained too many traces of the pre-

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<sup>140</sup> Martin Luther, *Small Catechism* in *The Book of Concord*, ed. and trans. Theodore Tappert, et al. (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1959): 349 cited in Johnson, *Christian Initiation*, 236.

Reformation Roman Church from which it was descended for some tastes.<sup>141</sup> Indeed, under the leadership of Elizabeth the Church of England survived a prolonged Presbyterian assault and produced men like Whitgift and Hooker who saw the Church of England (even with all its faults) as very close to the ideal model of a Christian community.<sup>142</sup> But these efforts to halt the tide of reform also left a fundamental discontent to rankle under the surface of English religio-political unity.

At the time of Elizabeth's death, many in the Puritan camp entertained high hopes that the new king from Scotland, a Presbyterian country, would produce a similar situation in England; while these low-churchmen had been biding their time under Elizabeth, they were determined to make their views known to the new king: the ceremonies to which they objected included confirmation, the administration of baptism (in extremis) by women, the use of the ring in marriage, bowing at the name of Jesus, and signing with the cross in baptism.<sup>143</sup> Clerical vestments were deemed "popish," as were the terms like "priest" and "absolution." They wanted bet-

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<sup>141</sup> Roger Lockyer, *The Early Stuarts: A Political History of England, 1603-1642* (New York: Longman, 1989): 95.

<sup>142</sup> Lockyer, *Early Stuarts*, 95. "Presbyterian assault" refers here to the Admonition Controversy, the first large-scale debate about the government of the church in post-Reformation England. The Admonition Controversy took its name from *An Admonition to the Parliament*, which, together with *A View of Popish Abuses*, was published in 1572 by two young Oxford graduates, John Field and Thomas Wilcox. The *Admonition* contained the first full-scale assertion of *iure divino* presbyterianism in print in England. John Whitgift replied and was in turn answered by Thomas Cartwright in 1577 with the publication of Cartwright's *The Rest of the Seconde Replie*. This remained unanswered, but the confrontation between presbyterians and conformists continued through a second round in the 1580s, culminating in a final showdown in the early 1590s. On the Puritan side, the fight was continued by hardline-Calvinist Walter Travers, who accused Richard Hooker of preaching doctrine favorable to the Church of Rome with respect to works and ceremonies. In addition, the argument also centered on whether there was a form of government established in scripture that the church was bound to adopt (the Puritans argued that there was and claimed the authority of scripture for the presbyterian platform, while the conformists maintained that scripture prescribed no system of government for the church. Church polity and ceremony were matters inherently indifferent and were to be decided by the relevant human authorities; in England that meant the Crown. Peter Lake, "Admonition Controversy" in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation* (New York: Oxford UP, 1996).  
<http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195064933.001.0001/acref-9780195064933-e-0010>.

<sup>143</sup> Lockyer, *Early Stuarts*, 96-97.

ter observance of the Sabbath, more sermons, better preachers, and an end to pluralism, or the holding of more than one benefice at a time.<sup>144</sup> The Presbyterian faction of the Puritan movement lobbied for a structure of Church governance featuring a decentralized ecclesiastical authority and the local autonomy of parishes. Shrewdly, they professed their conviction that God himself had appointed the new James I as “our physician to heal these diseases,” confident that the king would do “that which we are persuaded shall be acceptable to God”<sup>145</sup> and presented James with the Millenary Petition on his way south to take possession of the English crown in 1603.<sup>146</sup> This carefully worded document insisted that its signatories were neither “factious men affecting a popular parity in the Church” nor “schismatics aiming at the dissolution of the state ecclesiastical.” They were simply “subjects and ministers, all groaning under a common burden of human rites and ceremonies.”<sup>147</sup>

The signatories of the Millenary Petition did not assume that they would achieve their objectives merely by presenting such a document to the king, though. Aware of James’ relish for theological discussions (and aware of the need for an attempt to sway the direction of the Church of England at the outset of a new dynasty), the signatories claimed that they could prove that the

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<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 96-97.

<sup>145</sup> J.R. Tanner, ed. *Constitutional Documents of the Reign of James I* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1930): 57-59 cited in Lockyer, *Early Stuarts*, 97.

<sup>146</sup> James not only prided himself on the way in which he had curbed the pretensions of the Presbyterian clergy in Scotland, he dealt with the matter in his own treatise, *Basilikon Doron*, in 1599 (published in 1603 after the death of Elizabeth I). Addressed to his eldest son, Henry (d. 1612), *Basilikon Doron*’s professed purpose was to guide the prince in his duties when he succeeded to the throne, but its real object was to rebuke ministers of religion who meddled in state affairs. James defined Puritans as “brainsick and heady preachers” who held civil authority in contempt and who treated every ecclesiastical issue, no matter how minor, “as if the article of the Trinity were called in controversy”—they would soon discover that the king’s prevailing attitude was one of moderation in the face of Puritan extremism. J.R. Tanner, ed. *Constitutional Documents of the Reign of James I* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1930): 57-59 cited in Lockyer, *Early Stuarts*, 97.

<sup>147</sup> Tanner, *Constitutional Documents*, 57-59 cited in Lockyer, *Early Stuarts*, 97.

ceremonies of which they complained were not justified by Scripture and maintained that they would be happy to do so either “more at large by writing” or “by conference among the learned.”<sup>148</sup> Their suggestion was swiftly met with a favorable response by the king, and James announced his intention to call a conference of bishops and Puritan representatives at which the points raised in the Petition would be examined. In January of 1604, the conference commenced at Hampton Court Place.<sup>149</sup> The conference, which lasted for three days, made it perfectly clear that James was on the side of the establishment and expected all others to conform, reportedly crying out that if they failed to do so, he would “harry them out of the land, or else do worse.”<sup>150</sup> Events in the Netherlands and in France had shown how Calvinist claims to freedom of worship tended to undermine the authority of the secular ruler and, while the signatories of the Petition had been careful to distance themselves from the suggestion of “faction,” James was concerned about the Petition’s reverberations down into public opinion. The king declared his belief that Puritan “pretended zeal” was a cloak under which they planned to bring about “novelty, and so confusion.” In order to prevent this, the king declared his intention to “preserve the estate, as well ecclesiastical as politic, in such form as we have found it established by the laws here.” There were to be no structural changes, and reform would be confined entirely to “abuses which we shall apparently find proved.”<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 59 cited in Lockyer, *Early Stuarts*, 98.

<sup>149</sup> James had intended to hold the conference in November of 1603, but an outbreak of the plague forced him to postpone it until after Christmas.

<sup>150</sup> T. Fuller, *The Church History of Britain* (London: 1837): 172-193 cited in J.R.H. Moorman, *A History of the Church in England*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 1980): 224.

<sup>151</sup> Reforms that were agreed upon included: changes in the *description* of absolution and confirmation to make them more acceptable to Puritans, private baptism was to be administered only by the clergy (not midwives or other women), schools and preachers were to be provided for Ireland, Wales, and the Scottish borderlands, the number of

The Puritans had not been able to persuade the new King James, any more than they had Elizabeth, to do away with the suspect ceremonies: James insisted that ministers should wear the prescribed garments, carry out the prescribed ceremonies, and confine themselves strictly within the limits laid down by the 1559 *Book of Common Prayer*.<sup>152</sup> One essential prerequisite to the enforcement of conformity was a clear statement on what exactly was required, for ever since England's break with Rome under Henry VIII, the canon Law of the Church of England had been in a state of "limbo."<sup>153</sup> James was determined to put an end to that. In April 1604 the king instructed Convocation to prepare a definitive code of canons. In July 1604—after James was presented with a petition in which Puritan sympathizers, in the House of Commons this time, complained about "pressing the use of certain rites and ceremonies in this Church as the cross in baptism"—the king issued a proclamation announcing that ministers would be given until the end of November to "resolve either to conform themselves to the Church of England and obey the same, or else to dispose of themselves and their families some other ways."<sup>154</sup>

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pluralists was to be reduced, a new translation of the Bible was to be made, the Articles of Religion were to be explained, a uniform Catechism was to be issued and, at the local level, strict notice was to be taken of those who did not receive communion at least once a year. Eds. James F. Larkin and Paul L. Hughes, *Stuart Royal Proclamations*, Vol. I: Royal Proclamations of King James I (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1973): 72 cited in Lockyer, *Early Stuarts*, 100.

<sup>152</sup> The *Prayer Book* of 1604 was virtually the same as that of 1559, but with one significant addition: the Catechism was now extended to contain twelve questions and answers on the sacraments. This noticeable extension of the *Prayer Book* underlines the idea that Anglican religion was fundamentally sacramental and that even children should be made to recognize this fact. Not only does the extended Catechism provide the most uncluttered and convenient (albeit still a bit vague) definition of a sacrament ("an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace"), the revised *Prayer Book* also upholds the importance of traditional ritual actions, namely that the clergy *should* use the sign of the cross in baptism. John R.H. Moorman, *The Anglican Spiritual Tradition* (Springfield, IL: Templegate, 1983): 63-64. For a more complete listing of the compromises reached at the Hampton Court Conference, see Lockyer, *Early Stuarts*, 103-105.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

<sup>154</sup> Larkin and Hughes, *Royal Proclamations*, 90 cited in Lockyer, *Early Stuarts*, 105.



In September of that year the Canons were finished and promulgated. The 1604 Canons made it an offense punishable by excommunication for anyone to impugn the hierarchy of the Church of England, its Articles, or its rites and ceremonies. Moreover, all ministers were required to subscribe to three of the Thirty-Nine Articles in particular. The first, affirming the royal supremacy, presented little difficulty. The third, acknowledging that all Thirty-Nine Articles were “agreeable to the Word of God” was more contentious. But the major problem for the Puritan faction came with the second article whereby they had to commit themselves to the proposition that “the *Book of Common Prayer* [...] containeth in it nothing contrary to the Word of God” and also to promise to use the authorized services and none other, making no room for their vehement denunciations of “popish” elements remaining in the *Prayer Book*.<sup>155</sup>

While the early Jacobean revisions to the *Book of Common Prayer* and the Canons of 1604 went a long way to secure at least a minimum of outward conformity, at the convening of the first Parliament of James’ reign in March 1604, many of the Puritan sympathizers in the House of Commons were unprepared to accept the decisions of the Hampton Court Conference as final.<sup>156</sup> In particular, the English debates over baptismal signation retained special primacy and raged on for the rest of the decade. Between 1604 and 1606 William Bradshaw, Leonard Hutton, and John Dove entered into a treatise war over the “lawful” use of the sign of the cross in the baptismal service.<sup>157</sup> 1606 also saw William Attersol’s “The badges of Christianity. Or, A

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<sup>155</sup> Ed. J.P Kenyon, *The Stuart Constitution, 1603-1688*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986): 123 cited in Lockyer, *Early Stuarts*, 105.

<sup>156</sup> Lockyer, *Early Stuarts*, 104.

<sup>157</sup> Bradshaw, a moderate (but highly vocal) English Puritan, printed “A shorte treatise, of the crosse in baptisme” in 1604. Bradshaw’s incendiary tract received two replies. The first was by Leonard Hutton, Doctor of Divinity and vicar in Northamptonshire, in 1605. Hutton, speaking in defense of the Anglican establishment, published “An ansvvere to a certaine treatise of the crosse in baptisme” wherein he advertised that “not only the weaknesse of

treatise of the sacraments,” 1608 brought Martin Fotherby’s “Foure sermons, lately preached,” number four of which is “an answeere vnto certaine obiections of one vnresolved, as concerning the vse of the Crosse in baptisme: written by him in anno 1604 and now commanded to be published by authoritie,” and 1610 featured the Anonymous tract “Reasons why the surplice, crosse in baptisme, kneeling in receiuing, &c. should not be pressed vpon ministers, or preople.”<sup>158</sup> By the end of the decade, it had become clear that hope of reaching a consensus on the proper place and interpretation of the baptismal seal rendered visible in the act of signation had all but disappeared in England, and James’ fears of discord in the commonwealth when a consensus on ceremonies breaks down proved to be well founded.

At this point we return to *Othello*. If the play’s symbolic economy continued to operate around a literalization of baptism’s efficacious “seals and symbols” after the Mediterranean voyage, one might indeed dismiss Shakespeare’s invention of such a storm as a convenient and tired plot device. Instead, Shakespeare’s gradual dismantling of the signifying power of the baptismal seal and symbols enacts a version of that very renunciation of the Moor’s baptism speculated up-

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[Bradshaw’s] syllogisme it selfe, but also of the grounds and proofes thereof, [would be] plainly discovered.” The second response came from John Dove in 1606. Dove, the Rector of St. Mary Aldermary, London lent his voice in support of Hutton and published “A defence of church gouernment Dedicated to the high Court of Parliament [...] Together with a defence of the crosse in baptisme.” See William Bradshaw, “A shorte treatise, of the crosse in baptisme” (London: 1604). The *ESTC* indicates that the document’s imprint is false; “A shorte treatise” was printed in London by William Jones’ secret press, not in Amsterdam by I.H. For more on Bradshaw himself, see Prior, *Jacobean Church*, esp. 97-112. Leonard Hutton, “An ansvere to a certaine treatise of the crosse in baptisme” (Oxford: 1605). A brief biographical sketch of Hutton can be found in Ed. Alexander Chalmers, *The general biographical Dictionary containing an historical and critical account of the lives and writings of the most eminent persons in every nation; particularly the British and Irish; from the earliest accounts to the present time*, vol. 10 (London: 1813): 246. John Dove, “A defence of church gouernment Dedicated to the high Court of Parliament” (London: 1606). For more on John Dove, see Will Allen, “Dove, John (1561–1618),” in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. David Cannadine (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2004). <http://www.oxforddnb.com.flagship.luc.edu/view/article/7948> (accessed October 4, 2016).

<sup>158</sup> William Attersol, “The badges of Christianity. Or, A treatise of the sacraments fully declared out of the word of God Wherein the truth it selfe is proued, the doctrine of the reformed churches maintained” (London: 1606); Martin Fotherby, “Foure sermons, lately preached, by Martin Fotherby Doctor in Diuinity” (London: 1608); Anonymous, “Reasons why the surplice, crosse in baptisme, kneeling in receiuing, &c. should not be pressed vpon ministers, or people” (London: c.1610).

on by Iago. Here, at the edges of Christian Europe and on the threshold of the Islamic East, baptism should be a clear sign of profession and a mark of difference.<sup>159</sup> According to Thomas Becon, “Baptism declareth evidently unto me that whereas before I was an heathen, now am I become a Christian.”<sup>160</sup> Hugh Latimer also put it clearly when he said that baptism serves “to know a Christian from a Turk or a heathen.”<sup>161</sup> But once the Venetians have arrived on Cyprus, it becomes clear that the tempest which destroyed the Ottoman fleet was not simply a solution to the plot’s Islamic threat after all. The Ottoman fleet may have been destroyed, but the battle on Cyprus is still one between Muslim and Christian. Here, Othello is forced to reconcile with his conflicted identity head-on: as the play disrupts the symbolic economy that had facilitated the crossing of the Moor from one community into another, Othello undergoes a radical “de-conversion” prompted by his troubled second baptism in the sea.

If the symbolic language that had allowed Othello to render his Christian identity visible for others in Venice is collapsed, it seems that tragedy can be the only outcome. Where Othello’s “travailous history” offered a theatrically visible, literalized version of the enactment of traditional baptismal symbology, Othello’s de-conversion at the hands of Iago is its dark counterpart: Othello’s slavery and subsequent manumission detailed in Venice devolves into spiritual and moral slavery to Iago on Cyprus. Othello, “that wert once so good” is now “[f]allen in the practice of a cursed slave” as “black vengeance from the hollow hell” consumes the Moor, leaving Othello to demand of “that demi-devil” Iago how “he hath thus ensnared [his] soul and body” (5.2.288-289, 3.3.450, 5.2.298-299). Othello’s highly-praised virtue crumbles as his “blood be-

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<sup>159</sup> Bromiley, *Anglican Reformers*, 17, 12.

<sup>160</sup> Becon quoted in Bromiley, *Anglican Reformers*, 18.

<sup>161</sup> Latimer quoted in Bromiley, *Anglican Reformers*, 17.

gins [his] safer guides to rule” and unchecked passion now “[a]ssays to lead the way” in both domestic, marital matters and military affairs (2.3.201-203). Indeed, Othello’s authority within the ranks of the Christian military is slowly undermined as, on this Venetian outpost between two worlds, identities blur until the Moor’s furious query, “Are we turned Turks?” becomes a poignant one (2.3.170).

It is necessary to remember that Shakespeare’s imagined effects of a disrupted symbolic economy reach beyond the converted Moor and into the ranks of the native Venetian Christians because it is in this collapse of any easy distinctions that can be made about human difference—where any assumptions about eligibility for inclusion in the Christian and/or Venetian fold based on birth, color, physical traits, or merit break down—that Shakespeare tests the power of a collective social order constructed around a shared, efficacious system of symbols and imagines the stakes associated with the collapse of that organizing principle. Soon after the landing on Cyprus, and after the Europeans have been found savagely brawling in the dark, an enraged Othello demands of his unruly troops, “Are we turned Turks, and do ourselves do that / Which heaven hath forbid the Ottomites?” (2.3.170-171). While Othello’s question may seem rhetorically to reinscribe hard-and-fast imaginative boundaries between the distinctly Christian Venetian qualities of order and civilized behavior and the stereotypical Islamic Ottoman qualities of disorder and passionate rage, what is revealed here is the degree to which these distinctions are porous. Moreover, such distinctions are always incumbent upon the proper performance of one’s religious-political identity, an identity that suffuses all spheres of communal life.

Here, political betrayal and religious conversion are collapsed into each other so that disorder within the ranks of the Venetian army becomes a form of apostasy, a turn against the

Christian identity of the state and its God. The religious and the national nuances, as well as the literal and figurative meanings, of “turning Turk” are all activated as Cassio, Roderigo, and Iago, by turns, succumb to the alienating characteristics assigned to Othello. By the end of the play, Roderigo has been murdered by Iago, Cassio has been stabbed by Roderigo, and Iago is described as the very “devil,” “Spartan dog,” and “damned slave” he deems Othello to be in his all-consuming desire for recognition, favor, and differentiation (5.2.284, 359, 241). Within the scope of the play’s action on Cyprus, the Ottoman Turk is still the faithless enemy of Christian Europe, but “the greatest danger is located within the ‘imagined community’ of Christians,” in the ease with which Christians such as Othello’s troops might blur the distinctions separating themselves from the Muslim Turks.<sup>162</sup>

The slippage in marks of difference between insider and outsider, Christian and Turk, civilized and barbarian quickly spirals out of control.<sup>163</sup> How can this endless devolution of meaning be stopped? Jane Hwang Degenhardt reads the Moor’s suicide as a final revision of the act of his originary circumcision as a Muslim, but maintains that, despite this, Christian identity somehow reaches its “limit in the body of the black Moor”: according to Degenhardt, “Shakespeare shows us how the historically contingent impossibility that threatens Pauline universalism in his own time [the circumcision of Jews and Muslims] was an embodied distinction caught in the process of becoming racialized.” When religion is racialized, the conversion of the Moor is

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<sup>162</sup> Jonathan Burton borrows the term “imagined community” from Benedict Anderson but uses it “not as a descriptive term for a protonationalist entity, but rather to indicate the necessarily chimerical nature of a pan-Christian alliance in the sixteenth or seventeenth century.” Burton, *Traffic and Turning*, 17, 261n.21. See also Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (New York: Verso, 2006): esp. 6-7.

<sup>163</sup> For the slippage between final assessments of not only Othello and Iago, but between Othello and Iago and the barbaric Turks against whom they both try to distinguish themselves, see 5.1.62, 5.2.241, 288-289, 330, 353, and 359.

posited as an idea that “cannot live in the real world”—not even his final sacrificial act can initiate Othello into the Venetian community.<sup>164</sup> For Degenhardt, Othello’s suicide only underscores the Moor’s irredeemable otherness.

Julia Reinhard Lupton, on the other hand, reminds us that, following precedents in Roman and Venetian law, Othello made a bid for inclusion in Venice through manumission, intermarriage, and military service. Yet, for Lupton, these activities only provide Othello with provisional membership in the Venetian polity because of the Moor’s permanent mark of difference, “the inerasable yet non-genetic scar of [Islamic] circumcision.”<sup>165</sup> But Lupton, unlike Degenhardt, claims that it is when Othello kills himself through a sacrificial act of re-circumcision, a grotesque literalization of Paul’s “circumcision of the heart,” that Othello *joins* the civic body, “enacting a death into citizenship” that erases the mark of particularity that his actual circumcision had given him and undergoing a process of “re-conversion and naturalization that re-enrolls him in the commonwealth,” albeit at the cost of his life.<sup>166</sup> While Lupton’s reading rightly presses upon Othello’s suicide as enacting his unarguable inclusion in the Venetian polity, neither of these readings bears in mind the extent to which the sort of “Turkish” barbarity into which Othello has fallen by the end of the play—and which he is now desperate to repudiate—is not unique to him. If the renunciation of one’s baptism is revealed to be a danger that threatens not just the convert but all Christian men who find their sins and lusts stirred up on Cyprus, it seems that Othello’s final bid for definitive inclusion into that Christian society to which Lupton points has

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<sup>164</sup> Degenhardt, *Islamic Conversion*, 71-72.

<sup>165</sup> Lupton, *Citizen-Saints*, 106.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, 106.

to be the enactment of something to which they had all had access, a fundamental structuring principle of that religio-political society to be (re)joined.

At the end of Shakespeare's play, baptism is again revealed to be a leveler of men. At the close of the action, Othello's suicide functions as the literal, dramatic enactment of the Moor's death in Christ and renders definitive his status as a member of the Venetian polity: no one can question his loyalty to the state when he himself has severed all possible retention of his Moorish identity, smiting himself like the "circumcised dog" of his final tale (5.2.353). Othello stabs himself and so doing activates the other important secondary metaphorical signification of baptism, that of being "washed" in the blood of Christ. For the sixteenth and seventeenth century reformers, just as under the Old Covenant the sprinkling of the blood of sacrificed animals had purified God's people, so too under the New Covenant would those who were washed with the blood of Christ be purified.<sup>167</sup> Just as the sacramental action of immersion was particularly suited to signifying the paradoxical relationship between death and resurrection with Christ, the symbol of the blood rendered visible the life won through an act of sacrifice.

As Lupton suggests, Othello's death does indeed attain for him the unequivocal entrance into the "life" of the Venetian community he so desperately sought, but it is not an inclusion that necessitates the attempted erasure of some aspect of his physical self. It is an inclusion that necessitates a return to the efficacy of the baptismal ritual and its attendant symbols. Through a shared connotation of this paradoxical relationship between death and life, Othello's suicide is conceptually linked back to both his survival of the "moving accidents by flood" that had literalized his initiation into the Christian fold and the "high-wrought flood" on the sea that had set its disruption in motion (1.3.136, 2.1.2). One could certainly read Othello's demise as "the defeat of

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<sup>167</sup> Old, *Reformed Baptismal Rite*, 279.

the cultural exchange that the Moor initiates in Venice and the triumph of the racial and cultural discriminations that Iago would install there instead.”<sup>168</sup> However, it seems that if baptism’s “seals and symbols” have to be carefully undone in order to totally unmake Othello—and that only through a final reinscription of those baptismal symbols does the Moor effect his definitive inclusion in Christian society—this may make an argument in favor of their potency.

### **“nothing extenuate”: Conclusion**

While stereotypes of the “black devil” and the “infidel” are a useful dramatic device for introducing character, under the pressure of dramatic action, characters usually move closer to the context of the playwright’s world, exhibiting variations on the needs, frustrations, and perceptions that shape his own experience and the experiences of his audience. So while it has been suggested that “[t]he ambivalence that characterized the traditional Elizabethan representation of the Moor” becomes in *Othello* “a metaphor to explore a division within the state, the family, and human nature,” the drama’s symbolic economy calls us to examine something a bit more specific.<sup>169</sup>

At the turn of the seventeenth century, the late Elizabethan and Jacobean commonwealth (the unity of Church and state) was attempting to determine just how elastic its domestic, Christian body could be imagined to be and exactly how that body would convert and incorporate religious “others” beyond its relatively tolerant bounds. Through an exploration of the interconnect- edness of personal and communal bodies (sacramental and civic), English intellectuals begin to revive the discursive tradition of the English *corpus mysticum*—testing the limits of sacramental- ly-driven social incorporation—in order to imagine the ideal inclusion of converted religious

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<sup>168</sup> Bartels, *Speaking of the Moor*, 180.

<sup>169</sup> D’Amico, *The Moor*, 184.



“others.” Like the culture that produced it, William Shakespeare’s *Othello* is preoccupied with the navigation of bodies in both their literal and figurative registers and asks us to consider the collective body of an early modern Christian community in terms of its explicit connections to both the conversion of the religious other and the operation of baptismal theology which sits at the heart of the play. The complex ways in which early modern English drama adapted the historical discourses of medieval sacramentality—and the significant linking of these issues to conversion and the body politic—beg examination. The centrality of the baptism of the Moor which structures both the constructive conversion and destructive de-conversion of Othello should be placed in direct conversation with changing English discourses on the role of ceremonies in Elizabethan and Jacobean civil and ecclesiastical governance. These debates laid the cultural groundwork for the emphasis Shakespeare places on the sacramentally-enacted conversion of the Moor into his Christian identity and into the political and social world of Venice. Because of the inseparability of Church and state in England, it must be recognized that shifts in the political climate impinged upon shifts in English religion and *vice versa*.

This is not to say that *Othello* is somehow a direct reproduction of those conflicts or an allegory in which neat 1:1 ratios can be drawn between the drama’s context and the events of the drama’s plot. But as Michael Neill reminds us, “[t]hese texts are dense with [...] information about the society and culture to which they belonged—information that may sometimes be directly related to conscious authorial intention but that often found its way more or less unconsciously into the work because it was integral to the world the writers inhabited, inscribed in the very language by which they knew it.”<sup>170</sup> *Othello* stands as an important piece of evidence in the

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<sup>170</sup> Neill, *History to the Question*, 3.

long and complicated history of Anglo-Islamic interaction and sacramental debate in the English Church not because it relays the “facts” of history, but because drama is an “unfailing sensitive register of social attitudes and assumptions, fears and desires.”<sup>171</sup> While it is perhaps unlikely that Shakespeare used his text to offer a direct commentary on the particulars of a highly sophisticated and long-standing theological debate, we would be remiss in our engagement with his work if we too quickly dismiss the vital influence of a sacramentally-ordered worldview on the early modern English imagination.

But as the battles over ritual raged on, many Englishmen became distrustful of the manipulative qualities of ritual behavior. By the middle of James’ reign, ritual had become a problem that required constant adjustments and reforms, giving rise to the increased proliferation of Protestant sects across the seventeenth century, each unable to agree with others on the proper level of ritual practice and the proper interpretation of the Scriptural Word. The spiritual evocation of community that English Christians had once widely experienced through participation in the rites of the Church gave way to the fragmentation of Christian culture, the overvaluing of minor distinctions in ritual practices, and the propagandistic misinterpretation of doctrinal differences among various Churches. It is not difficult to see how someone on the margins could become jaded by such a situation. In Robert Daborne’s *A Christian Turn’d Turk* (1612), rituals of initiation become occasions for idolatry, vehicles for fraud and deception, pulling apart the body of the commonwealth instead of cementing its unity.

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<sup>171</sup> Ibid., 3.

## CHAPTER 2

### PERFORMING APOSTASY, DISRUPTING ORDER IN *A CHRISTIAN TURN'D TURK*

“[L]est any man should here conceive that it greatly skilleth not of what sort our religion be, inasmuch as heathens, Turks, and infidels impute to religion a great part of the same effects which ourselves ascribe thereunto [...] it shall be requisite to observe well, how far forth there may be agreement in the effects of different religions.”<sup>1</sup>

— Richard Hooker, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*

“Let all things be done decently and according to order.”<sup>2</sup>

— Canons of 1604, Canon XVIII

At the close of scene 7 of *A Christian Turn'd Turk*, preparations have begun for the ritual conversion of the English pirate John Ward to Islam. “The Mufti’s here,” declares Crosman, the captain of the janissaries in Tunis. “You know the custom, sir. / Some trivial ceremonies, they’ll soon be o’er. / They once performed, you’re ne’er unhappy more” (7.250-252).<sup>3</sup> Ward is resolved to take part in the ceremony that will facilitate his marriage to the beautiful Muslim temptress, Voada. But no sooner has Crosman carefully downplayed not only the pomp and circumstance of the ritual, but also its serious implications, in an effort to forestall any last backsliding in Ward’s decision, the Chorus enters at the top of scene 8. Operating in stark contrast to the placating voice of the captain, though, the Chorus comments upon the impending ceremonial action that is

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Hooker, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity: An Abridged Edition*, ed. A.S. McGrade and Brian Vickers (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1975): 5:1:221.

<sup>2</sup> Canons of 1604, Canon XVIII cited in Horton Davies, *Worship and Theology in England: From Cranmer to Baxter and Foxe, 1534-1690* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996): 205.

<sup>3</sup> All in-text citations of *A Christian Turn'd Turk* are from Robert Daborne, *A Christian Turned Turk in Three Turk Plays of Early Modern England: Selimus, A Christian Turned Turk, and The Renegado*, ed. Daniel J. Vitkus (New York: Columbia UP, 2000): 151-239.

to be set forth in an intricate dumb-show:

Here could I wish that our period, or that our pen,  
Might speak the fictions, not the acts of men.  
The deeds that we have presented hitherto are white  
Compared unto those black ones we must write [...]  
Give patience to our scene, which hereto tends  
To show the world black deeds have black ends. (8.1-4, 27-28)

Here, the Chorus adopts a familiar moral rhetoric of white-and-black, highlighting for the scene's viewers what seems to be a stark, unambiguous movement from virtue to vice, from good to evil, and from Christianity to Islam enacted in the ritual to follow. Once Ward has entered the scene in an elaborate procession, his entrance accompanied by "a confused noise of music," the English pirate exchanges his "Christian" clothes for "the habit of a free-born Turk," relinquishes his sword "unless employed / In wars 'gainst Christians," and forswears his Christian name (8.sd, 18, 23). As Ward renounces his originary loyalties to custom, nation, faith, and family, the Chorus reminds the audience of the disturbing efficacy of this ceremonial action and the stakes attendant upon Ward's performance of the ritual. Ward "[e]nrolls his name into their pagan tribes" and, though Ward "seems yet happy" with his decision, the Chorus foreshadows the resolution of Ward's tale (8.17, 25). Indeed, the Chorus makes it clear that ceremonial deeds have an undeniable power: in *A Christian Turn'd Turk*, "black deeds" have very specific "black ends" (8.28). From the first moments of the performance of the ritual itself, Ward's path is marked by an irreversible slide from salvation to damnation in which "black's the way to hell" (8.24).

Much like Shakespeare's *Othello*, Daborne's *A Christian Turn'd Turk* explores the power of ritual for constructing religio-political relationships against the backdrop of an evolving Anglo-Ottoman scene. But where Shakespeare interrogates a comparatively narrow set of questions about the efficacy of baptism as informed by competing perspectives on the proper enactment of

the ritual of Christian initiation in the wake of the English Reformation, Daborne widens the scope of this pressing concern for the efficacy of ceremonial action beyond the strictly baptismal. It was argued in Chapter 1 that Shakespeare structures the Moor's conversions around the play's appropriation and subsequent dismantling of baptism's traditional symbolic economy; in *A Christian Turn'd Turk*, however, Daborne constructs his far more explicit treatment of conversion such that it plays upon contemporary Anglican debates over ceremony as useful for the construction and maintenance of English religio-political order itself—debates ironically exacerbated by the Hampton Court settlement's desire to enforce a uniformity of ecclesiastical practice. Moreover, where the depiction of Othello's conversion is primarily interested in exploring the power of the English Church and state to facilitate the orderly reception of the Islamic "other" into the English commonwealth and to instill Christian virtue in the convert himself, Ward's conversion ceremony offers a meditation on the power of ritual action, for good *or* ill: to forge new bonds of allegiance, certainly, but also to dispose the heart towards vice and towards the denial of an Englishman's proper allegiance to God, king, and country.

However, while Ward's ritual deeds as presented in the dumb show performance of his conversion ceremony place a clear and dramatic (over)emphasis on action, on the *doing* of the ritual itself, what is perhaps the ceremony's most important ritual activity of all—the required circumcision of John Ward—is conspicuously missing from the scene. Ward's ritual bodily modification goes unperformed onstage, leaving the audience to assume that this activity has taken place offstage. Any certainty that this necessary step has been properly performed, though, is quickly called into question. The Dutch pirate Simon Dansiker's captain explains that while he did see Ward in his zeal "Turk to the circumcision," he later "heard [Ward] played the Jew with

‘em, / Made ‘em come to the cutting of an ape’s tail” instead (9.2-4). The ceremony that had effectively ordered the English pirate’s conversion to Islam and Muslim society in Tunis—while effectively disordering John Ward’s English allegiances to God and country—is now revealed to be a probable sham, a potential vehicle for fraud. Was Ward’s ceremonial conversion honest, complete, and duly performed? Or did the Christian not turn Turk at all? Did the Englishman actually commit the deception of which he is accused, a deception that would not only call into question the legitimacy of the ritual itself, but would also cause us to reconsider what seems to be the providential demise of John Ward at the play’s end?

The circumstances surrounding the scene of John Ward’s conversion to Islam and its consequences have been of recurring critical concern. However, where the play’s thematic investments in ritual conversion, apostasy, and their religio-political stakes meet most often in studies of *A Christian Turn’d Turk* is not within discussions interested in the performance of the ritual itself or its effects upon the convert and his new or native community. Instead, criticism of the play is almost exclusively preoccupied with Ward’s circumcision, an action that is not presented onstage at all and one whose proper enactment is called into question almost immediately. Because of this limited emphasis on bodily modification and, thus, the effects of conversion as centered on one’s individual, physical body—as opposed to ecclesiastical bodies or the body politic—critical approaches to Ward’s conversion in *A Christian Turn’d Turk* have repeatedly trended towards sexuality and gender studies as a lens through which to examine the play’s interest in conversion to Islam as a threat to the male Christian’s body and, through it, his soul.

In one of the fullest studies of *A Christian Turn’d Turk*, Jane Hwang Degenhardt argues that the play’s mediation of conversion “through a register of sexuality reflects a nexus of cultur-

al and bodily transformation that was bound up with the threat of turning Turk.”<sup>4</sup> For Degenhardt, the Renaissance stage presented conversion as “manifested through the sexualized body.”<sup>5</sup> When conversion to Islam is presented as the “inevitable consequence of interfaith seduction,” the play is able to present Islamic conversion as “a permanent, one-way process” by virtue of the “transgression” of the Christian male’s “sexual body” via the sexual act first and, second, via his circumcision.<sup>6</sup> Ultimately, John Ward’s “implied circumcision in *A Christian Turn’d Turk* helps to convey the gravity and irredeemability of his [spiritual] transgression” by rendering that transgression visible and physically permanent.<sup>7</sup>

Degenhardt’s recent reading of John Ward’s conversion is influenced to a considerable degree by Patricia Parker, Jonathan Burton, and Benedict Robinson’s earlier interest in the physical connotations of English Christian apostasy. For example, Patricia Parker traces the “pervasive discursive network that conflated Barbary and the ‘barbarous’ with barbering of all kinds” and argues that “the barbering that associated circumcision with the castration of the eunuch simultaneously conflated pathic sexual submission with turning Turk.”<sup>8</sup> Burton similarly reads the activity of ritual conversion with regard to its “emphasis on the physical coercion involved in circumcising” as evidence of not only an unstable English Christianity, but of imaginings of

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<sup>4</sup> Jane Hwang Degenhardt, *Islamic Conversion and Christian Resistance on the Early Modern Stage* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2010): 75.

<sup>5</sup> Degenhardt, *Islamic Conversion*, 75.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 14-15.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

<sup>8</sup> Patricia Parker, “Barbers and Barbary: Early Modern Cultural Semantics” in *Renaissance Drama* 33 (2004): 201-244, 201, 204.

“masculinity as uncertain, vulnerable, even compromised.”<sup>9</sup> For his part, Robinson follows Parker and Burton’s lead when he claims that “Ward’s conversion and circumcision are turned into a sodomitical joke.”<sup>10</sup> He argues that, “[i]n a sense, both the homoerotic and the heteroerotic pleasures offered as an enticement to renegadism [...] can be called kinds of sodomy, in that both seduce the male subject into a ‘preposterous’ turning.”<sup>11</sup>

Ultimately, then, if the conversion of the English Christian to Islam brings with it a violent physical, even sexual threat, such a threat must be imaginatively negated. Daborne’s use of dumb show to present Ward’s ceremonial conversion, then, is read as evidence of the absolute absurdity of the scene. By presenting the act of conversion unspoken, suggests Burton, the audience’s attention is drawn to the very act of “playing”: audience members are “made aware that they are watching a mere act.”<sup>12</sup> In other words, the dumb show works to vacate the scene of its power. “By emphasizing the staging of conversion,” says Burton, English dramatists “turned apostasy into an insignificant performance.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Jonathan Burton, “English Anxiety and the Muslim Power of Conversion: Five Perspectives on ‘Turning Turk’ in Early Modern Texts,” *Journal of Early Modern Cultural Studies* 2.1 (Spring /Summer 2002): 35-67, 40. Here, Burton reads Christian apostasy in travel narratives describing English experience in Muslim lands. In this case, it is Thomas Sander’s captivity and conversion narrative (1583) later featured in Richard Hakluyt’s *Voyages and Discoveries* (1589, 1598-1600).

<sup>10</sup> Benedict S. Robinson, *Islam and Early Modern English Literature: The Politics of Romance from Spenser to Milton* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007): 125. For more on accusations of sodomy and other forms of “preposterous” desire as a rhetorical framework for the discourse of religious conversion, see Patricia Parker, “Preposterous Conversions: Turning Turk and its ‘Pauline’ Rerighting” in *Journal of Early Modern Cultural Studies* 2.1 (Spring/Summer 2002): 1-34.

<sup>11</sup> Robinson, *Politics of Romance*, 125.

<sup>12</sup> In this reading, it is maintained that Ward has, indeed, “faked the ritual circumcision” completely and, by playing the deceiver, Ward “actually preserves his Christianity.” In Burton’s estimation, “[o]nly the fool who fails to distinguish performance, or playing, from reality mistakes acting for apostasy.” Burton, *Traffic and Turning*, 31-32.

<sup>13</sup> Burton, “Muslim Power of Conversion,” 59.



Readings like the ones briefly outlined above—readings that assume a nearly exclusive focus on the meaning and effects of Ward’s circumcision via a sex and gender studies model—have dominated the relatively few studies of Daborne’s play that have been produced to date. But whether one argues for the serious physical and spiritual threat of Ward’s circumcision or laughs away the very possibility of its enactment as absurd, both readings overlook the operation of the conversion ceremony itself as expressly presented in the text: readings that focus too narrowly on Ward’s circumcision ignore the purpose of the wider ceremonial action that *is* performed, and readings interested in denying Ward’s circumcision, in writing off the very possibility of its enactment as preposterous, are unconcerned with the serious implications of that ritual action as established in the ceremonial performance of scene 8 itself. This is not to suggest that we ignore the issue of Ward’s circumcision. At the same time, however, we must not ignore the ways in which the convert’s ritual circumcision is part of a wider ceremonial structure, one that is intricately performed and carefully constructed, and one that was understood to have serious religio-political consequences—both within the frame of the play’s action and for Daborne’s audiences.

Just as Chapter 1 explored Shakespeare’s imagining of the potential of the Church of England’s baptismal ceremony for facilitating the conversion and assimilation of the Moor against a backdrop of changing English politics and ecclesiastical norms, so too will this chapter examine the play’s representation of a scene of ritual action in terms of its engagement with both an internal, English state of affairs and with evolving Anglo-Ottoman relations during the early Jacobean period. As the scene of ritual conversion mobilizes the Englishman’s orderly and efficacious reception into Muslim society, the very activities that evidenced Othello’s Christianization a decade earlier—social assimilation and civic advancement, military service, and mar-

riage—are now the motivations for Ward’s apostasy. As the Islamic ritual of conversion threatens the alarming disordering of English society, the ceremonial action at the heart of *A Christian Turn’d Turk* compels the audience of Daborne’s play to confront the uncomfortable implications of his renegade protagonist’s conversion for England as a socio-political unit: in an era marked by plague, famine, and economic depression, the figure of the renegade stands as an embarrassing critique of his native land, the embodiment of all the problems of the English state compelling its men to seek out inappropriate ties to the Ottoman threat outside of England.

But the issue of renegadism cannot be spoken of in exclusively socio-political terms as if disconnected from religious implication. Indeed, the opening decades of the seventeenth century were just as often defined by violent, often paranoid, religious sectarianism that threatened the disruption of both political and ecclesiastical order. If John Ward’s conversion is a disturbing spectacle, it is only partly because the ritual unmakes Ward’s Englishness in the socio-political sense. Post-Reformation England was marked by a relentless anxiety about the precise nature of the “true faith” and, during the reign of James I, this conflict turned on the proper enactment of ceremony. Perhaps even more insidious than the defection of men already pushed to the fringes of English society, prolonged debate over contested notions of appropriate ceremonial action had the potential to disrupt the very ecclesiastical order undergirding and rendering visible any sense of unity in the commonwealth—a unity that was desperately needed in the face of disease, depression, and the ever-looming power of the Ottomans. But in the wake of the Hampton Court Conference and the subsequent issuance of the Canons of 1604, the commonwealth was embroiled anew in a familiar conflict over what reformists in England saw as idolatrous or insuffi-

ciently reformed in the ritual practices of the Church of England and what conformists defended as necessary to good order and moral edification.

In the disquieting ritual of John Ward's conversion, Daborne adopts this conflict's pervasive preoccupation with the fear of ritual idolatry to compel his audience to consider not only what is orderly, honest, and efficacious in ceremonial practice versus what is indecent, fraudulent, or idolatrous, but to confront the stakes of these protracted debates over ceremony for the nation's escalating problem of renegadism. By the middle of James' reign, ritual had become an issue that required constant adjustments and reforms, and received ideas about the efficacy of ritual were perennially called into question. What are the effects of inappropriate ritual action on its participants? How would repentant apostates be handled? How could the English hope to combat apostasy abroad if the Church of England could not resolve its own difficulties at home? The ceremony of Ward's conversion is, then, an English means of testing the limits of ritual and ceremonial enactment for the very stability of England itself.

**“no country I can call home”: English Renegades and the Politics of Conversion**

Criticism of *A Christian Turn'd Turk* has ardently avowed “the great pains to which this play goes to link Ward's conversion exclusively to sexual desire and intercourse,” maintaining that “the play insists that Ward's sole motivation for conversion is his uncontrollable sexual desire for a Muslim woman,” even pushing this assertion so far as to profess Daborne's “collapsing of conversion itself onto an act of sexual intercourse.”<sup>14</sup> In contrast to readings that attempt to reduce religious conversion, its motivation, and its consequences to a matter of unrestrained sexual desire, however, this section will begin to trouble such totalizing arguments by examining the

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<sup>14</sup> Degenhardt, *Islamic Conversion*, 15. Indeed, Jonathan Burton concurs that Daborne “places responsibility for Ward's apostasy squarely and exclusively on a woman.” Burton, *Traffic and Turning*, 137.

socio-politics at work in Daborne's rendering of Ward's conversion. In order to ultimately re-frame Daborne's construction of his protagonist's conversion to Islam as one that is decidedly interested in the implications of ritual action and its effects for the English commonwealth as a unity of political and ecclesiastical order—and so in presenting apostasy as a complex set of political and religious transgressions—it is necessary to re-examine the seventeenth century discourse about the motivations for English renegadism. While one may, indeed, find plenty to support readings trained on “sexual desire and intercourse,” the archive just as often brings into relief the pains to which Daborne goes to establish that his John Ward is not quite the exclusively sex-crazed degenerate that criticism claims. Re-focusing our attention on the issues of apostasy and renegadism as understood by Daborne's contemporaries highlights the ways in which Ward's enticement to Islam is, first, far more socio-politically influenced than current criticism allows.

By the time that Robert Daborne was writing *A Christian Turn'd Turk* sometime between 1609 and its first performance in 1611 (the play was quickly printed in quarto in 1612), Western Europe had been buffeted by a long history of Ottoman military aggression and Muslim cultural competition that would serve as the basis for English political anxieties about the power of Islam during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>15</sup> At the time of the greatest Ottoman expansions

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<sup>15</sup> Daniel J. Vitkus, “Early Modern Orientalism: Representations of Islam in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Europe” in *Western Views of Islam in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Perception of Other*, ed. David R. Blanks and Michael Frassetto (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999): 207-230, 209. The 1612 quarto edition is the only known version of *A Christian Turn'd Turk*. There is no evidence that it was ever reprinted. The date of composition must be between 1609, when Daborne's principal sources were first available—Andrew Barker's *True and Certain Report* (London: 1609) and the anonymous *News from Sea* (London: 1609)—and 1612, when the quarto was printed. The play was probably written for performance by Philip Rosseter's Queen's Revel's company at the indoor Whitefriar's Hall theatre near the Inns of Court. Daniel J. Vitkus, “Introduction” in *Three Turk Plays of Early Modern England: Selimus, A Christian Turned Turk, and The Renegado*, ed. Daniel J. Vitkus (New York: Columbia UP, 2000): 24.

of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Europeans were forced to confront Islamic wealth, political influence, and military supremacy in an intimate way; Daniel Vitkus reminds us that “[w]hile the Christians of Spain, Portugal, England, and other nations were establishing their first permanent colonies in the New World, they faced the threat at home of being colonized by the Ottoman Empire.”<sup>16</sup> Sixteenth and seventeenth century English writings reveal the extent to which Islamic conquest was increasingly perceived to be an immediate and looming danger. Indeed, as early as 1574, English diplomats were feeling the consequences of a Christian European political scene increasingly fractured and prone to in-fighting in the wake of the Reformation. During a foreign mission with Fulke Greville to Don John of Austria, Sir Philip Sidney wrote to Hubert Longuet of just such a concern:

These civil wars which are wearing out the power of Christendom are opening the way for the Turk to get possession of Italy; and if Italy alone were in danger, it would be less a subject for sorrow, since it is the forge in which the cause of all these ills are wrought. But there is reason to fear that the flames will not keep themselves within its frontier, but will seize and devour the neighboring states.<sup>17</sup>

In the following year, Thomas Newton wrote in the dedication to his English translation of Curio's *Sarracenicæ Historiæ* that the Turks were “at the very first far from our clime and region, and therefore the less to be feared, but now they are even at our doors and ready to come into our houses.”<sup>18</sup> Even the religion the Turks brought with them was narrowly defined and caricatured as a religion of violence by European Christians. Force of arms, successful military aggression, and violent conversion by the sword are all cited by Christian writers as an explanation for the

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<sup>16</sup> Vitkus, “Early Modern Orientalism,” 210.

<sup>17</sup> *Correspondence of Sidney and Languet*, ed. W.A. Bradley (Boston: 1912): 106 cited in Vitkus, “Early Modern Orientalism,” 211.

<sup>18</sup> Coelius Augustinius Curio, *A Notable History of the Saracens*, trans. Thomas Newton (London: 1575) cited in Vitkus, “Early Modern Orientalism,” 211.

astonishing achievement of the Islamic invasions. According to the Christian convert, Leo Africanus, in John Pory's English translation of his *History and Description of Africa* (1600), "there is nothing that hath greatlier furthered the progression of the Mahumetan sect, than perpetuitie of victorie, and the greatness of conquests."<sup>19</sup>

Any English fears of Islam and the Ottomans as an expanding world power that existed under Elizabeth I only increased after James I ascended to the throne of England in 1603. Chapter 1 detailed how the queen's death marked a sea-change in diplomatic relations between England and the Islamic world. Where an English affiliation with "the Turks" had been politically and economically expedient in Elizabeth I's antagonistic relations with the Roman Catholic powers on the Continent, James immediately expressed his dislike for Elizabeth's Anglo-Islamic alliances, preferring to entertain hopes for a reconciled Christendom in the face of an expanding Islam. In 1604 the Anglo-Spanish War (1585-1604) came to an end and, with it, any possibility of peace with the Ottoman Empire.<sup>20</sup> Elizabeth's subjects had come into close contact with the Ottomans and other Islamic powers on a peaceful basis, but Anglo-Ottoman contact abroad was now becoming a liability, drastically increasing the possibility of hostilities and leading to the rising frequency of English capture, enslavement, and loss of life.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Leo Africanus, *The History and Description of Africa*, ed. Robert Brown, trans. John Pory, 3 vols. (London:1896): 3:1019 cited in Vitkus, "Early Modern Orientalism," 211.

<sup>20</sup> Robert Watson and William Thomson, *The History of the Reign of Philip the Third, King of Spain* (London: James Eastburn & Co, 1812): 2. Nabil Matar, *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999): 143.

<sup>21</sup> Toenjes, *English Reformation*, 10. For the rise of Barbary piracy and its implications for English traders, see also Daniel J. Vitkus, "Trafficking with the Turk: English Travelers in the Ottoman Empire during the Early Seventeenth Century," in *Travel Knowledge: European "Discoveries in the Early Modern Period*, ed. Ivo Kamps and Jyotsna G. Singh (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001): 35-52; Daniel J. Vitkus, "Introduction" in *Three Turk Plays of Early Modern England*, ed. Daniel J. Vitkus (New York: Columbia UP, 2000): esp. 3-6; Nabil Matar, "Introduction: England and Mediterranean Captivity, 1577-1704" in *Piracy, Slavery, and Redemption: Barbary Captivity Narratives*

During the Jacobean period, partly as a result of an inadequate English naval presence in the wake of the new Anglo-Spanish peace, merchant ships from England and elsewhere in the British Isles were relentlessly pursued, captured, or sunk by Muslim mariners. Between 1609 and 1616, it was reported that 466 English ships were attacked and their crews enslaved.<sup>22</sup> In 1617 Thomas Newton's fears were finally realized when a Turkish ship was captured in the Thames estuary.<sup>23</sup> By April 1625, an entry in the *Calendar of State Papers* recorded that "The Turks are upon our coasts. They take ships only to take the men to make slaves of them."<sup>24</sup> It was one thing for Englishmen to acknowledge the might of the Ottomans as a competing commercial and imperial force beyond its borders—as Muslim military aggression affected England's maritime economy, and through it, the safety of Englishmen abroad—but it was quite another when the might of the Islamic world threatened the safety of the English state itself.

While Turkish activity on the coast of the British Isles paints a provocative image of the long reach of Ottoman maritime aggression, the number of those (albeit shocking) incidents is quite low. What reports like that of the Turkish ship in the Thames point to in an important way, however, was the possibility of an uncomfortable Ottoman infiltration into the heart of the English state at home. How this happened, though, was not truly via Ottoman ships in the Thames or Turkish raids along remote English seacoasts. Thousands of European Christians converted to

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from *Early Modern England*, ed. Daniel J. Vitkus (New York: Columbia UP, 2001): 1-40; Mather, *Pashas*, esp. 28-43.

<sup>22</sup> Michael J. Brown, *Itinerant Ambassador: The Life of Sir Thomas Roe* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1970): 138. See also "The council to Lord Zouch. The pirates of Algiers and Tunis have grown so strong that in a few years they have taken 300 ships, and imprisoned many hundred persons," *Calendar of State Papers Domestic, James I, 1619-1623*: 10.12. The statement was written in February of 1619. Cited in Nabil Matar, *Islam in Britain, 1558-1685* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998): 6.

<sup>23</sup> *Calendar of State Papers Domestic, James I, 1611-1618*: 9:514 cited in Matar, *Islam in Britain*, 8.

<sup>24</sup> *Calendar of State Papers Domestic, Charles I, 1625-1626*: 1.11, 20 cited in Matar, *Islam in Britain*, 6.

Islam in the Renaissance largely because their poor social conditions in England forced them toward such a choice.<sup>25</sup> The period between approximately “1570-1630 was one marked by repeated episodes of famine, plague, and economic depression,” and was one in which “conditions for laborers and seamen were particularly difficult.”<sup>26</sup> The historical John Ward was born and raised a fisherman in Faversham in Kent, and in the anonymous pamphlet *News from Sea* (1609)—one of Daborne’s sources for *A Christian Turn’d Turk*—Ward’s humble origins are described: “[H]is parentage was but mean, his estate low, and his hope less.”<sup>27</sup> Ward eventually found employment on a royal ship working the Channel, but soon after James I made peace with Spain the number of unemployed sailors and soldiers in England grew. As a result, so too did the number of England’s renegades.<sup>28</sup> According to Captain John Smith, “After the death of [...] Queen Elizabeth, our Royall King James [...] had no employment for those men of warre” (that is, for the buccaneers who, protected by Elizabeth’s letters of marque, had been able to thrive on Spanish plunder). “Those that were rich,” continues Smith, “retired with what they had; those that were poore and had nothing but from hand to mouth, turned Pirats.”<sup>29</sup> By 1644 Samuel Hartlib could confirm that poverty made “many that would live honestly to cheat, lie, steal, kill, turn Turk, or anything.”<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Matar, *Islam in Britain*, 15.

<sup>26</sup> Vitkus, *Turning Turk*, 110.

<sup>27</sup> Anonymous, *News from Sea, Of Two Notorious Pyrates, Ward...and Dansekar* (London: 1609): A2r.

<sup>28</sup> Vitkus, *Turning Turk*, 110. Matar, “Introduction,” 13.

<sup>29</sup> John Smith, *True Travels in Travels and Works of John Smith*, ed. Arber and Bradley 2:914 cited in Chew, *Crescent and the Rose*, 343.

<sup>30</sup> Samuel Hartlib, *The Hartlib Papers* (CD-ROM 1995), 57/4/3/5A cited in Matar, “Introduction,” 2.



At a time when “every major European town and city” had “thousands” of poor men, many viewed conversion to Islam and emigration to the independent Muslim kingdoms of North Africa or to the dominions of the Ottoman Empire as the only way to start new lives.<sup>31</sup> The verses of a stage play attributed to Thomas Lodge and Robert Greene, *Lady Alimony; or, The Alimony Lady*, paints such a picture of English desperation:

To Tunis and to Argiers, boys,  
Great is our want, small be our joys;  
Let's then some voyage take in hand  
To get us means by Sea or Land.<sup>32</sup>

Unlike England, Muslim society of the seventeenth century “projected an allure that promised a common Briton social and political power, turned a poor European soldier into a well-paid *rais*, and allowed converts to Islam to fulfil themselves in worldly power and glory.”<sup>33</sup> Life on an Ottoman pirate ship, for example, even as a low-ranking crew member, was freer and more profitable than serving as a seaman on a law-abiding English merchantman. Piracy was preferable to life under the miserable conditions aboard English royal ships. According to historians’ estimates, “[s]ailors on merchantmen could not expect [to earn] more than £10 a year, whereas a pirate

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<sup>31</sup> Henry Kamen, *The Iron Century: Social Change in Europe, 1550-1660* (New York: Prager, 1971): 387. See also Nabil Matar, “Introduction: England and Mediterranean Captivity, 1577-1704” in *Piracy, Slavery, and Redemption: Barbary Captivity Narratives from Early Modern England*, ed. Daniel J. Vitkus (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001): 1-2.

<sup>32</sup> The date of composition is unknown, and the text was not printed until 1659. Attr. Thomas Lodge and Robert Greene, *Lady Alimony; or, The Alimony Lady* (London: 1659): 3.2.n.p. cited in Matar, “Introduction,” 13.

<sup>33</sup> For would-be immigrants, the appeal of Islamic cities was all the greater after the failure of the Roanoke plantation in Virginia had made it widely known just how grim prospects in the New World really were. See also Gerald MacLean and Nabil Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World, 1558-1713* (New York: Oxford UP, 2011): 15, 22-23. Indeed, before the Great Migration to North America at the end of the 1620s there were, in fact, more Britons in North Africa than in North America as men were drawn to the Barbary States in search of work, livelihood, and settlement. Matar, “Introduction,” 2.

[crew member] could hope to make as much from one prize.”<sup>34</sup> Given the difficult circumstances for English sailors, renegadism held an understandable appeal.<sup>35</sup>

For those chaffing against economic depression and social immobility at home, life in the Ottoman Empire was relatively fluid. Unlike England during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Ottoman Empire was a comparative “super-civilization, a frighteningly all-inclusive and all-absorbing system.”<sup>36</sup> For renegades, there was “little stigma attached to their status as new Muslims, and though Islamic society was hierarchical, it was highly absorptive at its margins.”<sup>37</sup> After learning of the large number of Christian converts who had risen in power and prominence in Algiers and Tunis, Robert Burton, for example, astutely ascertained that the Christian who “will turn Turk [...] shall be entertained a brother.”<sup>38</sup> Indeed, by 1606 John Ward

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<sup>34</sup> C.M. Senior, *A Nation of Pirates: English Piracy in Its Heyday* (New York: Crane, Russak, and Co., 1976): 41. See also Vitkus, “Introduction,” 29-30 esp.

<sup>35</sup> Succumbing to the appeal of piracy and apostasy was not the exclusive purview of the economically disadvantaged, though. The problem was far more pervasive as “[o]utlaws of different strata of European society, from gentlemen-adventurers to the lowest ruffians, flocked to Barbary in search of gain.” Even English nobility found conversion and emigration to the Barbary States an attractive option when prospects at home took a turn for the worse. Sir Francis Verney, for example—the Englishman “of the noblest blood” whose conversion to Islam was reported along with John Ward’s—aroused particular concern in England. In 1606, Verney entered into a dispute with his mother-in-law over the rights to a small field. The case went all the way to Parliament where Verney lost the suit. In a fit of rage over the verdict, Verney sold his estates in 1608, abandoned his wife and mother-in-law, and went to Morocco where he joined a band of English mercenaries who were fighting for Mawlay Zidan, one of the claimants to the sultanate of Morocco. Interestingly, Verney was even related to three other members of the English gentry who had abandoned life in their native country for piracy and apostasy: the captain of Mawlay Zidan’s mercenaries, Captain John Giffard, Giffard’s second-in-command, Philip Giffard, and Richard Giffard, whose attempts to set fire to the Algerian fleet as it lay in anchor in its home port had caused so many problems for the real John Ward. Samuel C. Chew, *The Crescent and the Rose: Islam and England During the Renaissance* (New York: Octagon Books, 1965): 342. For more on Sir Francis Verney, see Adrian Tinniswood, *Pirates of Barbary: Corsairs, Conquests, and Captivity in the Seventeenth-Century Mediterranean* (New York: Riverhead, 2010): esp. 48-49; Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Downshire MSS II* (1936): 160 cited in Tinniswood, *Pirates of Barbary*, 48; *Calendar of State Papers Relating to English Affairs in the Archives of Venice*, Her Majesty’s Stationery Office (1864-1947), November 19, 1609 cited in Tinniswood, *Pirates of Barbary*, 49.

<sup>36</sup> Vitkus, *Turning Turk*, 119.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.

<sup>38</sup> Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, ed. Holbrook Jackson (London: Dent, 1977): 3.349.

himself had reached an agreement with the Ottoman commander of the janissaries in Tunis, Cara Osman (the “Crosman” of *A Christian Turn’d Turk*), to use Tunis as a base for his piratical operations; after each raiding expedition, Ward would return to Tunis and sell his booty to Cara Osman at very low prices. Cara Osman would then resell at a huge profit. A lowly fisherman in England, in Tunis “Ward became a roving king of the sea with his own private navy, beholden to no Christian monarch.”<sup>39</sup> On land, Ward lived like a nobleman in “a very stately house, far more fit for a prince than a pirate,” his “apparel both curious and costly, his diet sumptuous.”<sup>40</sup>

Privateering for Muslim powers not only allowed the English defector a chance to improve his socio-economic position to a degree foreclosed to him in England, it also brought in a substantial income to the Ottoman Empire and to the Barbary States. Just as European rulers used the income generated by piracy and privateering to fill national coffers, so too did North African rulers spend the income generated by their renegade privateers to effect social change and urban renewal.<sup>41</sup> England may have been facing economic depression, but with the wealth received from European renegades operating out of Tunis, Cara Osman’s successor, Yusuf Dey, went on a building spree: renegade booty helped to build the Turks’ market in Tunis, a mosque with a school attached to it, inns and a slave market, and to bring potable water into the city.<sup>42</sup>

While North Africa profited, those same acts of piracy adversely affected English trade through

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<sup>39</sup> Daniel J. Vitkus, “Introduction,” in *Three Turk Plays of Early Modern England: Selimus, A Christian Turned Turk, and The Renegado*, ed. Daniel J. Vitkus (New York: Columbia UP, 2000): 25.

<sup>40</sup> Anonymous, *News from Sea*, 15-16; Barker, *A True and Certain Report*, 15.

<sup>41</sup> Matar, “Introduction,” 8-9.

<sup>42</sup> Mahmud Maqdish, *Nuzhat al-Anzar fi Ajaib al-Tawarikh wa-al-Akhbar*, ed. Ali al-Zuwari and Muhammad Mahfuz (Beirut, 1988): 2.92; *Muhammad al-Qadiri’s Nashr al-Mathani: The Chronicles*, ed. and trans. Norman Cigar (London: Oxford University Press, 1981): 92; Ibn Abi Dinar, *Kitab al-Munis fi akhbar Ifriqiyah wa Tunis* (Tunis, 1967): 197 all cited in Matar, “Introduction,” 9.

the Straits of Gibraltar: renegade freebooters posed a threat to English commerce, a commercial crisis “discommodious to the state” that continued through the early decades of the seventeenth century.<sup>43</sup> As the English government scrambled to adopt a strategy that would reduce corsair activity in the Mediterranean, King James issued a proclamation against piracy in January of 1609 naming “Captain John Ward and his adherents, and other English pirates” and accusing them of taking “diverse great and enormous spoils.”<sup>44</sup> In an age in which piracy itself was not necessarily considered an evil pursuit, though, the king’s accusation casts light on an uncomfortable problem for the English state: the issue was not really those “great and enormous spoils” themselves, it was that the spoils of piracy in North Africa were going to the wrong recipient. For patriotic Englishmen, piracy was not seen as essentially dishonest if it was directed against foreigners, did not harm the commonwealth, and brought cheap goods into English markets.<sup>45</sup> Renegades like John Ward, however, were actively building the Tunisian community at the expense of the English one.

While historical studies allow that these economic, social, and political motivations existed for English renegades, literary criticism has largely failed to read them against Ward’s story as it was presented to Jacobean audiences in *A Christian Turn’d Turk*. This is not to say that criticism has not treated the historical record. For example, Daniel Vitkus provides an excellent

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<sup>43</sup> Vitkus, “Introduction,” 28. Barker, *True and certaine report*, 1609.

<sup>44</sup> King James I, *A Royal Proclamation: By the King. A Proclamation against Pirates* (London: 1609): 355 in ed. Daniel Vitkus, *Three Turk Plays of Early Modern England: Selimus, A Christian Turned Turk, and The Renegado* (New York; Columbia UP, 2000): 353-356. During the years that followed, the problems of piracy led James I and Charles I to mount attacks on the Barbary ports where these activities were based. Vice Admiral Sir Robert Mansell led an unsuccessful attack on Algiers in 1621, and Captain William Rainsborough’s 1636 expedition to Sallee took advantage of a civil war in Morocco to redeem about three hundred captives. See Vitkus, “Introduction,” 5.

<sup>45</sup> Indeed, Many English Protestant pirates saw their activities as a continuation of justifiable hostility against Roman Catholic Spain, even after James I made peace with Spain in 1604; an “aggressive and patriotic impulse carried over from that earlier era [namely Elizabeth’s reign] during which the English crown had sponsored and encouraged privateers who preyed upon Spanish shipping.” Vitkus, “Introduction,” 29-30.

overview of the historical situation of English renegades in the introduction to his anthologized edition of Daborne's play. However, he then strangely dismisses any bearing that these socio-political realities had on Daborne's construction of his renegade protagonist's situation in the drama: Vitkus instead maintains that there is "a large gap between the real experience and meaning of religious conversion for renegade seamen and the sensationalized representation of the Christian who 'turns Turk.'"<sup>46</sup> This "large gap," however, is a much smaller one than current criticism of *A Christian Turn'd Turk* admits. At a time when the defection of Englishmen to the territories of the Ottoman Empire in search of a viable livelihood cast light on the shameful conditions in England that left men desperate for a chance at advancement, so too does the John Ward of Daborne's play expose those political and socio-economic fault lines prevalent in the seventeenth century discourses on renegadism.

At the opening of *A Christian Turn'd Turk*, Ward has not yet renounced his Christianity, but his piratical activities certainly seem to indicate a figure of severely (and typically) questionable morality on the fringes of European social order. Indeed, Ward and his crew have just made off with the kidnapped French merchants, Albert and Ferdinand, lured onto Ward's ship for a game of cards and dice. Ferdinand quickly assumes that this heist is about money, common robbery on the high seas: "If't be our moneys that you covet, willingly we give it up," he pleads (1.29). Ever the moralizer, though, Ferdinand cannot seem to limit his interaction with Ward to a safe and painless handing-over of their cash. Ferdinand launches into a small lecture on the social evils of piracy that Daborne's audience would not only have found familiar but likely would have approved of themselves:

FERDINAND: Piracy, its theft most hateful, swallows up

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 5.

The estates of orphans, widows, who—born free—  
 Are thus made slaves, enthralled to misery  
 By those that should defend them at the best.  
 You rob the venting merchants, whose manly breast  
 (Scorning base gain at home) puts to the main  
 With hazard of his life and state, from other lands  
 To enrich his own. (1.58-65)

In a tirade that echoes King James' concerns that Ward's "diverse great and enormous spoils" were a detriment to the welfare of the state and its citizens when not brought back "from other lands / To enrich his own," Ferdinand underscores a stark and reassuring moral distance between merchantmen and pirates. One bravely seeks only the common good for their "fair home," their name "[w]rit in the golden lines of honor" for their self-sacrificing trouble, while the other—"ungrateful hands"—only take from the most vulnerable (1.30, 56, 65).

Given recent critics' overwhelming interest in Ward's degeneracy, one would think that Ferdinand has had the last word. Ferdinand's perspective on the matter of piracy is correct, judgement has been passed on Ward and his crew, and the men have been found wanting. However, Daborne immediately undercuts such a tidy and comfortable pronouncement. First, Ferdinand is shocked to learn that their capture has nothing to do with robbery at all ("[We] have not enticed you hither for your gold," Ward growls), but is instead a necessary bid at fleshing out a crew in need of more hands ("we have other use for you [...] It is the men we want") (1.32, 31, 33). While kidnapping and forced labor aboard a pirate ship seem to enforce Ferdinand's assessment of Ward's villainy—such action might even be read as an unlawful inversion of the impressment to which unwilling mariners were often submitted in England—Ward again challenges Ferdinand's smug assumption. Indeed, the pirate captain effectively upends the merchant's

neat moral categorizing, forcing Ferdinand into a position of hard self-assessment instead. The rejoinder offered by Ward and his officer, Gismund, is worth quoting at some length:

WARD: Is't not a shame  
 Men of your [Ferdinand's] qualities and personage  
 Should live as cankers, eating up the soil  
 That gave you being (like beasts that ne'er look further  
 Than where they first took food)? That men call "home"  
 Which gives them means equal unto their minds,  
 Puts them in action.

GISMUND: True, who is't would not smile  
 To hear a soldier that hath nothing left  
 But misery to speak him man, can show  
 More marks then pence, upon whose back contempt  
 Heaps on the weight of poverty—who would not smile  
 To hear this piece of wretchedness boast his wounds?  
 How far he went to purchase them? With what honor  
 He put them on? And now for sustenance,  
 Want of a little bread, being giving up  
 His empty soul, should joy yet that his country  
 Shall see him breathe his last when that air he terms his  
 Ungratefully doth stifle him? (1.34-51)

Ferdinand and Albert are not merely forced into service aboard Ward's ship as a matter of necessity, Ward considers their service a kind of social reparation: from the perspective of Ward and his crew, it is wealthy, self-satisfied men of quality like Ferdinand who are the true "cankers" in England's rose, men too taken with their own socio-economic and moral security to notice that "home" has not been so kind to everyone. While some receive opportunity, "means equal to their minds," others receive only the stifling "weight of poverty" and "misery" until they are finally stifled for good at the wharfs of Wapping. So "[a]s for your virtuous lectures," Ward spits at Ferdinand, "We are mariners and soldiers, not tattered yet / Enough to hear them" (1.78-80). Here, Ward and his men are revealed to be less high-seas thugs, moral degenerates, or depraved liber-

tines than shrewd social commentators, estranged from their native land by a social system that does not work for them and in possession of their own kind of honor.

**“If any odds be, ‘tis on Mahomet’s side”: Conversion and Confessional Crisis**

While *A Christian Turn’d Turk* carefully exposes the socio-economic factors fueling England’s problem with renegadism, piracy and apostasy were never understood as issues restricted to the body politic. Ward’s eventual apostasy in *A Christian Turn’d Turk* should not be spoken of exclusively in terms of the socio-political as if disconnected from religious implication. Indeed, the early modern interdependence of state and Church must be brought to bear on readings of *A Christian Turn’d Turk* not only because Islam (much like Christianity) possessed a religious ideology of proselytization that sought to convert the “other” and, in this case, integrate them into the *umma* of Islam, but because the Muslim states (much like the English commonwealth) paired a religious ideology with the construction and maintenance of political order and extended the privileges of full civic participation and opportunities for socio-political advancement only to members of its official religious body. This may seem like an obvious assertion, but recent criticism has neglected a consideration of the reality (let alone the appeals) of Islam as a political *and* doctrinal community, essentially a powerful alternative to the state and Church of the English commonwealth. In fact, Jonathan Burton proves a notable exception to this trend when he rightly points out that, even where “contemporary scholarship concedes the political might of Islam, scholars regularly disregard the fact that Islam was a religion, a force whose capacity to offer narratives of salvation interacts powerfully with, sometimes even superseding, other axes of social formation”—in this case, the reality of a polarizing English state and the dis-



order of an English Church mired in the disruptive effects of prolonged and widespread sectarian upheaval.<sup>47</sup>

Chapter 1 examined early modern England's inheritance of the medieval idea of the *corpus mysticum* or "mystical body" as one of the earliest figures for a specific ideal of Christian community that "conveys the notion that all the faithful are incorporated into a single body of Christ by participation in the sacraments."<sup>48</sup> It is useful to remember that, even as the social and sacramental *corpus mysticum* of the medieval church gradually began to slide into the more highly politicized body of the early modern commonwealth, the English *corpus mysticum* ultimately resisted "complete colonization by the emergent absolutist politics of early modern England."<sup>49</sup> The Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity, the recent revision of the *Book of Common Prayer*, and the political theology espoused by men like Richard Hooker all posit an ideal vision of the orderly functioning of the mutually-informing spheres of state and church. However, the actual situation of the English commonwealth in the early years of James' reign was not so tidy. Religious conformity was supposed to create a unified polity, but protracted theological debate not only strained the coherence of the English Church, it raised the ever-looming fear of civil unrest.

In the early seventeenth century, ceremony was pulling the nation apart rather than cementing it. Because "the service of God" in "all well-ordered States and Commonwealths [was] the first thing that law hath care to provide for," continuing criticism of the crown's ecclesiastical policies in the wake of the Hampton Court Conference made James more, rather than less, de-

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<sup>47</sup> Burton, "Muslim Power of Conversion," 36.

<sup>48</sup> Jennifer R. Rust, *The Body in Mystery: The Political Theology of the Corpus Mysticum in the Literature of Reformation England* (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 2014): xi, 21.

<sup>49</sup> Rust, *Body in Mystery*, 18, xi.

terminated to enforce the decisions of the Hampton Court settlement.<sup>50</sup> James' anger against continued Puritan agitation and fear of what it might portend was perhaps at its greatest in 1605. At that moment the king was faced with not only the new printing of the Millenary Petition as the *Abridgement*—prominently listing in its opening pages a multitude of challenges to the liturgy set forth in *Book of Common Prayer* and to the doctrinal foundations of the Canons of 1604—he was presented with yet another petition, this time signed by some forty Northamptonshire gentlemen, protesting the removal of ministers who refused to subscribe to the three required articles of the 1604 Canons.<sup>51</sup> James was alarmed by the fact that non-conforming ministers found considerable support among the gentry; if the English elite were susceptible to the wiles of religious non-conformity, what fallout was possible when religious factionalism was stirred up amongst the populace at large? The signatories of the Petition had been careful to distance themselves from the suggestion of “faction,” but the king, suspicious of the veracity of this gesture, dug his heels in and repeated his belief that Puritan “pretended zeal” was a cloak under which they planned to bring about “novelty, and so confusion.”<sup>52</sup>

That an ordinary Englishman would chose to leave the commonwealth behind for piracy and apostasy shined a glaring light on the current deficiencies of English ecclesiastical order. For those Englishmen willing to uproot to the Ottoman territories, conversion offered not only the chance for economic and socio-political advancement, but also an attractive, comparatively

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<sup>50</sup> Richard Hooker, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity: Preface, Book I, Book VIII*, ed. Arthur Stephen McGrade (New York: Cambridge UP, 1989): 8:6:183-184.

<sup>51</sup> “But as man liveth joined with others in common society and belongeth unto the outward politic body of the Church [...] it may for public unity's sake require men's professed assent or prohibit contradiction to special articles.” Hooker, *Laws*, 8:6:183. For more on the required Articles, see Chapter 1 of this dissertation. Roger Lockyer, *The Early Stuarts: A Political History of England, 1603-1642* (New York: Longman, 1989): 108-109.

<sup>52</sup> Eds. James F. Larkin and Paul L. Hughes, *Stuart Royal Proclamations*, Vol. I: Royal Proclamations of King James I (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1973): 72 cited in Lockyer, *Early Stuarts*, 100.

coherent confessional profile and a relative simplicity of religious doctrine. While the author of *The Policy of the Turkish Empire* (1597) is expectedly quick to ascribe the success achieved by Muslim proselytization efforts to force of arms and military conquest—“They doe think [...] that they are bound by all means as much as in them lyeth, to amplifie and increase their religion in all partes of the worlde, both by armes and otherwise [...] to the intent the name and doctrine of their Prophet Mahomet may bee everywhere, and of all nations, revered and embraced”—it helped that, in the eyes of the English, Muslim polities possessed a comparatively coherent confessional profile (albeit some regional variations in practice had developed across the Muslim world) and a relative simplicity of doctrine that made few liturgical requirements on believers.<sup>53</sup>

While the confessional identities of Christian nations grew ever more confused as the Reformation reverberated across Europe and English sects increasingly indulged their all-consuming paranoia over the proper performance of ritual activity, a new Muslim worshipped God directly without the intercession of priests or clergy, and the believers’ duties were summed up in five simple rules, the so-called Five Pillars of Islam.<sup>54</sup> Liturgical requirements beyond the exhortation to worship five times a day included a ritual washing, prostration, and the facing of Mecca during prayer, but prayer could take place anywhere and only took a few minutes.<sup>55</sup> Compared with the perpetrators of Protestant factionalism who, in the estimation of the king, treated

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<sup>53</sup> Anonymous, *The Policy of the Turkish Empire* (London: 1595): B4v-b5r.

<sup>54</sup> Jonathan Bloom and Sheila Blair, *Islam: A Thousand Years of Faith and Power* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2002): 181, 35-39, esp. 35. The Five Pillars exhort the believer to 1) testify, in Arabic, that “There is no god but God and Muhammad is his messenger, 2) worship God five times a day, 3) abstain from food and drink (as well as smoking and sex) between sunrise and sunset during the month of Ramadan, 4) give alms to the poor, and 5) go on a pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in one’s lifetime.

<sup>55</sup> Bloom and Blair, *Islam*, 35-39.

every ecclesiastical issue, no matter how minor, “as if the article of the Trinity were called in controversy,” the practice of Islam could be seen by Englishmen as “simplicity itself.”<sup>56</sup>

As the Ottoman Empire and the religion it brought with it increasingly came into competition and conflict with Christian merchants, colonizers, and missionaries, though, *The Policy*'s assessment that the Turks “desire nothing more then to drawe both Christians and others to embrace their Religion and to turne Turke” demands attention.<sup>57</sup> It has already been mentioned that Islam, like Christianity, possessed a religious ideology of proselytization that sought to convert the “other,” but one of early modern Islam's methods of proselytization bears special relevance for criticism of John Ward's conversion in *A Christian Turn'd Turk*, effectively drawing together the socio-economic benefits of embracing Islam in the Ottoman lands with Islam's claim to religious supersession. As Islam spread largely through trade, exploration, and conquest in this period, it was the Ottoman privateers who saw themselves as religious warriors, engaged in *dawah* (Islamic missionary work, literally “calling”), standing as spreaders and defenders of the faith.<sup>58</sup> Indeed, the Arabic term used to describe the early modern privateers was *al-ghuzat*, the same term that had been used to denote those who fought with the Prophet Muhammad and which was subsequently connected with the early Islamic conquests “when men fought for both faith and gain.”<sup>59</sup> In *A Christian Turn'd Turk*, Daborne puts John Ward in direct contact with the proselytization efforts of just such Muslim privateers and military men, men bent on the gaining of personal wealth, certainly, but men who, like the Ottoman privateers themselves, posit a striking

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<sup>56</sup> Tanner, *Constitutional Documents*, 57-59 cited in Lockyer, *Early Stuarts*, 97; Bloom and Blair, *Islam*, 35.

<sup>57</sup> Anonymous, *The Policy*, B4v-b5r.

<sup>58</sup> Roger Allen and Shawkat M. Toorawa, *Islam: A Short Guide to the Faith* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011): 133, 137, 141; Matar, “Introduction,” 11.

<sup>59</sup> Matar, “Introduction,” 11.

conflation of economic and spiritual concerns in their persuasive efforts expended on the English renegade.

The play's action moves from Ward's ship on the sea to his base of piratical operations in Tunis, and Ward is treated to an unexpected visit by the Governor, the Viceroy of Tunis, and Crosman, the captain of the janissaries. The scene begins *in medias res* with Ward's exclamation of surprise over his distinguished visitors—"I am o'ercharged [...] with so high a favor / As your descending thus to visit me"—but it quickly comes to light that the Governor and Crosman are interested in turning Ward's formidable skills on the seas more directly towards Tunisian benefit (7.1-2). "You are the man we covet," explains the Governor, "whose valor / Hath spake out, so impartial worthy [...] I see there speaks a fortune in your brow / Will make us proud to have acknowledged you" (7.3-4, 17-18). Much like Othello, Ward's martial and maritime skills are swiftly recognized and valued by his adoptive community. "I'll gauge a thousand ducats on equal terms, / I live to see him the sultan's admiral," remarks the merchant Benwash in a bit of calculated flattery over which Crosman asks, "Why not as well as the great customer [official in charge of customs], / My allied kinsman governor[?]" (7.19-22). The Governor's back-up team subtly increases the flattery being piled on the overwhelmed Ward. The renegade, outcast from English society, is so humbled by the Governor's recognition he naïvely exclaims, "I dare not look so high! Yet were I employed, / What a poor Christian could, I durst make promise of" (7.23-24). Ward's Christianity is, of course, the catch.

The merchant Benwash explains that, as Ward soon would, he "oft with laughter thought how innocent / [His] thoughts when first [he] turned were" (7.35-36). However, Ward seems "more wise" than "with religion to confine [his] hopes" for privilege in Tunis (7.25-26). Here,

where the Governor and Crosman sense that Ward's interest has been sufficiently piqued by careerist lures, faith and conversion become the explicit topics of conversation. The Governor reveals that he is a convert himself and has suffered no divine retribution for his change. In fact, the only thing that has really changed is his vastly improved status. For his part, the Governor has found conversion and an alliance with the Ottomans to be the surest way to achieve those very things Ward desires but have been denied him:

GOVERNOR: What difference in me as I am a Turk  
 And was a Christian? Life, liberty,  
 Wealth, honor—they are common unto all!  
 If any odds be, 'tis on Mahomet's side:  
 His servitors thrive best, I am sure. (7.29-33)

Not long ago Ward had offered a scathing critique of his native land: "That men call 'home' / Which gives them means equal unto their minds, / Puts them in action" (1.37-39). England, who gave nothing, was no home to him at all. Here, where God does indeed seem to favor the servants of Muhammad, everything is offered. Crosman only confirms Ward's sense that men, indeed, "have two ends, safety and profit"—both of those stand their best chance of being met in service to the Ottomans where prospects for life, liberty, wealth, and honor are "common unto all" men (7.47). The logic of the Governor and Crosman is difficult to refute, yet Ward still has some reservations about the idea of conversion. While England did him no favors, his Englishness seems too far engrained to relinquish so easily: "to abjure / [his] name and the belief [his] ancestors / Left to [his] being" seems to him "the way to more uncertainty" (7.74-76, 59).

That Ward must convert in exchange for a privileged position in Tunis should come as no surprise. The Englishman who immigrated to the Barbary States for economic or political gain had to acquiesce to religious conversion. As "People of the Book," Jews and Christians were ac-

corded customary *dhimmī* status in Ottoman lands, extended certain legal protections and obligations in exchange for a poll tax collected annually.<sup>60</sup> However, *dhimmī* did not enjoy certain political rights reserved for Muslims.<sup>61</sup> Membership in the Ottoman ruling elite—while theoretically open to anyone with ability and ambition—was, in reality, achieved only through loyalty to the sultan, adherence to Ottoman social norms, and acceptance of Islam.<sup>62</sup> Much as the English commonwealth of the seventeenth century required conformity with the Church of England for the full exercise of civic and civil freedoms, so too did Ottoman society require conversion for full civic participation and socio-political advancement. Benwash, a convert like the Governor, attempts to alleviate Ward’s misgivings over the prospect of apostasy—“If this religion were so damnable / As others make it, that God which owes [owns] the right, / Profaned by this, would soon destroy it quite”—but the Governor, seeing that Ward needs a little more enticement than theological debate, allows that “[w]e should do wrong to merit, not gracing you” (7.38-40, 5). Ward is offered the hand of Crosman’s sister in marriage.

Upon seeing the lovely Voada—“If ever breast did feel the power of love, / Or beauty make a conquest of poor man, / I am thy captive”—John Ward, already so alienated from his native land, begins to muse that perhaps he can only stand to gain by the offer of conversion:

WARD: What is’t I lose by this my change? My country?  
 Already ‘tis to me impossible.  
 My name is scandalled? What is one island  
 Compared to the Eastern monarchy? (7.109-111, 179-182)

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<sup>60</sup> *dhimmī*: non-Muslim citizens of an Islamic state. The word literally means “protected person.” See Maria Rosa Menocal, *The Ornament of the World: How Muslims, Jews, and Christians Created a Culture of Tolerance in Medieval Spain* (New York: Little, Brown, and Co., 2002): 29-30.

<sup>61</sup> They were otherwise equal under the laws of property, contract, and obligation. Menocal, *Ornament*, 29-30.

<sup>62</sup> Bloom and Blair, *Islam*, 190-191.

Ward has been offered everything denied to men like him in England: economic affluence, civic influence, and military advancement. He is even offered a wife and a captainship as part of Voada's dowry ("the captainship of our strong castle / Shall be my sister's portion," says Crosman) (7.253-254). Voada's sexual allure does, indeed, help to sway Ward in his choice. But by regularly discounting the possibility of conversion as influenced by any other factors than the entrapping wiles of sexual seduction that the renegade is too weak to resist, "early modern studies effectively sustains the phobic delusion that Christians would never willingly 'turn Turk.'"<sup>63</sup> Indeed, Daborne's "particular yoking of conversion and sexual seduction" is not only less of a forgone conclusion than critics suggest, the religious, romantic, civic, and socio-economic persuasions expended on John Ward are so thoroughly tied up that it is nearly impossible to disentangle them.<sup>64</sup> Because John Ward is a willing convert who abandons his native faith and land for marriage, wealth, and military advancement, our reading of the ritual of Ward's conversion needs to be similarly attuned to the interconnected religio-political resonances of his apostasy.

This reorientation of Ward's impending conversion in *A Christian Turn'd Turk* towards the interconnection of the political and religious spheres becomes most significant, and apparent, in the ritual action of the conversion itself. Not only in Daborne's drama, but in descriptions of Islamic conversion ceremonies that appeared in contemporary English travel narratives across

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<sup>63</sup> Burton, "Muslim Power of Conversion," 62.

<sup>64</sup> Burton, *Traffic and Turning*, 126. Thus far, criticism of *A Christian Turn'd Turk* has too narrowly relied on those English polemical voices decrying the renegade's choice of conversion to Islam as influenced by any persuasive efforts other than sexual seduction. Certainly this association of Islam and sexual sin frequently drew upon and exaggerated certain Muslim religious beliefs and practices: for example, in medieval and early modern accounts of Islam, "Mahomet's paradise" is described as "a false vision of sexual and sensual delights with its nubile *houris*, rivers of wine, and luxurious gardens" while the erotic rewards of the Islamic afterlife were frequently condemned by Christian writers who also asserted that the attraction of conversion to Islam—and the reluctance of Muslims to convert to Christianity—was based primarily upon the greater sexual freedom permitted under Islamic law (Vitkus, "Introduction," 14-15). But it is perennially argued that because "apostates were thought to have succumbed to the sensual temptations offered by life in Islamic society," sexual and spiritual transgressions are "explicitly conflated" in *A Christian Turn'd Turk*, as well. Vitkus, "Introduction," 13; Degenhardt, *Islamic Conversion*, 81.



the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the visible, symbolic rendering of this interconnection assumes pride of place. Just as Christian England relied upon the symbolic economy of the sacrament of baptism—signation and its attendant imagery of sealing and the Christian *militia*, ritual immersion and its attendant imagery of death and rebirth—to mobilize and render visible a convert like Othello’s adoption by his new society, so too did the ritual conversion of a new Muslim make use of an elaborate system of symbolic gesture to welcome the convert and render visible his incorporation into to his new community.

When a Christian willingly converted to Islam before the sultan in Istanbul, for example, the imperial scribe who recorded the fact sprinkled gold dust over the black ink in celebration.<sup>65</sup> After reciting the *shahada* (“There is no other God than God, and Muhammad is his messenger”), the new Muslim was presented with a ceremonial purse of coins, a length of white muslin with which to make a turban, and a cloak that, in the case of the more distinguished converts, might be lined with sable and brocaded in gold and silver (female converts were given slippers instead of turbans). Men were then whisked away by the imperial surgeon, who circumcised them on the spot. It was common, particularly among Europeans, to confirm and celebrate conversion to Islam by adopting a new Islamic name.<sup>66</sup> The moment when the real John Ward was “honored by the glory of Islam” in Tunis might have been less formal than the conversion ceremonies at the Ottoman court, but even shorn of gold dust, sable, and silver brocade, the basic elements remained the same: the devastatingly simple profession of faith, the symbolic re-clothing of the

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<sup>65</sup> Marc David Baer, *Honored by the Glory of Islam: Conversion and Conquest in Ottoman Europe* (New York: Oxford UP, 2008): 197.

<sup>66</sup> Tinniswood, *Pirates of Barbary*, 43-44. For the average convert, early modern Islamic tradition offered conversion through “an extremely simple ritual, and once that rite was performed, very few formal practices or demonstrations of faith were required of English converts who were willing to serve under Islamic rule.” Vitkus, *Turning Turk*, 111.

convert to signify his new identity and new life in the community of Islam, and the ritual mutilation.<sup>67</sup>

Daborne's construction of the ceremony of Ward's conversion in *A Christian Turn'd Turk* also renders visible those new religio-political ties. Upon Ward's entrance into the scene in an elaborate procession accompanied by the Mufti and several "priests," Ward is clothed "in his Christian habit, bear-headed" (8.sd). After a moment of formal prostration, Ward is offered "the tables" in which he "subscribes" his name as a formal convert (8.sd). Next, just as real seventeenth-century converts adopted Muslim manners and custom, particularly the wearing of the turban—the most distinguishing characteristic of Turkish appearance (so much so that John Locke would later refer to the Muslim people as the "turbaned Nations")—so too is Ward symbolically re-clothed in "the habit of a free-born Turk" by the Mufti (8.18). The Mufti removes Ward's Christian clothes, "puts on his turban" adorned "with a half-moon" instead, and helps him into "his robe" (8.18, sd).<sup>68</sup> Finally, Ward "swears on the Mahomet's head" (an idea to which we will return later but that is important here as evidence of Daborne's simple misunderstanding of the *shahada*) (8.sd). Thus richly clad and mounted on an ass, Ward exits the scene with a shout. He is whisked away to be circumcised.

This is emphatically not the "miserable" ceremony Samuel Chew describes in his reading of Ward's conversion. In his consideration of the scene, Chew details the fate of "renegade ex-

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<sup>67</sup> Tinniswood, *Pirates of Barbary*, 44.

<sup>68</sup> John Locke, *Two Tracts on Government*, ed. Philip Abrams (London: Cambridge UP, 1967): 146 cited in Nabil Matar, "The Renegade in English Seventeenth-Century Imagination" in *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 33.3 (Summer, 1993): 489-505, 501. See also Nabil Matar, "John Locke and the 'Turbaned Nations'" in *Journal of Islamic Studies* 2.1 (January 1991): 67-77.

slaves” who were “despised by their new co-religionists” and “forced to submit” to a ceremony that was “humiliating in the extreme.”<sup>69</sup> Chew describes the ritual in which

[t]he ex-Christian convertite is placed on horseback, his face towards the tail, and thus mounted is led through the streets. In his hands are a bow and arrow which he aims at a picture of Christ which a Moslem, following him, carries upside down. So, cursing aloud his parents, his kindred, and his country, he rides to the place of circumcision.<sup>70</sup>

Chew takes his cue from conversion accounts found in captivity narratives (here, that of William Davies in 1616) and travelers’ tales like those of George Sandys, whose *Relation of a Journey* (1615) provides a similar account of the procession of Christian captives toward Islam.<sup>71</sup> However, Chew then mistakenly reads the ceremonies of forced conversion onto the ritual undergone by Ward, claiming that Daborne attempts “to represent this ceremony in the dumb-show in his play.”<sup>72</sup> Nabil Matar, on the other hand, rightly suggests that the ceremonial pomp which is afforded Ward on his conversion proves that Ward “had freely and willfully chosen to renounce

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<sup>69</sup> Samuel C. Chew, *The Crescent and the Rose: Islam and England During the Renaissance* (New York: Octagon Books, 1965): 376.

<sup>70</sup> William Davies, *True Relation of the Travailes and most miserable Captivitie of William Davies* (London: 1616): Sig. B3v cited in Chew, *Crescent and the Rose*, 377.

<sup>71</sup> George Sandys, *A Relation of a Journey Begun An: Dom: 1610: Fovre bookes* (1615): 56 cited in Matar, *Islam in Britain*, 56.

<sup>72</sup> Chew is not the only literary critic to get a bit carried away by the titillating qualities of the captivity narrative. For example, where Jonathan Burton is interested in the physical effects of English Christian apostasy to Islam as explored in *A Christian Turn'd Turk*, he reads the activity of ritual conversion in light of a captivity narrative tradition that places its “emphasis on the physical coercion involved in circumcising.” For example, Burton examines Thomas Sanders’ account of the English ship the *Jesus*’ voyage to Tripoli in 1583. Sander’s captivity and conversion narrative, later featured in Richard Hakluyt’s *Voyages and Discoveries*, is read by Burton as evidence of not only an unstable English Christianity, but of imaginings of “masculinity as uncertain, vulnerable, even compromised.” In Burton’s reading of the Sanders narrative, the “fancy” of the “desirous” Muslim prince positions the captive Englishmen as “effeminized objects of desire who refuse to ‘yeeld’ their bodies” to the Muslim prince who “is cast as the aggressor while the overpowered and genitally-violated Englishmen are forced [...] into the more ‘feminine’ role of subdued victim.” Burton, “Muslim Power of Conversion,” 40.

his faith.”<sup>73</sup> John Ward is neither a renegade ex-slave nor a captive: Ward is a willing convert who deserts Christianity under no duress and out of self-interest. What Daborne constructs in the ceremony of Ward’s religious conversion is not the forced and degrading conversion of the captive; it is the orderly conversion and socio-political reception of John Ward into Muslim life in Tunis.

Nevertheless, in spite of the orderliness of the ritual for John Ward’s reception into the Tunisian community, we are left with a scene that simultaneously possesses a distinctly disquieting affect. By turns fantastic, terrifying, and absurd, the ceremony that sits at the heart of *A Christian Turn’d Turk* would have disturbed an audience’s comfortable viewing. What produces this quality? The state of affairs in Tunis seems stable. Ward converts to Islam, but the Turks are no barbarians and Ward himself receives the civil benefits of a promotion and a wife. But when the ceremony is considered from another perspective—particularly when we widen the scope of our reading to account for the ritual’s framing by the Chorus—the same ritual action is perceived incredibly differently. From the perspective of its practitioners within the scene, the ritual action is efficacious and orderly, but from the perspective of its observing critics, the ritual unleashes an irrevocable madness, a denial and disordering of religious and political loyalties that will send the participant on a downward spiral towards damnation.

#### **“a confused noise of music”: The Conflict over Ceremony**

In *A Christian Turn’d Turk*, Daborne certainly takes some imaginative license with Ward’s conversion as he strives to dissuade his audience from the allures of apostasy with what was likely received by English audiences as a fantastical, terrifying spectacle. But it must be remembered that in the face of an attractive, expanding Islam and its claim to supersede a flawed

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<sup>73</sup> Matar, *Islam in Britain*, 56.

and incomplete Christianity, many of the images of Islam that were produced by European writers in the early modern period are imaginary resolutions of their own complex and explicitly religious anxieties. The ceremony of John Ward's conversion would have been particularly unsettling because it is tinged with the suggestion of idolatry, with resonances of England's unreformed Roman Catholic past and, to Puritan minds, its insufficiently reformed present. In fact, by the time that Robert Daborne was writing *A Christian Turn'd Turk*, English Protestantism was already the inheritor of a long (and usually quite imaginative) theological tradition linking Roman Catholicism and Islam through Protestant perceptions of idolatry. At the turn of the seventeenth century, it was no great stretch to redeploy this rhetoric in the Church of England's internal conflicts over ceremony.

One of the most acute controversies between the Anglican conformists and the Puritan reformists of the seventeenth century was concerned with the most appropriate style in which to approach God—"in prayer, in gesture, and in vesture."<sup>74</sup> "Was it fitting," the conformists asked, "to approach the most high God, Creator and Sovereign Ruler of the Universe, with casual and unpremeditated prayers when one would not address an earthly monarch without careful preparation?" Similarly, "Could one act as God's representative to the people, His ambassador, as it were, without the appropriate ceremonies and gestures such as bowing, kneeling, and the sign of the cross?" Finally, the conformist asked, "Could one be God's servant-priest without fitting liv-  
ery that indicated one's service to the Lord of Lords?"<sup>75</sup> The official position of the Church of England was to judge the Divine Majesty as desiring and demanding forms of address, gesture and ceremonial, and vesture appropriate to the greatest potentate. For the conforming Anglican,

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<sup>74</sup> Davies, *Worship and Theology*, 187.

<sup>75</sup> Adapted from Davies, *Worship and Theology*, 187.

worship of God was appropriately expressed in a liturgy in which dignity, formality, and order were the leading characteristics.<sup>76</sup> Moreover, conformists maintained that these liturgical qualities were beneficial to the participant in the ceremonies, as well. According to would-be Archbishop John Bramhall,

Ceremonies are advancements of order, decency, modesty, and gravity in the service of God; expressions of those heavenly desires and dispositions which we ought to bring along with us to God's house; adjustments of attention and devotion, furtherances of edification, visible instructors, helps of memory, exercises of faith, the shell that preserves the kernel of religion from contempt; the leaves that defend the blossoms and the fruit.<sup>77</sup>

The new Canons of 1604 made official the Anglican conviction that the chief purpose of ceremonial was to provide opportunities for paying reverent homage to God. However, Canon XVIII quite explicitly conflates the quality of reverence to be used in the Church during the liturgy and its desired effects on the people: it prescribes that “all things be done decently according to order” as “decent” and “honest” ceremonial practice promoted “order in the Church” and state.<sup>78</sup> Like Bramhall, Bishop Lancelot Andrewes argued that appropriate ceremonial expression—necessary for the glorification of God and the edification of the participant—inculcated reverence, decency, and good order in the public.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Davies, *Worship and Theology*, 187.

<sup>77</sup> John Bramhall, “Of ceremonies” cited in Horton Davies, *Worship and Theology in England: From Cranmer to Baxter and Foxe, 1534-1690* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996): 188. See also Ed. Vernon Stanley, *Hierurgia Anglicana: Documents and Extracts Illustrative of The Ceremonial of the Anglican Church After the Reformation* (London: de la More Press, 1902): 1:8.

<sup>78</sup> Canons of 1604, Canon XVIII cited in Horton Davies, *Worship and Theology in England: From Cranmer to Baxter and Foxe, 1534-1690* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996): 205. See also Francis Mason, *The authoritie of the Chvrch in making canons and constitutions concerning things indifferent, and the obedience thereto required* (London: 1607) cited in Prior, *Jacobean Church*, 174-175.

<sup>79</sup> Lancelot Andrewes, *Sermons*, 1:162 cited in P.A. Welsby, *Lancelot Andrewes, 1555-1626* (London: SPCK, 1958): 126.

Nevertheless, many in the Puritan camp refused to relinquish their hopes that the new king would finally continue the work of furthering the Reformation in England where Elizabeth had not.<sup>80</sup> To conformists, the Anglican liturgy as outlined in the *Book of Common Prayer* was suffused with dignity and decorum, a sense of good order and good taste, its spirit one of reverent humility and submission.<sup>81</sup> By contrast, Puritan reformists thought that ceremonies suffocated, rather than stimulated, religion and were especially conscious of what they deemed a surplus of decorum in Anglican services. Prebendary Peter Smart attacked excessive ceremony in the English Church, asking whether religion consists in

altar-decking, cope-wearing, organ-playing, piping and singing, crossing of cushions and kissing of clouts, oft starting up and squatting down, nodding of heads, and whirling about till their noses stand eastward, setting basins on the altar, candlesticks and crucifixes, burning wax candles in excessive numbers when and where there is no use of light [...] if, I say, religion consists in these and such like superstitious vanities, ceremonial fooleries, apish toys, and popish trinkets, we had never more religion than now.<sup>82</sup>

Those of the reformist persuasion believed that very dignity beloved of conformists was, at best, in danger of being a Laodicean substitute for enthusiastic commitment. A more serious criticism of worship according to the *Book of Common Prayer* was that it was impersonal, formal, and *artificial*.<sup>83</sup> Its ceremonies were thought to be the shell not the kernel of religion, its shadow not its substance. At worst, the Jacobean settlement was depicted as a departure from the liturgical tra-

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<sup>80</sup> The Puritans, while never a formally defined sect or religious division within Protestantism, ascribed to Reformed theology and, in that sense, were Calvinists, but Puritans of the hotter sort also took note of the radical criticisms of Ulrich Zwingli. John W. Morris, *The Historic Church: An Orthodox View of Christian History* (Bloomington, IN: Author House, 2011): 438.

<sup>81</sup> Davies, *Worship and Theology*, 222.

<sup>82</sup> Peter Smart, *The Vanitie and Downefall of Superstitious Popish Ceremonies* (London: 1628): 23-24 cited in Davies, *Worship and Theology*, 188.

<sup>83</sup> Davies, *Worship and Theology*, 222.

ditions of the ancient Church and of the best reformed contemporary churches: in fact, argued the clerical signatories of the *Abridgment*, this “apostasy” was a clear sign that “idolatry” and “Barbarism had invaded the Church of God.”<sup>84</sup>

In *A Christian Turn'd Turk*, Daborne appropriates this charge of “Barbarism” to construct a scene of actual Barbaric (as belonging to the culture of the Barbary states) ritual action through which to examine the effects of ceremony on his protagonist Englishman. That Daborne could sensibly use a scene of orderly Islamic ritual to interrogate the charges of idolatry, barbarism, and apostasy levied against rites of the Church of England, though, involved a fairly convoluted chain of linguistic and cultural associations whose origins were much older than that 1605 charge. The linguistic connections are clear enough. By the seventeenth century, the term “barbarism” was used in English to designate that which was “foreign” or the “behavior of a foreigner.” However, the possibilities for who or what counted as foreign in this case mattered. “Barbarian” designated not only “a native of Barbary,” but something “of or belonging to Barbary” like its religion, customs, and culture. Indeed, the religious connotations of “barbarism,” “Barbarian,” and “Barbary” become even more relevant when one considers that “Barbarian” also referred to “one who is outside the pale of Christian civilization.”<sup>85</sup> From there it is easy to connect “Barbarism” with the peoples and religion of Islamic North Africa.

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<sup>84</sup> *An abridgment of that booke which the ministers of Lincoln diocess delivered to his Maiestie upon the first of December last* ([W. Jones' secret press], 1605) cited in Charles W. Prior, *Defining the Jacobean Church: The Politics of Religious Controversy, 1603-1625* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2005): 161.

<sup>85</sup> “Barbarism,” “barbarian,” “Barbary,” in *The Oxford English Dictionary*: “barbarism, n.”. *OED Online*. December 2016. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/15389?redirectedFrom=barbarism> (accessed February 27, 2017); “barbarian, n. and adj.”. *OED Online*. December 2016. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/15380?redirectedFrom=barbarian> (accessed February 27, 2017); “Barbary, n.”. *OED Online*. December 2016. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/15400?redirectedFrom=Barbary> (accessed February 27, 2017).



But this seemingly strange (since, of course, Muslims were monotheists and made no representational images in religious art) association of Islam with idolatry stretched back to the early medieval period and the chronicles of the First Crusade; “with the one exception of Guibert of Nogent (1035-1125), all of these chroniclers described their foe as pagan idolaters.”<sup>86</sup> Centuries later, John Lydgate (c.1370-c.1450), who provided the most comprehensive contemporary account of the life of Muhammad in English, described the latter as

A false prophet and a magician,  
As bokes olde well reherce can  
Borne in Arabya, but of low kindred  
All his life worshipped ydols in dede.<sup>87</sup>

Because the Islamic supersession of Christianity and the conversion of Englishmen was an unthinkable phenomenon, it was denied in various ways, including “definitions of Islam as a ‘pagan’ misbelief akin to other forms of idolatrous paganism that Western Europeans associated with the Middle East.”<sup>88</sup> In popular fiction and drama, pagan Saracens and idol-worshipping Moors then cropped up paying homage to “Mahomet,” “Mawmet,” “Mahoun,” or “Mahound,” a deity who is often made part of a heathen pantheon that includes other devilish idols.<sup>89</sup> Thus, the

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<sup>86</sup> Christopher Toenjes, *Islam, the Turks, and the Making of the English Reformation: The History of the Ottoman Empire in John Foxe’s Acts and Monuments* (New York: Peter Lang, 2016): 210. See also John V. Tolan, “Muslims as Pagan Idolaters in Chronicles of the First Crusade,” in *Western Views of Islam in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Perceptions of the Other*, eds. David R. Blanks and Michael Frassetto (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999): 97-117, esp. 99 and Chew, *Crescent and the Rose*, 387-395.

<sup>87</sup> John Lydgate, *The fall of Prynces Gathered by John Bochas* (London: c.1554): fo.20r cited in Toenjes, *English Reformation*, 210.

<sup>88</sup> Vitkus, “Early Modern Orientalism,” 208.

<sup>89</sup> Vitkus, “Introduction,” 9. Vitkus points out that we may also find a distorted image of Islam first recorded in medieval romances and chivalric legends describing armed conflict between Christian and Saracen knights, including Alexandre du Pont’s *Roman de Mahomet* (1258) and *Sir Beues of Hamtoun* (c. 1300), as well as early modern romances such as Ludovico Ariosto’s *Orlando Furioso* (1532) and Torquato Tasso’s *Gerusalemme Liberata* (1581). The cultural heritage that these tales embody is important for an examination of *A Christian Turn’d Turk* because they exhibit what Dorothee Metlizki has called “the assemblage of myth, legend, fact, and propaganda [being fused]

representation of Islam received by Renaissance Europe is at times almost the opposite of its original. “Through a process of misperception and demonization, iconoclasm becomes idolatry, civilization becomes barbarity, monotheism becomes pagan polytheism, and so on.”<sup>90</sup>

Although the medieval belief that Muslims were idolaters enjoyed far less popularity in early modern Europe, such ideas did not disappear so readily. Even learned depictions of Islamic religion tended to be distortions or fabrications in the early modern period. A potent and seductive foe spread by an expansive Empire, the Islam of the early modern period “had to be repre-

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in the literary encounter between Christians and Saracens.” For Daborne’s composition of *A Christian Turn’d Turk*, these medieval accounts of Islam form an important imaginative foundation, “comprising an entire tradition of polemical misrepresentation,” a basis for the attitudes taken later by early modern theologians and writers, both Protestant and Roman Catholic, “in order to promote Christianity and to refute Islam. While the early modern image of Islam as seen through English eyes is one that has been so “radically transformed by time, distance, and cultural mediation that it bears little resemblance to the religion and culture it purports to describe, [...] these twisted stereotypes are, in a sense, ‘real.’ They are real because, for the vast majority of medieval and early modern Europeans, they served as the only readily available means for understanding [...] Islam. These representations are also ‘real’ in the sense that any such representation has a material and ideological impact as a historical phenomenon: it is a mode of perception that shapes the way people think and therefore the way they act.” Or, in this case, the way in which, and to what ends, they represent Islam in their plays. Dorothee Metlizki, *The Matter of Araby in Medieval England* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1977): 161.

Daniel Vitkus allows that Metlizki’s description of these texts is “an accurate assessment from the perspective of a modern critic,” but he suggests that a medieval audience “would have been far less skeptical,” claiming that the “deformed image of Islam” as found in the medieval romances “was received as a true one by many Europeans, even in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.” I would be inclined to agree with Vitkus to the extent that he rightly draws our attention to the degree to which, for premodern readers and audiences, “the distinction between story and history, fiction and fact, legend and chronicle, was not a clear one”—highlighting the fact that the category of “literature” as it is popularly defined today did not come into being until the nineteenth century—but Vitkus pushes this assertion too far when he finally claims that the product of these reading practices is an early modern “orientalism,” maintaining that the orientalist discourse described by Edward Said “began to emerge in an era when the European relationship to the Orient was not yet one of colonial dominance.” Daniel J. Vitkus, “Early Modern Orientalism: Representations of Islam in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Europe” in *Western Views of Islam in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Perception of Other*, ed. David R. Blanks and Michael Frassetto (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999): 207-230, 209. For a rationale for why I deem this term to be particularly problematic when applied to a pre-colonial period, see the Introduction of this dissertation. For further analyses of the depiction of Islamic figures in the romance tradition, see also Norman Daniel, *Heroes and Saracens: An Interpretation of the “Chansons de Geste”* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1984); C. Meredith Jones, “The Conventional Saracen of the Songs of Geste” in *Speculum* 17 (1942): 201-225; William Wistar Comfort, “The Saracens in Italian Epic Poetry” in *Proceedings of the Modern Language Association* 59 (1994): 882-910.

<sup>90</sup> Vitkus, “Early Modern Orientalism,” 207.

sented as a dangerous distortion of the true Church.”<sup>91</sup> It is at this very juncture, where Islam became associated with distortions of the “true Church” in the early modern imagination that the medieval rhetoric of idolatry was perhaps most famously taken up again by John Foxe as a trope with which to interrogate the “un-Christian” character of merely outward appearances that Foxe perceived in his own world. If Islam (here, the medieval image of Islam) had its array of ceremonies and outward signs, so too did the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>92</sup> In this way, the “availability of the ‘Turk’ as a trope [...] enabled him to speak to Protestant anxieties [about Roman Catholicism], enforce claims to the truth and legitimacy of the Protestant church [against the Church of Rome], and further to consider his country’s present and future spiritual health.”<sup>93</sup> But Foxe not only utilizes the terms “Turk” and “Turkish” to attack Roman Catholics or denote Christian “ungodliness” broadly-speaking, the imaginative framework of Islamic “idolatry” had finally become a conventional vehicle by which English Christians could interrogate insufficiently reformed English Christian religion.

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<sup>91</sup> Jack D’Amico, *The Moor in English Renaissance Drama* (Tampa: University of Florida Press, 1991): 75-76. Such anti-Islamic propaganda directed against the Prophet and the Quran is typified in a polemical dialogue by William Bedwell in 1615. As Vitkus points out, the title of his tract alone is sufficient for providing a sense of the English attitude toward Islam as it had evolved more than a decade into James I’s reign. William Bedwell, *Mohammedis Imposturare: That is, A Discovery of the Manifold Forgeries, Falsehoods, and horrible impieties of the blasphemous seducer Mohammed: with a demonstration of the insufficiency of his law, contained in the cursed Alkoran* (London: 1615). Vitkus, “Early Modern Orientalism,” 208. At the same time that romance tale tellers were recounting the heroic exploits of Christian knights and crusaders who vanquished sinister Islamic foes, there were those among the educated elites who were studying Islamic theology in order to stop its spread. For example, medieval scholars such as Ricoldo da Monte Croce, Mark of Toledo, Ramon Lull, Ramon Marti, Peter the Venerable, Robert of Ketton, and Hermann of Dalmata (all monks or clerics) translated, described, and denounced Islam from the perspective of medieval scholasticism. Vitkus, “Early Modern Orientalism,” 208. For detailed information on these authors and their works, see also Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1960) and James Kritzeck, *Peter the Venerable and Islam* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1964).

<sup>92</sup> Toenjes, *English Reformation*, 207-208, 227.

<sup>93</sup> Stephan Schmuck, “The ‘Turk’ as Antichrist in John Foxe’s *Acts and Monuments* (1570)” in *Reformation* 10 (2005): 21-44, 27.

Even as Puritan voices called for continued reformation of the Church of England—the removal of all traces of barbarous “idolatry”—it must be acknowledged that the Church’s ceremonial practice had come a long way from its pre-Reformation roots. Indeed, Horton Davies muses that worship according to the stately ordinances of the *Book of Common Prayer* “must have often seemed exceedingly boring.”<sup>94</sup> Certainly the disappearance of much ceremonial splendor in the wake of the earlier English reform movements under Henry, Edward and, later, Elizabeth amounted to “a deadening of the pictorial imagination.”<sup>95</sup> With this qualification in mind, it becomes clear that, by contrast, the ritual of John Ward’s conversion in *A Christian Turn’d Turk* would have been a riotous sensory overload.

If Daborne harbored any doubt that his audiences would have been appalled by the spectacle of the ceremonial action itself, the Chorus fills that need for right interpretation. Much like the play’s audience, the Chorus stands outside the action in Daborne’s drama—the Chorus does not involve himself in events or with characters like the Chorus in Kyd’s *The Spanish Tragedy*, for example. Instead, the Chorus essentially serves as the spectator “in the know.” Before the entrance of Ward and the Muslim “priests,” the Chorus makes it clear to the audience that what they are about to witness on stage are only “black” deeds: indeed, “[h]ere could I wish that our period, or that our pen, / Might speak the fictions, not the acts of men,” he says (8.11, 4, 1-2). Once the perception of the audience has been retrained to expect something vile, the ceremonial action that follows looks decidedly different from our first examination of the scene through the perspective of its practitioners. Ward, of course, still enters in that stately ceremonial procession, proceeded by two Turks “bearing half-moons” and one “with Mahomet’s head” following after,

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<sup>94</sup> Davies, *Worship and Theology in England*, 222.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 222.

etc. (8.sd). But interweaving its way through the scene's ritual action, the outsider voice of the observing Chorus continually interjects from the frame of the text to redirect the audience's consumption of the ceremony.

With the voice of the Chorus setting forth Ward's participation in the rite as the height of pride and irreverence ("The face of heaven itself he dares to strike," he "to whom [...] shame nor fear / Give any curb") all the while espousing a familiar vocabulary of "priests," "pagan[s]," "seducers," "fiction," and "villainy," the imagination is quick to transform the orderly ceremony into an idolatrous rite brimming with extravagant and unedifying spectacle (8.6, 13-14, 11,17, 20, 2, 20). While Ward's exit in ceremonial pomp on ass may be merely absurd and his swearing on the grotesque, oversized, angry-eyed "Mahomet's head" too fantastical to be truly frightening, under the Chorus' steady-stream of rhetorical influence idolatrous Turks bearing half-moons become acolytes, the Mufti's train is transformed into a cope, prostration is not so far from genuflection.<sup>96</sup> All the while "a confused noise of music" accompanies a "show" that promises its participants only "wretchedness" and "hell" (8.sd, 24, 26). Indeed, from the perspective of the critical observer, the orderly ritual that facilitates Ward's reception into Muslim life in Tunis becomes an absolutely disturbing piece of theatre that not only revives a medieval discourse of Islamic idolatry, but that resurrects England's own "idolatrous" Roman Catholic past in the tradition of early modern reformers like Foxe and the *Abridgment* signatories.

As Ward converts to Islam, what is simultaneously mobilized in the English cultural imagination, then, is a meditation on the fracturing of the spiritual evocation of community that

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<sup>96</sup> Mahomet's head: A standard stage property of the London playing companies like the "Turk's heads" used in England as tavern signs or archery targets. "Swears him on the Mahomet's head": The misperception of Mahomet as a pagan idol, worshipped by "Saracens" and "paynim knights," goes back to the *Chanson de Roland* and other medieval romance tales. The notion that Muhammad was a pagan god continued to appear in English writing on Islam throughout the seventeenth century. Vitkus, "Notes" on *A Christian Turn'd Turk*, 236.

Christians had once widely experienced in the rites of the Church, the overvaluing of minor distinctions in ritual practices, and the propagandistic misinterpretation of doctrinal differences. When “custom” and the pomp of “ceremony” could be dismissed as the work of men and exploited as idolatrous, Roman Catholic error, it was no great stretch, then, to discredit the rites of the relatively conservative Church of England on similar grounds. Indeed, the *Abridgment* suggested that the roots of Anglican ceremony were planted firmly in the “rise of Roman idolatry.”<sup>97</sup> As long as the Church of England embodied the sort of idolatry associated with the Church of Rome, Anglican ceremony necessarily entailed a retreat from reform: “the retaining of popish ceremonies will certainly be a means to endanger the doctrine that we professe, and to bring the people back again to popery.”<sup>98</sup>

Against the charge of “idolatry” spread by those Protestants who sought further reform in the Church of England, John Gordon, who had actually been present at the Hampton Court Conference, published *EIPHNOKOINΩNIA. The Peace of the communion of the Church of England* (1612). In this treatise Gordon argues that the process of reform that defined English Protestantism was notable for having restored ceremonies to their original use: in other words, the driving theme of *EIPHNOKOINΩNIA* was the “conversion” of ceremonies formerly the preserve of pagan worship and their restoration to sound usage.<sup>99</sup> Gordon posited the “reform” of idolatrous

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<sup>97</sup> Prior, *Jacobean Church*, 177.

<sup>98</sup> *An Abridgement of that booke which the ministers of Lincoln diocess delivered to his Maiestie upon the first of December last* ([W. Jones’ secret press]: 1605) cited in Prior, *Jacobean Church*, 161.

<sup>99</sup> John Gordon, *EIPHNOKOINΩNIA. The Peace of the communion of the Church of England* (London: 1612): sig.Bv cited in Prior, *Jacobean Church*, 180.

ceremonies as part of the historical identity of the Church.<sup>100</sup> By restoring formerly idolatrous customs to sound usage, the Church of England was partaking in an ongoing process of reformation that linked it to both Christ and the ancient Church. Hence, “gestures that once stood as badges of idolatry became signs of reverence and edification.”<sup>101</sup>

Therefore, in 1607, Thomas Sparke entreated all English Protestants to accept the decisions of the 1604 Canons in order to preserve the stability of the Church:

[O]ur common Mother the Church of England [...] is troubled with so dangerous enemies, both on her right and left, and so to bury and extinguish for ever the odious name of Puritants, and to put an end to all shewe of schism, distraction and division amongst ourselves [let us] give over contending any more thus amongst ourselves, about these our Mother’s outward fashions, trimmings, and deckings.<sup>102</sup>

But to reformists, the alterations and deviations from Scripture as contained in the *Book of Common Prayer* could not be permitted. For Puritan Samuel Hieron in c.1607-1608, even the “conversion” of ceremonies not explicitly outlined in Scripture constituted “a departure from the divine pattern” and entailed “a severing of the Church of England from the ‘true’ Church.”<sup>103</sup> Any

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<sup>100</sup> Gordon, *EIPHNOKOINΩNIA*, sig.B2r cited in Prior, *Jacobean Church*, 180. For example, he offered the case of the Israelites in Egypt: Seeing that God ordained the ceremonies, with which the Israelites were accustomed when they did worship Idols in Egypt, to be used in His owne worship, it follows, that these customes and ceremonies, as also the Material things that were abused to Idolatry [...] may lawfully be converted to some use in the true worship of God.”

<sup>101</sup> Prior, *Jacobean Church*, 182.

<sup>102</sup> Thomas Sparke, *A brotherly perswasion to vnitie, and vniformitie in iudgement, and practice touching the recited, and present ecclesiasticall government* (London: 1607) cited in Stuart Barton Babbage, *Puritanism and Richard Bancroft* (London: SPCK, 1962): 81. See also William Covell, *A briefe answer vnto certaine reasons by way of an apologie deliuered to the Right Reuerend Father in God, the L. Bishop of Lincolne, by Mr. John Burges* (London: 1606): \*4r.

<sup>103</sup> Samuel Hieron, *A defence of the ministers reasons, for refusal of subscription to the Booke of common prayer, and of conformitie* ([Amsterdam?: 1607-1608]): 3 cited in Prior, *Jacobean Church*, 173.

disjunction between Scripture and practice in the rites of the English Church was evidence of that Church's apostasy, rather than a mark of its sovereignty.<sup>104</sup>

### **“our country’s shame”: Ceremonies and the Commonwealth**

However, despite (or perhaps because of) prolonged sectarian conflict in the wake of the Reformation in England, participation in the ritual activity of the Church of England was still read as an indicator of one's right relationship to the whole and, thus, necessary for the construction of English religio-political community in the seventeenth century. The rites of the Church not only served “as bonds of obedience to God, strict obligations to the mutual exercise of Christian charity, provocations to godliness, preservation from sin, [and] memorials to the principal benefits of Christ,” the ceremonies of the Church were understood as “marks of distinction to separate God's own from strangers” and one's participation in the Church's rites a means to “compare the receivers of them with such as receive them not.”<sup>105</sup> The performance of ceremony, then, was as essential to constructing reassuring distinctions between insiders and outsiders as it was to facilitating the crossing of religio-political boundaries as explored in Shakespeare's *Othello*.

In *A Christian Turn'd Turk*, though, the effects of a disorderly ecclesiastical body for the orderly maintenance of the body politic, so often the focus of early modern theological and political theorists like Hooker, are rendered visible in that same ritual of Ward's conversion. As audience members watch Ward change from his “Christian habit” into “the habit of a free-born

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<sup>104</sup> Prior, *Jacobean Church*, 186. For more on the necessity that all aspects of ceremonial practice be derived from Scripture, see also William Ames, *A reply to Dr. Mortons general Defence of three nocent ceremonies. viz. the surplice, crosse in baptisme, and kneeling at the receiuing of the sacramental elements of bread and wine* ([Amsterdam: Printed by Giles Thorp], 1622): esp. sig.B3v; Kevin Sprunger, *The Learned Doctor William Ames* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1972): esp. 3-101.

<sup>105</sup> Richard Hooker, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity: An Abridged Edition*, ed. A.S. McGrade and Brian Vickers (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1975): 5:57:286.



Turk,” Jonathan Burton argues that they are “made aware they are watching a mere act. Nothing more has occurred than an actor’s harmless change of costume.”<sup>106</sup> But it is that very ease and even innocuousness to which Burton points—exchanging a hat for a turban, shoes for slippers—that makes the scene disturbing. Despite its seriousness, changing allegiance to God and country is as easy as changing garments. Indeed, this potentially flippant quality is what makes apostasy so dangerous. But Ward does more than exchange his clothes for “the habit of a free-born Turk”: Ward swears to the “laws of their damned Prophet” and, in doing so, “Foreswears his name” (8.16-23). Ward has altered his physical body in resemblance of the Turk, certainly, but he has also ritually abandoned the collective body of Christian Europe when he rejects his Christian identity in the forsaking of his name, in the girding of his sword for use “[i]n wars ‘gainst Christians,” and in spurning the staged offer of wine at the hands of “a Christian” who “offers him a cup” (8.sd). It is through the highly theatrical rejection of recognizable Christian bodies—names/familial bodies, wars/political bodies, cups/ecclesiastical bodies—that the ceremony of Ward’s conversion situates the audience within a familiar discourse of bodily and spiritual change. The ceremony at the heart of *A Christian Turn’d Turk* demonstrates special interest in changing bodies at the nexus of the religious and the political—an interest in the effects of dangerous ceremony for the unified body of the commonwealth.

Indeed, even the treatments of John Ward’s story found in the extant pamphlet literature direct our attention toward the kind of condemnation that was reserved for the renegade’s awesome crimes against the English king *and* against England’s God.<sup>107</sup> When news that John Ward

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<sup>106</sup> Burton, *Traffic and Turning*, 31.

<sup>107</sup> For examples, see Anonymous, “The Seaman’s Song of Captain Ward, The Famous Pirate of the World, and an Englishman Born” (London: 1609) and Anonymous, “The Famous Sea-Fight Between Captain Ward and the Rain-

had apostasized reached England in 1610, the event was swiftly and widely commented upon and, in 1612, a poem by satirist Samuel Rowlands, “To a Reprobate Pirate That Hath Renounced Christ and Is Turn’d Turk,” issued from the English presses.<sup>108</sup> From Rowlands’ text, we are able to glimpse a hint of the sort of righteous fury that renegadism and apostasy provoked in England. Addressing Ward himself, Rowlands denounces the renegade Englishman as a traitor worse than Judas:

Thou wicked lump of only sin, and shame,  
 (Renouncing Christian faith and Christian name),  
 A villain, worse than he that Christ betray’d [...]  
 Receive this warning from thy native land;  
 God’s fearful judgements (villain) are at hand.<sup>109</sup>

Both halves of the commonwealth are violated by acts of apostasy abroad. Renegadism was regarded as a treasonous betrayal of king and nation, rendering warnings from one’s “native land” necessary, just as it was a denial of the “Christian faith” and its attendant ecclesiastical order—the order not only headed by the English sovereign but undergirding and rendering visible the ideal coherence of the English state itself. Rowlands’ condemnation of Ward posits that the renegade’s compromising of the integrity of the English nation as a coherent political unit was met

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bow” (London: 1620). Daniel Vitkus’ *Three Turk Plays of Early Modern England* contains a nice modern-spelling edition of both ballads as part of an Appendix to the anthology.

<sup>108</sup> In December, the Venetian ambassador to England, Marc Antonio Correr, wrote to the doge that “there is confirmation of the news that the pirate Ward and Sir Frances Verney, [...] an Englishman of the noblest blood, have become Turks, to the great indignation of the whole nation.” *Calendar of State Papers Relating to English Affairs in the Archives of Venice*, Her Majesty’s Stationery Office (1864-1947), December 23, 1610 cited in Tinniswood, *Pirates of Barbary*, 44.

<sup>109</sup> Samuel Rowlands, “To a Reprobate Pirate That Hath Renounced Christ and Is Turn’d Turk” (London: 1612) cited in Tinniswood, *Pirates of Barbary*, 44.

by the renegade's compromising the integrity of the English nation as a unity of state and Church.<sup>110</sup>

So too in Daborne's play do even the "trivial scenes" work to underscore the atrocity of Ward's rejection of God *and* country (Prologue.9). In order to turn what might have seemed fairly reasonable, certainly familiar, but even sympathetic reasons for conversion—socio-economic benefits, upward civic mobility, marriage—into a picture of the heinousness of apostasy for an English audience, Daborne needed to show that renegades, "our country's shame," not only renounced Christianity but their Englishness too (7.269).<sup>111</sup> As Ward embraces his own unholy trinity of "beauty, command, and riches," that three-fold desire is met by the virtuous Alizia's three-fold appeal that Ward stay his choice (7.193). Alizia begs Ward not to "turn" and tells him that conversion is not only "the denial / Of your redeemer," it is "the denial / Of your redeemer, religion, country, / Of him that gave you being" (7.198-200).

Faith and nation are explicitly connected in Alizia's list, but they are connected far more subtly, and perhaps more powerfully, in the unclear referent of "him." Who is the "him" that gave Ward being? Does "him" belong with "redeemer," thus affecting a particular emphasis on Ward's religious transgression? Or does "him" belong with "country," emphasizing Ward's conversion as a rejection of his father and *his* father, a denial of his lineage and thus a political transgression? We must remember that the Church of England still held the medieval view that

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<sup>110</sup> For his part, another English renegade and contemporary of John Ward, Peter Eston, felt no compunction about attacking the ships of his home country. But in 1610, when Eston released the master of one English vessel he captured, Eston sent him home to London with a warning that effectively highlights the degree to which political and religious disloyalty were conflated: tell the merchants on the Exchange that Eston "would be a scourge to Englishmen" and that "he esteemed Englishmen no other than as Turks and Jews." High Court of Admiralty, Public Record Office 13/41/59 (July 24, 1610), cited in Tinniswood, *Pirates of Barbary*, 67.

<sup>111</sup> Matar, "The Renegade," 501.

because the Church and state were essentially co-extensive bodies, as a child is born a member of the English nation to English parents and baptized a member of the Church of England, and as the prayers of the local church are a reflection of the prayers of the national Church, so too does the Church of England stress continuity with the England of centuries past.<sup>112</sup> Even in this understated bit of dialogue, Daborne carefully establishes the pivotal scene of Ward's conversion as one in which the apostate's relationship to the English unity of Church and state cannot be disentangled.

So it is precisely in the confused order of ceremonial action at the heart of his play that Daborne facilitates what is, from one perspective, the orderly and efficacious construction of religio-political bonds and what is, from a conflicting point of view, a disordered and dangerous symbolic breaking of those same religious and political bonds. Indeed, it is in Daborne's lacing of his scene of Islamic conversion with traces of what, to a Puritan reformist, must have suggested unreformed, ritual idolatry that the ceremony of Ward's conversion is revealed to have the highest stakes for the body of the English commonwealth and for the renegade himself. Far from definitively settling matters of English ecclesiology, the Hampton Court settlement stirred up old fears and old grievances over effects of ceremony for its participants. Ultimately, if the scene of Ward's conversion would have given English audiences pause, it was because prolonged conflict over the meaning of ritual had created a space in which the Church had no official means by which to address a repentant renegade. By the end of his story, Ward will desire a return to the Christian fold, but there will be no corresponding ritual with which to heal the wound in the body of the commonwealth created by his apostasy. Ward will be severed from the Body of Christ.

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<sup>112</sup> Davies, *Worship and Theology*, 199.

### “heaven is just”: The Consequences of Ceremony

It is often asserted by critics that Ward’s sexual transgression and subsequent conversion are “signs of his unalterable path to damnation” and reveal the shape of the play’s tragic arc as “consistent with Calvinist predestination.”<sup>113</sup> As we have seen, the Jacobean era was defined by the contentious polarities that existed between Anglican and Puritan ideologies, certainly, but what those divisions have at their core in this period is not the problem of soteriology, it is the problem of ecclesiology. It is the debates on ceremonies, in particular, that are crucial to our understanding of Jacobean religious conflict. Indeed, across much of the discourse that issued from the English presses in the immediate wake of the Hampton Court settlement, there is no mention of predestination, nor do these works yet show much concern with the doctrinal aspects of the attainment of grace. Rather, their arguments turn on the axis of mode of worship (and, relatedly, Church governance).<sup>114</sup> The tragedy of the renegade’s fall must be resituated within the scope of the seventeenth century debates over ceremony—just as the mobilization of Ward’s conversion was itself re-contextualized within the frame of ritual action—thus revealing the extent to which Ward’s tragic end is a meditation on the effects of improper ceremonial action.

The conformist argued that “pure and unstained religion ought to be the highest of all cares appertaining to public regiment” precisely “for the force which religion hath to qualify all sorts of men, and to make them in public affairs the more serviceable, governors the apter to rule

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<sup>113</sup> Degenhardt, *Islamic Conversion*, 126.

<sup>114</sup> Prior, *Jacobean Church*, 188, 193. In fact, Prior suggests that the first overt references to the interconnected problems of predestination, election, free will, Calvinism, and Arminianism did not surface until 1619 with the publication of Thomas Deighton’s *The second part of a plain discourse of an vnlettered Christian, wherein by way of demonstration hee sheweth what the reasons be which he doth ground upon, in refusing conformity to kneeling in the act of receiving the Lord’s Supper* ([Leiden]: 1619). The initial debates on ceremonies had dealt almost exclusively with questions of antiquity and authority, out of which the accusations of idolatry and heresy arise.

with conscience, inferiors for conscience sake the willinger to obey.”<sup>115</sup> This is a vision of religion that had the potential to “qualify all sorts of men” and that made room in the Body of Christ for even the grossly imperfect sinner. Indeed, that was the point. Herbert Thorndike would later stress that ceremonies are a kind of “Paedagogie” whereby men “are guided in the exercise of godliness.” To the conformist mind, ceremony could help even those minds which are least in tune “to corroborate their reverence and devotion at the Service of God, by their exercise of it,” while the thoughtful persons present will be greatly impressed “by the example of the world practising the Service of God in an orderly and reverent form.” Thorndike clearly approved Augustine’s conviction that “the affection of the heart antecedent to the doing of these [gestures], by the doing of them gathers strength.”<sup>116</sup> Over time, and with diligent training, even the ungodly could be brought to godliness.

The Puritan reformers, however, wanted more practical results. They gauged the value of a religious ritual by examining the quality of the participant’s immediate response to it. In their view, “rituals ‘worked’ only when they improved the morals of the people.”<sup>117</sup> During the first third of the sixteenth century, the humanist writings of Desiderius Erasmus popularized this view. His critique of outward ritualistic piety depicted ceremony “as folly unless it produced charitable behavior and self-knowledge.”<sup>118</sup> It is clear by now that, in worship, the Puritan tended to equate the formal, the traditional, and ceremonial with the insincere: it was thought a “high presumption to tender any innovation by farre-fetcht devices and novelities, or some Old Tradition, or worme-

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<sup>115</sup> Richard Hooker, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity: An Abridged Edition*, ed. A.S. McGrade and Brian Vickers (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1975): 5:1:218-219.

<sup>116</sup> Herbert Thorndike, *Of Religious Assemblies and the Publick Service of God: A Discourse according to Apostolic Rule and Practice* (Cambridge: 1642) cited in Davies, *Worship and Theology*, 206.

<sup>117</sup> Edward Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1997): 150.

<sup>118</sup> Muir, *Ritual*, 150.

eaten ceremony, full of uncertainty, to the direct disabling of all sufficient truth.”<sup>119</sup> But so pervasive was this protracted “crisis in confidence in the efficacy of ritual” that this same sentiment can be seen in what Thomas Greene calls the “curious destiny” of the word “ceremony” itself.<sup>120</sup>

By the sixteenth century, “ceremony” had taken on a disparaging connotation. In English, one of the sub-definitions of “ceremony” had become “a rite or observance regarded merely formal or external; an empty form.” In fact, the *Oxford English Dictionary*’s first recorded use of “ceremony” with a disparaging meaning is 1533, when it is contrasted to the true body of Christ: “Shal we become Jewes and go backe to the shadow and ceremonie, sith we have the body and signification whiche is Christ?” Moreover, the word “ritual” as opposed to “rite” began as a pejorative word in English, first appearing, according to the *OED*, in 1570: “contayning no manner of doctrine [...] but only certayn ritual decrees to no purpose.” Rather than offering access to divine mysteries, “ceremonies” and, by extension, “rituals” came to be considered “in the minds of some, at least, as synonymous with fraud.”<sup>121</sup>

The association of ceremony with fraud is finally literalized in *A Christian Turn’d Turk* when the suggestion of Ward’s counterfeiting of his circumcision is raised. Jonathan Burton

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<sup>119</sup> Thomas Deighton, *Certaine reasons of a private Christian against conformitie to kneeling in the very act of receiving the Lords Supper* ([Leiden]: 1618): sig.A3v cited in Prior, *Jacobean Church*, 192.

<sup>120</sup> Thomas M. Greene, “Ritual and Text in the Renaissance,” *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature* (June-September 1991): 179-197, 181-182. These doubts about the moral and spiritual efficacy of Christian ritual practice evidenced in Daborne’s primary source texts and in *A Christian Turn’d Turk* itself surfaced long before Martin Luther and the other early reformers like Zwingli and Calvin revised the sacramental system, though. This centuries-long precedent for the questioning of the results of religious ritual needs to be acknowledged here for its effects upon the language of ceremonial action that had come to fruition in early modernity. Muir, *Ritual*, 166-167.

<sup>121</sup> The same pattern appears in the other vernacular languages of Europe during the sixteenth century. Greene and Muir point out, for example, in *Galateo* (1558), Giovanni Della Casa cited ceremonies, lies, and dreams as examples of illusions that should be ignored; these were things that consist “in appearances without substance and in words without meaning.” For his part, Michel de Montaigne (*Essais*, 1580) noted that “we are only ceremonies” to convey his disgust with the hypocrisy of social formalities. For all of the above quotations and more examples across the vernacular languages of Europe, see Greene, “Ritual and Text,” 181-182 or Muir, *Ritual*, 167.

claims that “Ward, we learn, has faked the ritual of circumcision.”<sup>122</sup> Indeed, any certainty that this necessary step has been properly performed is called into question. The Dutch pirate Simon Dansiker’s captain explains that while he did, in fact, see Ward in his zeal “Turk to the circumcision,” he later “heard [Ward] played the Jew with ‘em, / Made ‘em come to the cutting of an ape’s tail” instead (9.2-4). Burton pushes this uncertainty further, though, when he argues that Ward was not actually circumcised at all. He stresses that “[o]nly the fool who fails to distinguish performance, or playing, from reality mistakes acting for apostasy. By playing the part of the Jew—the deceiver and false convert—Ward actually preserves his Christianity” and thus remains a “sympathetic figure.”<sup>123</sup> While it is certainly possible that Ward has not been circumcised (although we must remember that this report is purely the result of hearsay), the lack of circumcision does not necessarily equate to a preservation of Ward’s Christianity as Burton suggests.

It was believed that as “religion unfeignedly loved perfecteth men’s abilities unto all kinds of virtuous services in the commonwealth,” so “the purer and perfecter our religion is, the worthier effects it hath in them who steadfastly and sincerely embrace it, in others not.”<sup>124</sup> Regardless if Ward has been circumcised, Ward has taken part in the wider ceremonial action of his conversion. If “pure” and “perfect” ceremonies are supposed to dispose the heart to virtue and proper service to the commonwealth, we must remember that this ceremony—by turns Islamic, Roman Catholic, orderly, and idolatrous—is only riddled with confusion. It perhaps goes without

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<sup>122</sup> Burton, *Traffic and Turning*, 31.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>124</sup> Richard Hooker, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity: An Abridged Edition*, ed. A.S. McGrade and Brian Vickers (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1975): 5:1:222.



saying that the effects of such a ritual are not good for Ward; his morals are not improved, it does not produce charitable behavior, and it does not produce self-knowledge until it is too late. The very possibility that Ward could render an already questionable rite worse by his own fraudulent behavior suggests a serious tarnishing of Ward's character.

Indeed, after Ward has converted, whether he has been circumcised or not, the effects of improper ceremonial action produce distinctly irreverent, un-Christian behavior. Ward discovers Voada's desire for both his wealth (scene 12) and a lover (scene 13) and, suspecting his alluring wife is playing him false, goes mad with rage and vows revenge (scene 13, 15). He eventually wounds her in a fight over her lover (scene 15), and finally Ward kills himself (scene 16). Like *Christian Turn'd Turk* itself, Daborne's principal sources similarly take perverse pleasure in detailing the moral (d)effects of the pirate's conversion. Andrew Barker's *True and Certain Report* (1609) accuses the apostate Ward and his followers of monstrous sins, including "concupiscence and covetousness," "sodomy," and "atheism," condemning Ward's behavior in Islamic territory where "he was diverted and abased to most vile actions, clothing his mind with the most ugly habiliments that either pride, luxury, or cruelty can produce from the blindness of unruly desires." So too does the anonymous *News from Sea* (1609) describe a sensationally sinful man whose crew of renegades go about "pampering and fattening themselves with the poison of their souls."<sup>125</sup>

Given Daborne's driving concern for the interconnection of personal, religious, and political bodies explored in this chapter thus far, however, it seems far more likely that Ward *was* circumcised and Sares' bit of hearsay is just that—hearsay (in fact, Burton is the only critical voice

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<sup>125</sup> Barker, *A true and certaine report*, 16. Anonymous, *Newes from the sea*, sig. Br3.

to suggest otherwise). Here, it is necessary to recall Chapter 1's consideration of the theological relationship between circumcision and the sacrament of baptism.<sup>126</sup> First, the Israelite bore the outward sign of his membership of the chosen people by the Covenant seal of circumcision, a token by which God recognized and acknowledged His people while, at the same time, it functioned as a visible sign whereby the Israelites might know one another. Second, it was from this tradition that Paul developed his metaphor for the transformative, inward operation of the Spirit, the "circumcision of the heart" of Romans 2:29 in which the apostle explains that baptism does to the soul what circumcision does to the body.<sup>127</sup> Thus, the ritual action of the Church—in this case through the baptismal ceremony—gathered together a community made distinctive by its signs.

But it is equally essential to remember that it is "by the refusal and contempt of them [the Church's ceremonial signs] that we declare ourselves to be none of Christ's disciples, of whom these sacraments are badges."<sup>128</sup> Indeed, by the early modern period, circumcision was considered not only a desecration of the baptismal sign, it was "a denial of the messianic fulfillment in

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<sup>126</sup> Indeed, to sever the act (or threat) of ritual circumcision from its expressly theological connotations in order to read it as an overt commentary on sexuality as criticism has tended to do is to risk disingenuousness about the purpose of the ritual as understood by the early modern religious communities engaged in the practice (for Jews and Muslims, signifying religious and ethnic communal membership and/or covenant relationships with God) and to overlook its relationship to early modern Christianity's self-understanding through its theological connection to the Christian sacrament of initiation, baptism, and thus to the formation of seventeenth century English religio-political community.

<sup>127</sup> For a reading of Othello's definitive entrance into Venetian society only through his "re-circumcision" (his suicide read as a literalization of the Pauline "circumcision of the heart"), see Julia Reinhard Lupton, *Citizen-Saints: Shakespeare and Political Theology* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005) and "Othello Circumcised: Shakespeare and the Pauline Discourse of Nations" in *Representations* 57 (Winter 1997): 73-89.

<sup>128</sup> Thomas Draxe, *The lambes spouse or the heauenly bride* (London: 1608): sigs.B2v, F2v cited in Prior, *Jacobean Church*, 178.

Jesus, a denial that the Jews and the Muslims—in different ways—shared.”<sup>129</sup> That Englishmen like Ward had submitted themselves to circumcision proved that they had rejected their Lord and savior: they had stained “the Christal clere-sauing water of Baptisme with the bloud of Circumcision.”<sup>130</sup> As far as the official position of the Church of England was concerned, baptism was necessary to salvation—“for God in his wisdom and mercy hath instructed [the sacraments] to that end, and hath so commanded them to be used”—and “onely true members of this Church are assured of the forgiveness of their sinnes by Christ.”<sup>131</sup> Salvation depended on membership in the Church and, via his circumcision, Ward has severed himself from this association. His behavior, then, is an expected reflection of his spiritual state.

However, at the end of *A Christian Turn'd Turk*, John Ward undergoes a radical, moralizing repentance for his apostasy. Betrayed by his wife, Ward, who was so taken by the many benefits offered by conversion in Tunis, regrets everything:

WARD: O may I be the last of my country  
 That trust unto your treacheries, seducing treacheries.  
 All you that live by theft and piracies,  
 That sell your lives and souls to purchase graves,  
 That die to hell, and live far worse than slaves,  
 Let dying Ward tell you that heaven is just,  
 And that despair attends on blood and lust. (16.315-321)

Ward offers himself as an example to all future pirates and renegades, and conveys a familiar exhortation for Christian unity against the “slaves of Mahomet”:

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<sup>129</sup> Matar, *Islam in Britain*, 64.

<sup>130</sup> Edward Kellet, *A Returne from Argier. A Sermon Preached at Minhead in the County of Somerset the 16. of March, 1627. at there admission of a relapsed Christian into our Chvrch* (1628): 18 cited in Matar, *Islam in Britain*, 64.

<sup>131</sup> Richard Gawton, *A short instruction for all such as are to be admitted to the Lords Supper* (London: 1612): sig.B3v cited in Prior, *Jacobean Church*, 179.

WARD: O may the force of Christendom  
 Be reunited and all at once requite  
 The lives that you [the Turks] have murdered,  
 Beating a path out to Jerusalem  
 Over the bleeding breasts of you and yours (16.296, 309-313).

Daniel Vitkus argues that, at the play's end, Ward takes his leave of the Christian community "only because it cannot accommodate his bold spirit or satisfy his appetite for unlimited aggression" but, far from thumbing his nose at a society that cannot accommodate his unruly masculinity, Ward meets his end wanting to come back to that community.<sup>132</sup> So profound is John Ward's regret for having joined the Turks that only the powerful imagery of crusade—a conflict tinged by all the bloody, bodily, religio-political strife of Ward's own story—can meet his descriptive needs as he calls for a united resistance of the Turk.

Unfortunately for Ward, there are no means by which to enact his return to his English Christian community. The issue of John Ward's ritual circumcision became important in its theological connection to Christian baptism, and through baptism, to its signification as a mark of identity with a Christian community—in this case, the English commonwealth. What baptism mobilized was entrance into the life of both a human *and* a spiritual community, two inseparable spheres. Ward, however, has disrupted this association at a time when his native community is unable to fix it. There is not yet a corresponding, restorative ritual to heal the wounds wrought by apostasy, and so Ward's body itself is torn "piecemeal," his "accursed limbs" thrown "[i]nto the raging bowels of the sea" (16.323-324). To the extent that Ward is a "sympathetic figure" as

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<sup>132</sup> Vitkus, *Turning Turk*, 144.

Burton claims, it is because Ward is a victim of a divided English Christianity as much as he is a victim of his own poor choices.<sup>133</sup>

### **“Let my example move all pirates”: Conclusion**

Of course, at the time of the first performances of *A Christian Turn'd Turk*, the real John Ward was alive and well. As the play was being presented on the London stage, Ward was flourishing in Tunis without having undergone divine or human punishment for his apostasy. “Ward lived like a Bashaw in Barbary,” wrote Captain John Smith, and when William Lithgow visited Ward in 1615, he provided an eyewitness account in which he marveled at Ward’s lavish lifestyle.<sup>134</sup> Ward’s palace, he wrote, was “beautiful with rich Marble and Alabaster stones,” and Ward’s wealth was subsequently celebrated in London songs:

At Tunis in Barbary,  
Now he buildeth stately,  
A gallant Palace, and Royal place,  
Decked with delights most trim.<sup>135</sup>

Vitkus muses that “London playgoers were probably aware that Ward was still alive and prospering, a reality that may have tinged the tragic ending with irony.”<sup>136</sup> Where Vitkus reads clever irony, though, Nabil Matar argues that the fact “[t]hat [Daborne] ended his play with this fabricated episode shows the apprehension which prevailed in the English imagination about Britons

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<sup>133</sup> Burton, *Traffic and Turning*, 32.

<sup>134</sup> Smith, *The True Travels*, 56 cited in Matar, *Islam in Britain*, 57.

<sup>135</sup> William Lithgow, *The Totall Discourse of the Rare Adventures and Painefull Peregrinations of Long Nineteen Yeares Trauayles, from Scotland, to the Most Famous Kingdomes in Europe, Asia, and Affrica* (London: 1632): 315 cited in Matar, *Islam in Britain*, 57; Anonymous, “The Seaman’s Song,” in ed. Daniel Vitkus, *Three Turk Plays of Early Modern England: Selimus, A Christian Turned Turk, and The Renegado* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000): 345-348.

<sup>136</sup> Vitkus, “Introduction.” 39.

who converted to Islam and remorselessly renounced their king and country.”<sup>137</sup> Many Britons believed that apostasy paid off handsomely; “no wonder Daborne had to punish Ward at the end of the play. Indeed, the fact that Daborne wrote his play about the apostasy of an English, not a continental, renegade shows how concerned he was about the apostasy of Britons to Islam.”<sup>138</sup> Daborne knew that little could realistically be done about Ward or any other Englishmen who converted: “what was possible,” says Matar, “was to inject fear about the consequences of apostasy.”<sup>139</sup>

But inject fear into whom? And fears of what consequences? If the weakness and amorality of Englishmen in the Islamic world might seem to be a distant concern for many in England, what made renegadism and apostasy relevant and even pressing issues was that “the conversion of Englishmen to Islam might be seen as part of a larger destabilization of religious identity.”<sup>140</sup> In a period in which “religious loyalties were variously configured by over a century of conflicting mandates”—not the least of which included three national conversions in the sixteenth century and protracted in-fighting among Protestant groups themselves—“turning Turk” was only one of many ways that English Christians might dissent from state-decreed doctrine.<sup>141</sup> To the extent that conversion to Islam was seen in similar ways to apostasy within English Christianity—namely in perceptions of idolatrous ritual and deceptive ceremony—the renegade represented the

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<sup>137</sup> Matar, *Islam in Britain*, 57.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>140</sup> Burton, *Traffic and Turning*, 128.

<sup>141</sup> Burton, *Traffic and Turning*, 128; Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Later Reformation in England, 1547-1603*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Palgrave, 2001).

facility with which Christendom could collapse from within. “As a dramatic type, the renegade did not serve to vilify Muslims,” Matar reminds us, “but to embarrass, reprimand, and warn Christians.”<sup>142</sup> In this case, the warning was directed toward a fractured English commonwealth mired in controversy over the very meaning of ritual itself.

The early modern crisis in the “‘communal, performative sign,’ which had led a learned few to see ritual observances as a diversion from true spiritual concerns or worse as a manipulative fraud, stimulated a vast debate about what a rite is and what it does.”<sup>143</sup> Indeed, their attempts to work out the implications of this insight led them to abhor or destroy religious images and to revise or drop sacramental rituals and supplemental ceremonial practices.<sup>144</sup> But the Protestant reformers thereafter faced a tenacious dilemma: “even though the theological reformers doubted the efficacy of many rites, all communities require them.”<sup>145</sup> What seemed perfectly logical and necessary in theory floundered in the actual implementation of reform.

The protracted breakdown in the English consensus on ceremonial action had high stakes for the maintenance of the English commonwealth in the face of an expanding and attractive Islam: in this case, most specifically in the face of England’s mounting problem with renegadism as the early decades of the seventeenth century wore on. The on-going debates over ceremony—that in the 1610s pressed for the limitation, rather than the expansion, of the Church of England’s ceremonial repertoire—left a gaping hole in the Church’s set of possible responses to the problem of the English renegade. What happens when an apostate renegade wants to come back? In

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<sup>142</sup> Matar, “The Renegade,” 502.

<sup>143</sup> Muir, *Ritual*, 181.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 181.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 181.

1612, the Church of England had not yet devised an official means of reincorporating repentant apostates into the religio-political body of the commonwealth, and this lack of a uniform response to the problem of renegadism was only exacerbated by debates over how ceremonies themselves were understood. Beneath the thrilling stage spectacle of rampant lust, greed, and bloody violence of Daborne's drama is the tragedy of an Englishman—"an unexceptional person with nothing striking or fiendish about him"—who suffers the consequences of the Church of England's unresolved debates. The renegade was "an average Englishman—a sailor, a trader, a traveler—who willfully renounced God and monarch and 'turned Turk,'" yes, but who upon repenting his crimes has no means to return.<sup>146</sup>

When Ward is understood as a very real victim of the ecclesiastical discord so rampant in the early Jacobean period, Ward's tragedy looks remarkably similar to another convert's—that of Othello. The Protestant debates over ceremony in the Church of England are significant because they reveal the implications of ritual practices for the constitution of the early modern community. Ward's demise, like Othello's, is not inevitable. Othello's demise happens because the traditional framework that should unequivocally work to effect the Moor's reception into the community was being dismantled from within. Ward's demise happens because that dismantling had not yet met with new construction. Altering the perspective of our reading in such a way as to take account of the religious practices structuring the convert's complex relationship with the religio-political life of the commonwealth has as much potential to upset totalizing readings of the degenerate and sexually debauched renegade as it did the absolute and unassimilable alterity of the Moor. In this way, Daborne's rendition of John Ward may be seen less as a caricature and

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<sup>146</sup> Nabil Matar, "The Renegade," 490.



more as a character who embodies variations on the fears, desires, and perceptions that shaped the experiences of Daborne's audience.

But where Robert Daborne's *A Christian Turn'd Turk* cannot resolve the problem of Ward's conversion other than through his destruction and damnation, Philip Massinger's *The Renegado* (1624) will offer a corrective to the problem of the repentant renegade. As Massinger taps into proto-Laudian developments in English ceremony and presents a re-enactment of efficacious ritual (complete with all vesture and gesture so despised by Puritan reformists), Antonio Grimaldi is offered the second chance at salvation denied to John Ward. In *The Renegado*, the two-fold destruction of John Ward, enacted in both the defilement of his baptism and the breaking of his physical body through the act of suicide, is remedied in the healing of Grimaldi and his reception back into the Body of Christ after his destructive act of Eucharistic desecration and his own contemplated suicide.

## CHAPTER 3

### PERFORMING RECONVERSION, RECOVERING COMMUNION IN *THE RENEGADO*

“For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.”<sup>1</sup>

— 1 Corinthians 12:12

“[T]his Bread hath in it more than the substance which our eyes behold; this Cup hallowed with solemn benediction availeth to the endless life and welfare both of soul and body, in that it serveth as well for a medicine to heal our infirmities and purge our sins as for a sacrifice of thanksgiving.”<sup>2</sup>

— Richard Hooker, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*

In Act 3 of *The Renegado*, the renegade pirate Antonio Grimaldi is contemplating suicide. Having absconded from Christian Venice and then been cast out of favor with the Ottoman vice-roy of Tunis, Grimaldi—like John Ward before him—regrets everything. In the face of his despair, the master of Grimaldi’s crew describes the inciting incident which led to the renegade’s defection to the Turks in the first place. “Upon a solemn day” in Venice, “when the whole city / Joined in devotion [...] Passed to St. Mark’s,” Grimaldi,

Out of a wanton, irreligious madness,  
I know not which—ran to the holy man  
As he was doing the work of grace,  
And, snatching from his hands the sanctified means,  
Dashed it upon the pavement. (4.1.19-33)<sup>3</sup>

This inexplicable act of blasphemy is so heinous that the renegade is hard-pressed to imagine any

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<sup>1</sup> All biblical citations in this chapter are from the King James Bible, 1611 edition.

<sup>2</sup> Richard Hooker, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity: An Abridged Edition*, ed. A.S. McGrade and Brian Vickers (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1975): 5:67.

<sup>3</sup> All in-text citations of *The Renegado* are from Philip Massinger, *The Renegado*, ed. Michael Neill (New York: Methuen Drama, 2010).

means of reconciliation; his desperate grasping at repentance leads him to consider his own death to be the only possible means of social and religious restitution. But here Massinger departs from Daborne's dramatic precedent. Where Ward meets a violent demise—a tragic victim of his defection from Christian Europe and of a religious and political order that has no way to bring him back—Grimaldi is given a second chance.

It is often suggested that Philip Massinger's *The Renegado* (1624) offers an antidote to the social dilemmas posed by apostasy as Massinger's drama constructs a tragicomic rewriting (and re-righting) of the bodily destruction and social anxiety that permeates the action of a play like *A Christian Turn'd Turk*.<sup>4</sup> In Daborne's play, not only is Ward's physical body irreparably wounded via the rite of circumcision and his soul diseased to the point of despair (and finally suicide), the English religio-political body is unforgivably broken both by Ward's apostasy and his acts of piracy. By contrast, observes Daniel Vitkus, *The Renegado* allows its converts to escape from Tunis "with bodies and souls intact."<sup>5</sup> In Vitkus' estimation, *The Renegado* reverses the outcome of Daborne's tragedy "by affirming the power of Christianity to 'redeem' and recover both Muslims and renegades."<sup>6</sup> However, the processes by which this recuperation actually happens for the play's converts, especially for the eponymous renegade himself—in other words,

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<sup>4</sup> Although in his "Introduction" to *Three Turk Plays of Early Modern England*, Vitkus situates his observation of the "rewriting of Daborne's plot" in *The Renegado* on Vitelli's resistance of sexual temptation: "Vitelli repents and resists temptation [and] Vitelli eventually succeeds in converting Donusa to Christianity. It is interesting that Massinger's Christian *raisonneur* has the same name as Daborne's—Francisco. This similarity, among others, indicates that Massinger may have been consciously responding to the earlier play, rewriting it with a happier ending. In *The Renegado*, the tragic Ward-Voada relationship is reconfigured in the happy outcome of the Vitelli-Donusa relationship." Daniel Vitkus, *Three Turk Plays from Early Modern England: Selimus, A Christian Turned Turk, and The Renegado* (New York: Columbia UP, 2000): 41-42.

<sup>5</sup> Vitkus, *Three Turk Plays*, 43.

<sup>6</sup> Daniel Vitkus, *Turning Turk: English Theatre and the Multicultural Mediterranean, 1570-1630* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003): 161.

the manner in which the play stages and rhetorically structures the recovery and redemption of those bodies and souls—has not yet been fully explored.

As in many recent studies of *Othello* and *A Christian Turn'd Turk*, critical approaches to *The Renegado* have trended towards gender studies as one important lens through which to examine the play's dual interest in both the bodily and spiritual and the stakes of conversion and reconversion. For example, Grimaldi is only "[r]estored to Christian virtue" when his "unruly masculinity is recuperated for the service of Christendom," argue Daniel Vitkus and Jonathan Burton, and so if *The Renegado* is to offer a redemptive rewriting of the desecration of souls and bodies at work in other Renaissance travel plays, the violent physical threat of circumcision that conversion to Islam brings must be negated.<sup>7</sup>

Jane Hwang Degenhardt takes up this thread of gender-centered conversion studies to argue that *The Renegado*'s comic resolutions as indicated by Vitkus and Burton actually reveal "a logic of redemption that differs for men and women."<sup>8</sup> In fact, much criticism of *The Renegado* has focused on the romantic main plot, directing attention towards the conversion of the sultan's niece, Donusa, by the Venetian gentleman, Vitelli. As the play battles the threat of apostasy and its "embodied, sexual, and reproductive consequences," claims Degenhardt, *The Renegado* "reveals the gendered implications of Islamic conversion by foregrounding the question of whether male and female Christians are equally eligible for spiritual redemption if contaminated by Mus-

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<sup>7</sup> Vitkus, *Three Turk Plays*, 41-42. Jonathan Burton, "English Anxiety and the Muslim Power of Conversion: Five Perspectives on 'Turning Turk' in Early Modern Texts," *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 2.1 (2002): 35-67, 52. Vitkus, *Turning*, 124. Jonathan Burton, *Traffic and Turning: Islam and English Drama, 1579-1624* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005), 98.

<sup>8</sup> Jane Hwang Degenhardt, *Islamic Conversion and Christian Resistance on the Renaissance Stage* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2010), 122.

lim sexual contact.”<sup>9</sup> She ultimately argues that the play’s redemptive conclusion is only possible because “the sexual seduction of the Christian hero by a Turkish woman is reversible” (via Vitelli’s repentance for his sexual transgressions and his willingness to undergo Christian martyrdom) and because the Turkish woman is herself redeemable through marriage to the Christian hero and by the rite of baptism “as spiritual re-virgination.”<sup>10</sup> Dennis Austin Britton is similarly interested in the gendered dynamics of conversion by which the play attempts to verify Donusa’s conversion by persuading the audience that the “infidel” heroine has acquired Christian faith, but expands upon Degenhardt’s assertion in the direction of race studies: “[e]mploying a discourse of martyrdom in which bodily death leads to the heavenly union with Christ, the tragicomic form provides a structure for plotting a narrative of transformation from tragic [...] racialized object to redeemed Christian.”<sup>11</sup>

Such recent criticism of Massinger’s play is rightly attuned to the early modern rhetoric of the body threading itself through the text but, surprisingly, the significance of the titular renegade’s apostasy (as centered on an act of Eucharistic desecration) and reconversion (as centered on the performance—and even the very possibility—of a ritual-driven reconciliation) has been largely ignored. While readings of *The Renegado* that focus their interest on conversion and redemption via explicit dealings with bodily change like circumcision certainly offer insight into early modern interreligious dynamics, they neglect an examination of the thematic centrality of Grimaldi’s apostasy which works primarily through a different register of bodily destruction and

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<sup>9</sup> Degenhardt, *Islamic Conversion*, 121.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 122, 138.

<sup>11</sup> Dennis Austin Britton, *Becoming Christian: Race, Reformation, and Early Modern English Romance* (New York: Fordham UP, 2014): 144.

healing, namely that of the sacramentally interconnected personal and social body. On the other hand, where studies like those by Degenhardt and Britton allow for the operation of ceremonies in the redemption of the converted romantic heroine, gender and race-centered studies similarly neglect the turning of the eponymous renegade: a turning and re-turning that is also importantly structured around the enactment of ritual. First, this chapter intends to recover the significant concern for ceremony in Massinger's play through its specific treatment of the Grimaldi sub-plot.

Furthermore, in a departure from the popular critical approaches to religious conversion in the play outlined above, this chapter will fill a gap in studies of the community-ritual-body dynamic at work in *The Renegado*. Where an English religio-political context informing Grimaldi's apostasy via Eucharistic desecration has been addressed (as in studies by Michael Neil, Leike Stelling, and Patricia Parker), these moments are read within a rather stark historical binary that stresses the polarity between Calvinist and Arminian soteriological positions within the late Jacobean Church.<sup>12</sup> These studies have examined the period's preoccupation with the navigation of free will, the works/faith contention, and the doctrine of predestination informing the presentation of conversion in the play. By contrast, this chapter maintains that while the Jacobean era was defined by the contentious dynamic that existed between Anglican and Puritan, Arminian and Calvinist ideas about salvation, certainly—and that we need to hold these debates in mind as we approach Massinger's play—what cannot be lost are the problems of ecclesiology that arose from those debates and that came to define the late Jacobean Church of England. It is

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<sup>12</sup> See Michael Neill, "Turn and Counterturn: Merchanting, Apostasy, and Tragicomic form in Massinger's *The Renegado*," *Early Modern Tragicomedy* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2007) and Neill's introduction to Philip Massinger, *The Renegado: Or, The Gentleman of Venice*, Ed. Michael Neill (London: Methuen Drama, 2010). Leike Stelling, "'Thy very essence is mutability': Religious Conversion in Early Modern English Drama, 1558-1642," in *The Turn of the Soul: Representations of Conversion in Early Modern Art and Literature*, Ed. Harald Hendrix, Todd M. Richardson, and Lieke Stelling (Boston: Brill, 2012). Patricia Parker, "Preposterous Conversions: Turning Turk, and its 'Pauline' Rerighting," *The Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 2 (2002): 1-34.

the debates on ceremonies, and on Eucharistic ceremonies in particular, that are “crucial to our understanding of Jacobean religious conflict” and to the popular stage plays produced to creatively test this dynamic.<sup>13</sup>

*The Renegado* is preoccupied with the navigation of bodies in both their literal and figurative registers, and the vital intellectual heritage of the medieval *corpus mysticum* examined in Chapters 1 and 2 asks us to consider the collective body of an early modern Christian community in terms of its explicit connections to both the act of Eucharistic desecration and the ritual redemption of the renegade which sits at the heart of Massinger’s play. The complex ways in which early modern English drama adopted and adapted the historical discourses of Eucharistic sacramentality—and the significant linking of these issues to apostasy and the body politic—beg examination. If early modern constructions of community were created through the explicit channeling of sacramentality, as David Coleman suggests, then any dramatic presentations of a sacramentally-structured community needs to be explored within a context of the wider anxieties about the scope and impact of sacramentality at work during the Jacobean period in England.<sup>14</sup>

When critical notions of the body are expanded to encompass early modern understandings of the Eucharist as the body of Christ (personal and singular) and the Body of Christ (the Church and, inseparably in this period, the state), the rhetoric of troubled, wounded, broken, or diseased bodies at work in Grimaldi’s apostasy and redemption illuminates the danger to bodies

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<sup>13</sup> Charles W. A. Prior, *Defining the Jacobean Church: The Politics of Religious Controversy, 1603-1625* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005): 17, 8. While Nicholas Tyacke focuses his analysis of Jacobean and Caroline ecclesiology on doctrinal debates centered on Calvinist versus Arminian soteriology, Charles Prior argues that critical attention needs to be shifted in a direction of study that rejects such a “narrow” interpretation of religious conflict “dominated by predestination, Arminianism, and the attack on Calvinist soteriology.” See also Nicholas Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists: The Rise of English Arminianism, c.1590-1640* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).

<sup>14</sup> David Coleman, *Drama and the Sacraments in Sixteenth-Century England: Indelible Characters* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007): 5.

that preoccupied James I within the contentious religious and political landscape of seventeenth-century England itself. At home, the Jacobean commonwealth was attempting to determine just how elastic its domestic body could be imagined to be and exactly how that body could incorporate ecclesiastical non-conformists in the face of prolonged doctrinal controversy over soteriology and sacrament in the wake of the Hampton Court Conference (1604) and, later, England's involvement at the Synod of Dort (1618-1619). In one sense, Grimaldi's apostasy via ceremonial disruption and redemption via ceremonial reenactment in *The Renegado* allows for the exploration of the Jacobean-era desire for a unified Christian state invested in conformity to the ceremonial and the sacramental mandates of the Church of England as its means of construction and maintenance, discourses that frequently turned on a Eucharistic point.

Moreover, through that exploration of the interconnectedness of the sacramental and civic, *The Renegado* tests the limits of ritually-driven social incorporation as a way to imagine the ideal inclusion of converted religious "others."<sup>15</sup> Ultimately, *The Renegado* appropriates the imaginative framework of the *corpus mysticum* in order to repurpose its rhetorical power of the body (and its particular investment in the Eucharist as symbolic of collective religious and communal bodies) to combat England's new religious and socio-political menace—here, the destructive power of seventeenth-century Islam and the renegades produced as a result of cross-cultural encounter abroad. Was there any hope for a repentant renegade like Grimaldi? Could he be recon-verted? How? Could English Christians willing to embrace a renewed emphasis on the benefits of ceremony and ritual that had been challenged by the Reformation help to bolster the body politic troubled by religious apostasy? In late Jacobean England and in *The Renegado*, the rhetoric

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<sup>15</sup> Here, I'd like to distinguish between "ecumenical others" and "religious others." I am using "ecumenical" to signify differences in denomination (Catholic, Puritan, Anglican, etc.) and "religious" to signify interfaith difference (Christian, Muslim, Jew, etc.).



of bodies that had been used to for centuries to describe the joint religious and civic functioning of the English commonwealth was now being used to test the outcomes of English contact with Islamic North Africa and the Near East.

**“charity and conscience”: Reintegrating Renegades or Compromising the Body Politic?**

In order to begin reorienting the critical conversation on renegadism as it is explored in Massinger’s play towards an examination of Grimaldi’s apostasy and reconversion as it works through the sacramental interconnection of personal and social bodies, it is necessary to first examine the ways in which both apostasy and a renegade’s possible reintegration were imagined by polemicist and poet in the early decades of the seventeenth century. Chapter 2 maintained the necessity of bringing both ecumenical conflict and the poor socio-economic conditions facing England’s maritime community in the Jacobean period to bear on readings of early modernity’s discourse on the (imagined) causes and effects of renegadism. Here, though, it is precisely those popular imaginings themselves that must be examined in greater detail. How did the English discourse on renegadism evolve from a rhetoric of debauchery and corruption fueled by the basest bodily impulses into a new rhetoric increasingly obsessed with the imagery of disease and bodily wounding? Why was that rhetoric particularly effective as Englishmen attempted to make sense of the effects that apostasy had on the commonwealth? And how would that new collection of bodily images render meaningful Massinger’s insistence upon the centrality of Eucharistic (im)piety in the staging of his own renegade’s crime?

It should be remembered from Chapter 2 that thousands of European Christians converted to Islam in the Renaissance largely because their poor social conditions in England forced them

toward such a choice.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, the period between approximately “1570-1630 was one marked by repeated episodes of famine, plague, and economic depression,” and was one in which “conditions for laborers and seamen were particularly difficult.”<sup>17</sup> The situation was only made worse after the death of Elizabeth I when James I made peace with Spain: now, the king “had no employment for those men of warre” (that is, for the buccaneers who, protected by Elizabeth’s letters of marque, had been able to thrive on Spanish plunder). “Those that were rich retired with what they had; those that were poore and had nothing but from hand to mouth, turned Pirats.”<sup>18</sup> At a time when “every major European town and city” had “thousands” of poor, many viewed conversion to Islam and emigration to the independent Muslim kingdoms of North Africa or to the dominions of the Ottoman Empire as the only way to start new lives.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, for willing converts, there was “little stigma attached to their status as new Muslims, and though Islamic society was hierarchical, it was highly absorptive at its margins.”<sup>20</sup> With willing conversion came the benefits of financial security, civic promotion, and social inclusion denied them in England.

However, while the socio-economic motivations for English defection to the Islamic states of North Africa and the Levant were quite real, those motivations—embarrassing for an

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<sup>16</sup> Nabil Matar, *Islam in Britain, 1558-1685* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998): 15.

<sup>17</sup> Vitkus, *Turning Turk*, 110.

<sup>18</sup> John Smith, *True Travels in Travels and Works of John Smith*, ed. Arber and Bradley 2:914 cited in Samuel C. Chew, *The Crescent and the Rose: Islam and England During the Renaissance* (New York: Octagon Books, 1965): 343.

<sup>19</sup> Henry Kamen, *The Iron Century: Social Change in Europe, 1550-1660* (New York: Prager, 1971): 387. See also Nabil Matar, “Introduction: England and Mediterranean Captivity, 1577-1704” in *Piracy, Slavery, and Redemption: Barbary Captivity Narratives from Early Modern England*, ed. Daniel J. Vitkus (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001): 1-2.

<sup>20</sup> Vitkus, *Turning Turk*, 111.

English state already so feeble in the face of the Ottoman Empire's superior wealth and military power—could hardly be acknowledged. On the other hand, though, even narratives of the *unwilling* captivity and forced conversion of Englishmen held comparatively less appeal in England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries than it did in Spain, for instance. Unlike Spain, England was not yet in possession of a formidable standing navy and so could offer little protection for its own seafaring men. Indeed, until the Interregnum period, “British sailors were,” by comparison, “nearly helpless before the attacks of corsairs.”<sup>21</sup> Consequently, there is no account in English drama or fiction of capture and enslavement similar to the ones in Cervantes' *The Traffic of Algiers* (1582), *Don Quixote* (1605, 1615), and *The Prisons of Algiers*, for example (1615).<sup>22</sup>

Helpless in the face of both socio-economic motivation for conversion (which implicitly offered a scathing critique of seventeenth century life in England) and the coerced conversion of the captive (which only highlighted the English state's inability to aid its citizens abroad), English writings on renegadism and apostasy sought to combat both the frightening allure and sheer military might of the Islamic world by locating the reasons for conversion in the moral corruption of the individual, his desire for material gain, cowardice, fickleness of faith, violent passions, or his irrational, unrestrained appetite for sensual pleasure. Responsibility was thus drained from the English state and agency from the Ottoman foe as both were relocated in the despised convert

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<sup>21</sup> Nabil Matar, *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery* (New York: Columbia UP, 1999): 73-74.

<sup>22</sup> Some of the sources Massinger consulted when writing *The Renegado*, though, were those very Spanish narratives: the most striking parallels are with Cervantes' *Los Bagnios de Argel* (*The Prisons of Algiers*), “The Captive's Story” from *Don Quixote, Part I* (translated and printed in England in 1605) and “The Liberal Lover” from the *Novelas ejemplares* (1613). Massinger also consulted several contemporary tracts describing Islamic culture: Biddulph's *The Travels of Certain Englishmen into Africa, Troy, Bythnia, Thracia, and to the Black Sea* (1609), George Sandys' *Relation of a Journey* (1615), and Richard Knolles' *General History of the Turks* (1603). Daniel Vitkus, “Introduction,” in *Three Turk Plays of Early Modern England: Selimus, A Christian Turned Turk, and The Renegado* (New York: Columbia UP, 2000): 41. See also Philip Edwards and Colin Gibson's introduction to their text of *The Renegado* in *The Plays and Poems of Philip Massinger*, ed. Philip Edwards and Colin Gibson, 5 vols. (Oxford: Calrendon Press, 1976): esp. 2:7-9.

himself. Nabil Matar attempts to make a distinction here, however: he argues that because some English traders and travelers “interacted with converted compatriots in the Muslim Empire[s]” that it must have been left to playwrights and poets “to convey to English society the futility and despair of apostasy.”<sup>23</sup> But in his own account for why Christians in the Mediterranean were so frequently “turning Turk,” John Pory, the English translator and compiler of the *Geographical Historie of Africa* (1600), offered this explanation:

The Christians become Turkes, partly upon some extreme & violent passion... [others] abjure the faith to release themselves of torments and cruelties; others for hope of honors and temporall greatnes: and of these two sorts there are a great number in Constantinople [...] or else through sensualitie, and for that they would not be deprived of the licentiousnes and libertie of the life they lead, resolve not to performe that they are bound unto; deferring thus from moneth to moneth & from yeere to yeere, to leave theis Babylon & sinke of sin.<sup>24</sup>

Pory’s text makes it clear that any such division between the English imagining of renegadism found in mercantile, political, and historical writing and the imaginative work found in the English dramatic tradition is not necessarily as stark as Matar would have it. The *Geographical Historie* does allow that sometimes conversion could be prompted by a desire for release from the deplorable conditions facing unconverted captives in Ottoman territories, but it far more explicitly and extensively connects the allure of apostasy with the basest bodily impulses of the individual: unchecked “passion,” “sensualitie,” and “licentiousnes.” Even academic undertakings like Pory’s text were not immune to the didactic desire to present to their readers “a fabricated por-

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<sup>23</sup> In support of this claim, Matar cites Sir George Carteret. Carteret apparently conducted business with an English renegade in Safi (Morocco) in 1638. Three entries in Carteret’s diary suggest that Ally Martine’s profession of Islam did not interfere with the course of business. See Matar, *Islam in Britain*, 50-51. See also Sir George Carteret, *The Barbary Voyage of 1638*, ed. Boies Penrose (Philadelphia: 1929): 22-23 cited in Matar, *Islam in Britain*, 51.

<sup>24</sup> Johannes Leo Africanus, *A Geographical Historie of Africa*, trans. John Pory (London: 1600): 386, cited in Vitkus, *Turning*, 109.

trait of renegades which ridiculed and misrepresented their conditions” so frequently found in the literature of the day.<sup>25</sup>

Indeed, where conversion to Islam is primarily imaginable for Pory through the basest bodily desires, the rhetoric at work in Pory’s text—far from upholding the binary between “real life” renegadism and theatrical imaginings of renegadism as described by Matar—anticipates and establishes the rhetorical precedent for the later account of the apostasy of Massinger’s titular renegade that would find its way onto the English stage. When we meet Grimaldi in the Tunisian marketplace, his own description of the attractions of the renegade life tracks closely onto Pory’s association between apostasy and the disordered, immoderate passions of the body. In Act 1, the pirate Grimaldi enters with his master, boatswain, sailors, and Turks, and provides the audience with an extensive, explicit cataloging of not only the supposed benefits of conversion and piracy, but also a glimpse of the sort of moral costume change required to facilitate this new role as renegade:

Wherefore shake we off  
 Those scrupulous rags of charity and conscience,  
 Invented only to keep churchmen warm,  
 Or feed the hungry mouths of famished beggars,  
 But, when we touch shore, to wallow in  
 All sensual pleasures? [...] Hang consideration!  
 [...] Though we carouse  
 The tears of orphans in our Greekish wines,  
 The sighs of undone widows paying for  
 The music bought to cheer us, ravished virgins  
 To slavery sold for coin to feed our riots,  
 We will have no compunction. (1.3.49-53, 55, 71-76)

In fact, it should be noticed that Grimaldi’s metaphorical casting off of those garments of now-despised virtue echo the rhetoric of John Ward’s apostasy in *A Christian Turned Turk*, as well.

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<sup>25</sup> Matar, *Islam in Britain*, 51.

Of course in Daborne's play, Ward literally exchanges his clothes for "the habit of a free-born Turk" as he ritually abandons the collective body of Christian Europe (8.16-23).<sup>26</sup> But both scenes, Grimaldi's first monologue and the ceremony of Ward's conversion in *A Christian Turn'd Turk*, situate the audience within a familiar discourse on renegadism that conflates spiritual and bodily change. If Daborne's John Ward can doff his Christian identity through the ritual shedding of his name and the changing of his clothes, Massinger's Grimaldi can shed, garment-like, any allegiance to the organizing virtues of Christian society whatsoever in favor of a new socio-religious body (one in which he serves the Viceroy of Tunis) and the highly individual pull of his own physical desires, his delight "to wallow in / All sensual pleasures" (1.3.52-53). Grimaldi exits the scene with self-satisfied swagger and an invitation that typifies Englishmen's worst imaginings of the renegade: "Come, let's be drunk! Then each man to his whore" (1.3.83).

But while the popular English rhetoric of renegadism as corrupted conscience, violent passion, or uninhibited sexual desire seemed a sufficient arsenal with which to dissuade readers and audiences of any desirability associated with the lures of apostasy abroad, this rhetoric proved insufficient to deal with a new threat to the health of the English commonwealth, this time an internal one. During the Jacobean and Caroline periods, "hundreds of Britons"—in one seventeenth-century estimate, "thousands"—returned from the Muslim dominions, often after years of enslavement.<sup>27</sup> However, these returning Englishmen—men who desired to resume their social, religious, and civic roles in their home community—created a host of new social problems. For example, many of them, having been ransomed, were now in debt to their ransomers

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<sup>26</sup> All in text citations of *A Christian Turn'd Turk* are taken from *Three Turk Plays from Early Modern England: Selimus, A Christian Turned Turk, and The Renegado*, ed. Daniel Vitkus (New York: Columbia UP, 2000).

<sup>27</sup> Matar, *Islam in Britain*, 63. William Gouge, *A Recovery from Apostacy* (London: 1639): 42.

but destitute after years of absence from their professions.<sup>28</sup> Far more troublesome, however, was the fact that all returnees, whether ransomed captive or regretful pirate, raised the specter of undetected and unaddressed apostasy: some of them were known to have converted abroad while others had returned without confessing to their (suspected) pasts.<sup>29</sup>

That some Englishmen returned from the Islamic lands but refused to admit conversion was widely known: those who confessed their apostasy to local authorities after returning to England were perhaps “[one] tenth of ten times ten of them that having played the Renegadoes are returned into their countrey, yet never gave any publike evidence of their true repentance.”<sup>30</sup> In 1627, Henry Byam, a minister in the county of Somerset, claimed that

Many hundreds [of renegades] are Musselmans in Turkie, and Christians at home; doffing their religion, as they doe their clothes, and keeping a conscience for euery Harbor where they shall put in. And those Apostates and circumcised Renegadoes, thinke they haue discharged their Conscience wondrous well, if they can Returne, and (the fact vnknowne) make profession of their first faith.<sup>31</sup>

Later, the diplomat and historian Paul Rycaut would also revile those Englishmen who never publically repented of their “abominable Lapse and Apostasie.”<sup>32</sup> For his part, the minister William Gouge was as deeply concerned as Byam that Englishmen who were technically Muslim were sitting in his church. In fact, in a 1638 sermon given at the public confession of a repentant

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<sup>28</sup> Matar, *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen*, 74.

<sup>29</sup> See, for example, Gouge, *A Recovery*, 42.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>31</sup> Henry Byam, *A Retvrne from Argier, A Sermon Preached at Minhead in the County of Somerset the 16. of March, 1627* (London: 1628): 74. In *The Renegado*, Massinger himself provides another (slightly earlier) example of this preoccupation with the conscienceless changeability of religious identity. In the play’s opening scene, Vitelli’s manservant, Gazet, explains his philosophy: “Live I in England, Spain, France, Rome, Geneva, / I am of that country’s faith” (1.1.32-37).

<sup>32</sup> Paul Rycaut, *The Present State of the Greek and Armenian Churches: Containing The Tenets, Form, and Manner of Divine Worship in that Church* (London: 1678): 290.

renegade, Gouge made a confession himself: “I feare, I feare,” he said, “that there are some even now here present [...] that have played Renegadoes, and as an evidence thereof are circumsised.”<sup>33</sup> Gouge pleaded with these men to present themselves to the church, but there was no real method short of a physical examination by which to determine who had succumb to apostasy and who had not.<sup>34</sup> Certainly, many of these men may have been quite unlike the image of the corrupt and debauched renegade at the heart of both political treatise and poem alike but, to their countrymen, it was impossible to tell.

As fears of the unconfessed apostate took hold of the English imagination, the discourse on the effects of apostasy began to change, adding a new layer of rhetorical complexity discernable as early as the 1610s. By the mid-Jacobean period, renegadism could no longer be held at a safe distance, imagined in terms of some far-removed, barbarous corruption of individual virtue, honor, or loyalty, a kind of social aberration that only affected men on the margins anyway and that would eventually lead to such men’s deserved downfall. In 1616 John Deacon worried that the consequences of apostasy were not, in fact, constrained to the individual renegade—the effects of Englishmen’s “careless entercourse of trafficking with the contagious corruptions and customes of forreine nations” would be brought home.<sup>35</sup> A new metaphorical power of infection, disease, and debilitating bodily dysfunction had begun to render the crippling stakes of apostasy for the English body politic legible, and the means by which English writers interrogated this

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<sup>33</sup> Gouge, *A Recovery*, 16.

<sup>34</sup> Gouge, therefore, encouraged friends and relatives of men returned from Islamic lands to spy on them and report their findings to the minister. In the same sermon, Gouge continued: “If by private means thou canst not so farre prevaile with such as thou knowest to be Renegadoes, as to bring them voluntarily to make satisfaction to the Chruch [sic], then follow Christs advice, Mat. 18.17. Tell it unto the Church.” Gouge, *A Recovery*, 90. For other examples of English renegades (both fictional and real) being physically examined in order to confirm (or refute) their conversion, see Matar, *Islam in Britain*, 66 n.46.

<sup>35</sup> John Deacon, *Tobacco Tortured* (London: 1616) cited in Burton, *Traffic*, 18. Vitkus, *Plays*, 5.



problem grew far more visceral and immediate. The rhetoric of renegades as “disease-bearing threats to the health of the English community” was deployed with ever-greater frequency as the early decades of the seventeenth century wore on.<sup>36</sup>

Here, once again, the literary discourse—far from wildly deviating from the political, as Matar would have it—proves strikingly attuned to the discourse on renegadism at work in the political sphere. In 1630 Baptist Goodall’s poem, *The Tryall of Travell*, was still promulgating that already-popular English rhetoric of bodily disease, mutilation, and wounding deployed by writers like Deacon who were interested in navigating the religious and socio-political stakes associated with the temptation of apostasy. Hence Goodall could caution his readers against associating with renegades in no uncertain terms:

No Jew or Turk can prove more ruinous  
Then will a Christian once apostulate thus.  
Avoid as death a reconciled foe,  
Nor ever with him reconciled go.  
The sore smooth’d up not cured out will fly,  
And soon’st infect a careless stander by.  
Man of a cross religion do not trust,  
He hath evasion t’be with thee unjust.<sup>37</sup>

In *The Tryall of Travell*, apostasy itself is firmly couched in the language of the body. Vitkus points out that Goodall connects the metaphorical “sore” of conversion—and, relatedly, even the physical sore of the convert’s circumcision—to the transmission of a disease that may recede and go into remission, but may never be truly healed. He argues that the stigma of apostasy is an incurable, syphilitic-like contaminant, one always with the latent potential to “fly” the individual apostate body and eventually infect the body politic when unwitting persons come into contact

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<sup>36</sup> Vitkus, *Turning Turk*, 145.

<sup>37</sup> Baptist Goodall, *The Tryall of Travell* (London: 1630): 12 cited in Vitkus, *Turning Turk*, 145.

with the merely externally “cured” former renegade.<sup>38</sup> If Goodall’s poem prescribes purgation as the surest treatment for the ills of the commonwealth, though, Daborne’s use of the analogy of disease, for example—in which a French sea captain declares that English pirates like John Ward “have lain / Upon their country’s stomach like a surfeit; / Whence, being vomited, they strive with poisonous breath / To infect the general air”—imagines that the very purgation of the English communal body ultimately desired by Goodall will, in fact, disease the “general air” of the whole Mediterranean maritime, mercantile sphere (2.44-47).<sup>39</sup> In either estimation, any attempts to reintegrate the convert into the communal body were doomed to fail.

But could such a dismal assessment of the possibility of reintegration be the final word? Renegadism was such a pressing and socially sensitive issue, in part, because it touched the very heart of the English commonwealth in its potential to pit the families of renegades against their ministers or even their neighbors. How desirable (not to mention sustainable) could such divisiveness at the heart of a community be? For many families, the fact that their sons, fathers, or husbands were alive was more important than whether or not they had converted.<sup>40</sup> For example, after their initial anger and despair at knowing their son had converted to Islam, the parents of one Exeter man, Joseph Pitts, grew sympathetic when they learned that their son had always wanted to return to Christianity, that he had converted only “with [his] Mouth.”<sup>41</sup> Some parish ministers, on the other hand, were far quicker to condemn the abandonment of one’s Christian identity, whether or not English renegades had “received the abominable circumcision in their

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<sup>38</sup> Vitkus, *Turning*, 145.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 145.

<sup>40</sup> Matar, *Islam in Britain*, 68-69.

<sup>41</sup> Joseph Pitts, *A True and Faithful Account of the Religion and Manners of the Mohammetans, with an Account of the Author’s Being Taken Captive* (London: 1704): 146 cited in Matar, *Islam in Britain*, 68-69.

flesh, but not in their hearts.”<sup>42</sup> For Charles FitzGeffry in Plymouth, the willingness of families to make distinctions between one’s actions and one’s inward state—as opposed to maintaining that outward acts enforce, or could be indicative of, inward convictions—was a dangerous and unacceptable position: “Excuse them I cannot.”<sup>43</sup> For those at the helm of their community, Christianity was to be adhered to at all times and places, both in thought and deed.

If the immediate family of a renegade was swiftest of all in their attempt to rationalize their kinsman’s apostasy and to re-extend the hand of social inclusion while the clergy were far less swift to excuse such a choice, it seems that the community-at-large was simply unsure “whether to revile or pity, ostracize or include the renegade.”<sup>44</sup> Because of their treasonous association with the enemies of Christian Europe, known renegades could be slain on sight in some parts of Europe, regardless of their desire to return to Christianity.<sup>45</sup> When the renegade captain Dansiker seeks pardon in France in *A Christian Turn’d Turk*, for example, the citizens of Marseille demand his life (albeit unsuccessfully). This sort of extreme violence was only one possible response, though. Where a community checked outright violence, petty indifference or pointed social excommunication were also options. Unlike Simon Dansiker, Angelo (alias Colonna) in *The Knight of Malta* (1618) explains that he had been a galley slave among the Turks, by no means an apostate by choice like either Ward or *The Renegado*’s Grimaldi, but that upon being

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<sup>42</sup> Charles FitzGeffry, *Compassion Towards Captives, Chiefly Towards out Brethren and Country-men who are in miserable bondage in BARBARIE* (Oxford: 1637): 35 cited in Matar, *Islam in Britain*, 68-69. FitzGeffry’s compassion is obviously reserved for the Christian Englishman who persevered in his faith while “in miserable bondage.”

<sup>43</sup> FitzGeffry, *Compassion*, 35 cited in Matar, *Islam in Britain*, 68-69.

<sup>44</sup> Matar, *Islam in Britain*, 68-69.

<sup>45</sup> Burton, *Traffic*, 99.

freed he nonetheless found himself “a stranger” with his “wants upon [him]” (2.2.49).<sup>46</sup> In this case, both “[t]he hand of pity that should give for Heaven’s sake, / And charitable hearts,” says Colonna, “[were] grown so cold” (2.2.52-53). Even where those who returned to Christian Europe were treated with greater understanding, “no means was agreed upon to ‘uncircumcise’ the apostate or erase (either physically or metaphorically) the stigma of his conversion.”<sup>47</sup> For many repenting their apostasy and desiring reintegration into their home communities, the situation looked hopeless.

### **“joined in devotion”: The *Corpus Mysticum* and the Coherence of the Body Politic**

In order to account for the effectiveness of the highly visceral rhetoric that English writers deployed against the dangers apostasy posed to the English commonwealth and to make sense of Grimaldi’s initial act of defection itself, it is necessary to bear in mind the inseparability of religious, political, and social bodies at work in the political theology of English early modernity established in Chapters 1 and 2. More specifically, though, when literary criticism takes into account the fact that the inseparability of these bodies mirrors the conceptualization of different kinds of communal bodies undertaken by both state and Church in England since the medieval period, it should come as no surprise that the language of disease, wounding, and bodily corruption would prove useful to describe the contaminating threat returning renegades posed to the body of the English commonwealth. It is the operation of literal and figurative bodies as they were deployed in medieval political theology—as symbols of religious and social order and the sites around which they were both maintained and contested—of which polemicist and poet alike

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<sup>46</sup> All in-text citations of *The Knight of Malta* are from John Fletcher, Nathan Field, and Philip Massinger, *The Knight of Malta in The Dramatic Works in the Beaumont and Fletcher Canon*, vol. VIII, ed. George Walton Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992): 345-482. Burton, *Traffic*, 99.

<sup>47</sup> Burton, *Traffic*, 99.

made use in the seventeenth century. The pre-modern permutations of analogies between the living body and political and religious structures that had come to designate the state as the “body politic” and the Church as the “body of Christ,” proved useful tools for early modern articulations of the potentially debilitating effects of inter-religious contamination and, later, to imagine its healing.<sup>48</sup>

As Suzanne Conklin Akbari and Jill Ross suggest, pre-modern discourses of individual and group identities are best observed in their historical and literary contexts “through images of the body” where “beginnings and endings—both personal and communal—are articulated by reference to corporeal states of being.”<sup>49</sup> For example, within the history of medieval thought, the human body often appears “as a microcosm of the greater universe: the four humors correspond to the four seasons of the year, the four physical elements of creation, and so on.”<sup>50</sup> Moreover, the human body appears as a microcosm not only of the natural world, but of the social world, as well: according to Irina Metzler, there is a long history of notions that connect the beautiful, properly proportioned body (and, conversely, disproportioned, diseased, or impaired bodies) with proper (or improper) religious and socio-political functioning.<sup>51</sup> Importantly, John of Salisbury (c.1115-1180) used the analogy of a hierarchy among different parts of the body to

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<sup>48</sup> Jennifer R. Rust, *The Body in Mystery: The Political Theology of the Corpus Mysticum in the Literature of Reformation England* (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 2014): 21.

<sup>49</sup> Suzanne Conklin Akbari and Jill Ross, “Limits and Teleology: The Many Ends of the Body,” in *The Ends of the Body: Identity and Community in Medieval Culture*, Ed. Suzanne Conklin Akbari and Jill Ross (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013): 12.

<sup>50</sup> Conklin Akbari and Ross, “Ends of the Body,” 10.

<sup>51</sup> Irina Metzler, *Disability in Medieval Europe: Thinking about physical impairment during the high Middle Ages, c.1100-1400* (New York: Routledge, 2006): 51.

express his views on not only political hierarchies, but on the vision of what creates a unified polity:

For the creative Trinity, the one and true God, has so ordered parts of the universe for the sake of a more firmly joined connection and protective charity that each one requires the assistance of the others and a defect in one is repaired by the others, insofar as each individual part is like a member of the other individual parts. All things are, therefore, incomplete if they are disconnected from one another.<sup>52</sup>

This corporeal principle of bodily construction articulating the functioning of the body politic was rooted in a theological framework; these spheres—the political and the theological—were understood to be mutually implicating, and not just any body was the pattern for correspondences between the individual and a larger order, say Conklin Akbari and Ross. Specifically the body of Christ served as a template, a concept observable, for example, in the Ebsdorf Map, where Christ’s head, hands, and feet protrude as compass points beyond the world itself: on medieval maps, on which the geo-political was encompassed by the divine, “the template of Christ’s body as the model for all forms of community” was made manifest in both symbolic and material terms.<sup>53</sup>

But when we think about the construction and composition of the Christian community in medieval England analogically as a *living* body, claims Conklin Akbari, we have to acknowledge that “mutability was written into the very fabric of the nation.”<sup>54</sup> Bodily flux, in other words, had to be reckoned with in an effort to even describe the body politic of the medieval period. In this setting, “metamorphosis—that is, bodily change—came to be used as an extended metaphor for

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<sup>52</sup> John of Salisbury, “Metalogicon,” *Medieval Political Theory—A Reader: The Quest for the Body Politic, 1100-1400*, Ed. Cary J. Nederman and Kate Langdon Forhan (New York: Routledge, 1993): 28.

<sup>53</sup> Conklin Akbari and Ross, “Ends of the Body,” 10.

<sup>54</sup> Suzanne Conklin Akbari, “Death as Metamorphosis in the Devotional and Political Allegory of Christine de Pizan,” in *The Ends of the Body: Identity and Community in Medieval Culture*, Ed. Suzanne Conklin Akbari and Jill Ross (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013): 283.

other kinds of transformation,” particularly historio-political change and its ramifications for the ecclesiastical community.<sup>55</sup> Bodies acted as the conceptual foundation on which communities were built and through which they were articulated, but these communities—both the ecclesiastical body and the body politic—were still earthly, imperfect, and are never quite complete. The continual maintenance of the body politic and the ecclesiastical body depended upon the active participation by all their members in the greater, transcendent, and unified body of Christ, namely through their active participation in the life of the community through the Eucharist, the physical *and* spiritual instantiation of Christ’s body.

For the medieval English, the Eucharist was not only a commemoration of Christ’s death, “it was also a showing forth in time of an act which had an eternal validity.” That is to say, that it enabled the congregation “to be spiritually present at Calvary and to join with Christ in offering his sacrificial death to God the Father as their supreme act of worship and thanksgiving.”<sup>56</sup> The celebration of the Eucharist thus enabled the community, unified across time, to plead that sacrifice for the forgiveness of its sins and for the needs of *all* its people, living and dead: this broad understanding of communal unity and continuity and of the absolute efficaciousness of the Sacrament was an affirmation that the true minister of the Sacrament was Christ and that no one could hinder the grace He freely offered to His whole Church in the Eucharist.<sup>57</sup> So central was the place that this communal theology of the Eucharist occupied in the life of the members of the medieval Church that the ecclesiastical use of the term *corpus mysticum*—one of the earliest fig-

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<sup>55</sup> Conklin Akbari, “Metamorphosis,” 284.

<sup>56</sup> Bernard Hamilton, *Religion in the Medieval West*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Oxford UP, 2003): 52.

<sup>57</sup> In fact, not even the unworthiness of a minister could impede the efficacy of the sacraments: if the sacraments were performed using right matter and right form, and with the intention of doing what the Church intended to be done, they were efficacious *ex opera operato*. Hamilton, *Medieval West*, 52-53.

ures for a specific ideal of Christian community that “conveys the notion that all the faithful are incorporated into a single body of Christ by participation in the sacraments”—actually referred to the consecrated Host in its earliest usage, not yet to the Church or Christian society.<sup>58</sup>

It was the formulation of the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 that crystallized the mutually-reinforcing notions of the sacramental *corpus mysticum* and the *corpus ecclesiae mysticum*, the mystical body of the Church itself<sup>59</sup>:

There is one universal church of the faithful outside of which absolutely no one is saved, and in which Jesus Christ is himself at once both priest and sacrifice. His body and his blood are truly contained in the sacrament of the altar in the forms of the bread and the wine, the bread being transubstantiated into the body by divine power [...] And no one can perform this sacrament except a priest ritually ordained according to the [authority of the] keys of the Church.<sup>60</sup>

First, the notion of the body as a representation of society was articulated and “sacralized in the notion of Christ’s body, simultaneously the consecrated Host—which emerges to consolidate the function of the priesthood—and Christian society.”<sup>61</sup> In this case, the figure of the body (of Christ in the Host) articulates the ordered social functioning of its disparate members (i.e. priest and people play differently-ordained roles in the community). Second and simultaneously, in the

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<sup>58</sup> Rust, *Body in Mystery*, xi.

<sup>59</sup> Sarah Beckwith, *Christ’s Body: Identity, Culture, and Society in Late Medieval Writings* (New York: Routledge, 1993): 31. Andrew Louth points out that Henri de Lubac had earlier complicated the history of the term *corpus Christi*, as well, with implications for the evolving meaning(s) of the *corpus mysticum*: “before the middle of the twelfth century, the expression *corpus Christi* referred either to the historical body of Christ or to the Church, while the Eucharistic body of Christ was designated *corpus Christi mysticum*. But from that time onwards, the traditional language shifted and *corpus Christi mysticum* came to designate the Church, while the Eucharist came to be called *corpus Christi*, or *corpus verum*.” In any case, by the late medieval period, *corpus mysticum* had taken on the connotation Rust suggests—designating the Church united by the sacraments—while *corpus Christi* referred to the body of Christ present in the Eucharist. Andrew Louth, “The body in Western Catholic Christianity,” in *Religion and the Body*, ed. Sarah Coakley (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997): 122. See also Henri de Lubac, *Corpus Mysticum: The Eucharist and the Church in the Middle Ages*, trans. Gemma Simmonds, CJ (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007).

<sup>60</sup> *Concilium Lateransae*, IV, chapter 1, Mansi, vol. 22, col. 982 cited in (and translated by) Beckwith, *Christ’s Body*, 31.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.



face of such social multiplicity (sovereign and subject, clergy and lay, etc.) the Eucharistic analogy of the body emphatically insisted upon spiritual oneness, ecclesiastical unity and unification:

That there is one holy Catholic and apostolic Church we are bound to believe and to hold, our faith urging us, and this we do firmly believe and simply confess [...] one mystical body whose head is Christ, while the head of Christ is God. [...] Therefore there is one body and one head of this one and only Church, not two heads as though it were a monster.<sup>62</sup>

Against the image of a body politic constantly in a state of flux and forced to confront social difference and political change indicated by Conklin Akbari, the collective body of the Church was imagined as whole and immutable “because its template is the eternal and unchanging form of Christ [in which] the perfect flesh of the Incarnation [...] models the wholeness of the community of the Church.”<sup>63</sup>

Perhaps medieval Europe’s most evocative rendering of the ideal wholeness of the community of the Church and its ability to manage the relationship between individual and religious-political bodies was the feast of Corpus Christi, inaugurated in the late thirteenth century in light of the decrees of the Fourth Lateran Council.<sup>64</sup> On one hand, the social power of the feast was most clearly demonstrated in its ability to soothe interpersonal disruption that threatened the health of the civic body, as recorded of a Corpus Christi procession in the English town of Newcastle upon Tyne in 1426 performed

[t]o the Worshipp of God and in sustentacioun of the procession of Corpus Xpi in the Towne of Newcastle upon Tyne after the laudible and ancient custome of the same Towne and in *avoideing of dissencion and discord that hath been among*

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<sup>62</sup> Pope Boniface VIII, *Unam sanctam* (1302), quoted in Beckwith, *Christ’s Body*, 30. See also Brian Tierney, *The Crisis of Church and State 1050-1300* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1964): esp. 188. For a discussion of Corpus Christi as a disputed symbol of “spiritual oneness” over “secular multiplicity,” see Anton-Hermann Chroust, “The Corporate Idea and the Body Politic in the Middle Ages” in *Review of Politics* 9.4 (October 1947): 423-452.

<sup>63</sup> Conklin Akbari, “Metamorphosis,” 283.

<sup>64</sup> Beckwith, *Christ’s Body*, 34.

the crafts of the said Towne as of man slaughter and murder *and other mischiefs in time comeing* which hath been lately attempted amongst the fellowship of the said crafts of the Tailor of the same Towne *and to induce love charity peace and right.*<sup>65</sup>

Here, the body of Christ is evoked in a collective effort to repair past offences to the communal body, to prevent future offences, and to inculcate a proper neighborly disposition in the citizens of the town. This is not to deny that articulations of the religio-political body and the individual's place within that system as enacted at Corpus Christi, for example, were free from discord. On the other hand, precisely because of this ever-present tension between immutability and changeability, between spiritual bodies and earthly ones, Christ's body as manifested in the Eucharist and celebrated and staged by the community in feast and procession was also "the arena where social identity was negotiated, where the relationship of self and society, subjectivity and social process found a point of contact and conflict."<sup>66</sup>

In his examination of the socio-symbolic significance of the feast, Mervyn James maintains that the rites and processions associated with Corpus Christi actually acted as a means of articulating social integration *and* social difference. According to James, "[T]he theme of Corpus Christi is society seen in terms of the body [...] the concept of the body provided urban societies with a mythology and a ritual in terms of which the opposites of social wholeness and social differentiation could be both affirmed and also brought into a creative tension, one with the oth-

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<sup>65</sup> Newcastle upon Tyne Archives Office, MS Enrolment Book IV, fol. 56v cited in Alan H. Nelson, *The Medieval English Stage: Corpus Christi Pageants and Plays* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974): 13, 223 n.38, emphasis mine. Nelson mentions that although the ordinance is dated 1536, it likely refers to disturbances mentioned in the Coopers' Ordinance of 1426. See also Beckwith, *Christ's Body*, 34.

<sup>66</sup> Beckwith, *Christ's Body*, 23.

er.”<sup>67</sup> The procession which formed after the Mass—the carrying of the consecrated Host (the body of Christ) around the boundaries of the community—consisted of clergy, layfolk, and municipal officials (the Body of Christ). Thus the body of Christ as articulated at Corpus Christi served “as a symbol of the unity of the community.” But as the procession made its way through the town, “symbolically linking, say, the cathedral to the marketplace, or the square, or the quarters of the city to each other, rank and status [were simultaneously] being defined by proximity to or distance from the body of Christ,” reinforcing social hierarchy and difference.<sup>68</sup> As Charles Adams notes, “[t]o all those outside or on the edge of the community, [such] ceremonies must have been a constant reminder of its discrete [...] identity. For those inside it, on the other hand, they were the visible means of relating individuals to their social structure.”<sup>69</sup>

So although its most effective and affective ritual power was located precisely in its enacted symbolization of a coherent community, whenever a community is articulated there is always an inside and an outside. Religious non-conformists, heretics, and apostates expectedly stood beyond a community’s self-designated boundaries:

In a society which was committed to an ideal of organic unity, which demanded of all its members a functional contribution to the achievement of that unity, which defined both its ideal and its mode of organization in terms of the mystical body of Christ, which operated (at least in theory) as the centralized monarch of the earthly vicar of Christ, and which gave rise to intense feelings of patriotism on its own behalf, no room existed for infidels.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Mervyn James, “Ritual, Drama, and Social Body in the Late Medieval Town,” in *Past and Present* 98 (February 1983): 3-29, esp. 4 cited in Beckwith, *Christ’s Body*, 33.

<sup>68</sup> Beckwith, *Christ’s Body*, 33-34.

<sup>69</sup> Charles Pythian Adams, “Ceremony and the Citizen: The Communal Year at Coventry 1450-1550” in *Crisis and Order in English Towns 1500-1700: Essays in Urban History*, ed. Peter Clark and Paul Slack (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972): 59 cited in Beckwith, *Christ’s Body*, 34.

<sup>70</sup> A.P. Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1985): 254.

Because “the threat to unity came as much from the enemy within” as any enemy without, the celebration of Christ’s body was the forum for social conflict—“the very arena and medium of social argument”—at the same time that it was the forum for integration and social cohesion.<sup>71</sup> Ultimately, then, while the repeated use of Christ’s body as a model for the ordered functioning of many disparate parts in an (ideally) unified whole was one way in which bodies in the medieval world appeared as not just symbolic foundations of the body politic, but also of the transcendent body of the Church, the microcosm of the body also had the potential to demonstrate metaphorically what happens when the proper order of the macrocosm (political and/or ecclesiastical) becomes upset and disordered.

In *The Renegado*, Massinger makes use of this paradox at the heart of a sacramentally-constructed society and repurposes an historic cultural ideal to frame his own seventeenth-century exploration of the religio-political disruption of apostasy. In fact, Grimaldi’s defection from the Christian fold is set in motion by his disruption of the public observance of Corpus Christi, specifically, not simply “a Catholic mass” as Jane Degenhardt has argued or, even more vaguely, a “Catholic ceremony” as Benedict Robinson suggests.<sup>72</sup> What better image for apostasy’s ability to violate both halves of the body of the commonwealth than to imagine the disruption of the very activity designed to both articulate and maintain its coherence?<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Beckwith, *Christ’s Body*, 34-35.

<sup>72</sup> Degenhardt, *Islamic Conversion*, 144. Benedict S. Robinson, *Islam and Early Modern English Literature: The Politics of Romance from Spenser to Milton* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007): 138.

<sup>73</sup> It is worth mentioning here that perhaps the best example of the medieval drama’s creative engagement with this trope of the *corpus mysticum* as the regulator of communal disruption is to be found in the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*. Interestingly, the only extant copy of the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*—MS. F.4.20 (Catalogue No. 652) in Trinity College, Dublin—is a Reformation-era document, typically dated to the mid-sixteenth century. However, the play’s composition was probably late in the fifteenth century, certainly after 1461, the date given at the close of the play as the time when the enacted events were supposed to have taken place in Heraclea. See John C. Coldew-

Grimaldi's disruption of Corpus Christi actually occurs before the play's action commences, but the master of Grimaldi's crew later explains the inciting incident which set in motion Grimaldi's defection to the Turks, the "rude prank he did ere he turned pirate— / The memory of which, as it appears, / Lies heavy on him" (4.1.15-18). The master's story is worth quoting at length:

Upon a solemn day when the whole city  
 Joined in devotion and with barefoot steps  
 Passed to St. Mark's—the Duke and the whole Signory  
 Helping to perfect the religious pomp  
 With which they were received—when all men else  
 Were full of tears and groaned beneath the weight  
 Of past offences, of whose heavy burden  
 They came to be absolved and freed, our captain—  
 Whether in scorn of those so pious rites  
 He had no feeling of, or else drawn to it  
 Out of a wanton, irreligious madness,  
 I know not which—ran to the holy man  
 As he was doing the work of grace,  
 And, snatching from his hands the sanctified means,  
 Dashed it upon the pavement. (4.1.19-33)

Grimaldi violently disrupts the solemn "religious pomp" of public penitence undertaken by the whole body of the Venetian state, during which "all men," even "the Duke and the whole Signory," are united in what is—on the level of the civic—a temporary act of communal cohesiveness (if not social leveling) in the face of the Sacrament. In this case, Grimaldi violates the political peace of the city rendered in the processional act (4.1.21-23). At the same time, however, that Grimaldi's inexplicable desecration of the Host during the public celebration of the Sacrament wounds the body politic, this desecration is especially heinous because it symbolically re-wounds the body of Christ Himself (both Christ as present in the Eucharist and as the body poli-

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ey's introduction to Anonymous, "The Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*" in *Early English Drama: An Anthology*, ed. John C. Coldewey (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1993).

tic becomes the Body of Christ through participation in the Eucharist). Indeed, the very moment Grimaldi's apostasy disrupts—when the priest “was doing the work of grace,” offering the sacrifice of the Mass for the good of all—jeopardizes the wellbeing of the community as a whole.

Because the “very act of worship had about it a dimension of political loyalty,” says Charles Prior, “due using of the sacraments” was one of the ways by which “the mercy, favour, and blessing of almighty God [was] readily and plenteously poured [upon the] realm.”<sup>74</sup> The stability of Church and state was predicated upon religious uniformity and proper observance of the sacraments of the Church, and this uniformity made no room for radical dissention let alone outright blasphemy or, even more seriously, apostasy. The careful picture Massinger crafts would have recognizably established the danger inherent in Grimaldi's act of ceremonial disruption, it being—in the estimation of the boatswain—“a deed deserving death with torture” (4.1.34). Moreover, as apostasy wounds bodies on the level of both the civic and the religious, so too are the stakes associated with his radical act of disruption raised for the renegade himself. Indeed, the corruption of the unified body of the commonwealth will soon be turned upon the renegade, leaving him “raving” with a “wounded conscience,” repeating “those dreadful words / ‘Damnation’ and ‘despair’” (4.1.3, 9, 4).

### **“black guilt and misery”: The Consequences of the Calvinist Consensus**

Just as the medieval English valued the corporate construction of religio-political unity celebrated in the Eucharist at Mass and manifested in the feast of Corpus Christi, so too was the

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<sup>74</sup> Prior, *Jacobean Church*, 20, 24. Second Edwardine Act of Uniformity (1552) as quoted in Coleman, *Sacraments*, 62. I would also argue (perhaps tangentially) that the specific moment Grimaldi actually disrupts (when Francisco is “doing the work of grace”) is the moment of the Elevation of the Host, the very moment of Transubstantiation when Christ Himself is embodied in the bread and wine. Jane Degenhardt shares this observation. For more information on Degenhardt's reading of Transubstantiation as metamorphosis, see Jane Hwang Degenhardt, “Catholic prophylactics and Islam's sexual threat: preventing and undoing sexual defilement in *The Renegado*,” *The Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 9 (2009): 62-92.

seamless communal enactment of ceremony necessary for the coherence of the body of the commonwealth under James I. Non-conformity, by contrast, bore the marks of disruption, dis-sention, and even factionalism. James always felt that religious non-conformity posed a serious threat to the coherence and stability of the English Church and state, and Jacobean conformists thus assumed that a stable polity was defined by something like a consensus or identity of religious interest—individualism and non-conformity “did not come within their intellectual pur-view, nor did any notion of a separation of religious and political authority.”<sup>75</sup> “Those religious groups—whether radical reformists or Catholics—that could not (or would not) conform to public doctrine were perceived as threats to the stability of Church and state,” Prior reminds us.<sup>76</sup> In this atmosphere, even apparently minor aspects of the Church’s practice could take on tremendous political importance. So important were the ceremonies of the Church for binding together the sinews of the body politic that James’ administration even argued that “the communion of the faithful consisteth much in the publick exercises of pietie: and this is the chiefe bond of vnion so much desired by good men.”<sup>77</sup> Far from the concept of the *corpus mysticum* being relegated to England’s medieval past, this discourse is appropriated and redeployed in the seventeenth century in order to imagine a commonwealth rendered whole and apparent through its collective participation in the ceremonial life of the Church.

It was argued in Chapter 2 that, even after the conclusion of the Hampton Court Conference and the issuance of the Canons of 1604, those “publick exercises of pietie” defended by

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<sup>75</sup> W.B. Patterson, *King James VI and I and the Reunion of Christendom* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997): 33, 3.

<sup>76</sup> Prior, *Jacobean Church*, 32.

<sup>77</sup> Isaac Casaubon, *The Answere of Master Isaac Casavbon to the Epistle of the Most Illvstriovs and Most Reuerend Cardinall Peron, Translated out of Latin into English, May 18. 1612* (London: William Aspley, 1612): 37 cited in Patterson, *Reunion of Christendom*, 135.

conformists as “the elements that bound together the spiritual body politic” were the focus of continued reformist criticism.<sup>78</sup> Anglican debates over ceremony as useful for the construction and maintenance of English religio-political order itself were, then, debates ironically exacerbated by the Hampton Court settlement’s desire to enforce a uniformity of ecclesiastical practice. However, we should remember that because “the service of God” in “all well-ordered States and Commonwealths [was] the first thing that law hath care to provide for,” continuing criticism of the crown’s ecclesiastical policies in the wake of the Hampton Court Conference made James more, rather than less, determined to enforce the decisions of the Hampton Court settlement over the opening decades of his reign.<sup>79</sup> For instance, James attempted to bring the Church of Scotland into greater conformity with the Church of England in this period. To that end, the king disallowed any further official changes to the English liturgy beyond the resolutions passed in the Canons of 1604 as he attempted to enforce conformity to already-existing rubrics. James attempted to enforce conformity to the requirements of clerical vesture, reintroduced bishops to the staunchly presbyterian Church of Scotland and, in 1618 (through the Five Articles of Perth), attempted to impose uniform liturgical observances on the whole of the Scottish Church. In fact, between 1616 and 1619, an entirely new liturgy was drafted for Scotland: the first draft was concerned just with the Sunday morning service, while the second two drafts provided for other occasions, including the sacraments.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Prior, *Jacobean Church*, 32.

<sup>79</sup> Richard Hooker, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity: Preface, Book I, Book VIII*, ed. Arthur Stephen McGrade (New York: Cambridge UP, 1989): 8:6:183-184.

<sup>80</sup> Bryan D. Spinks, “Anglicans and Dissenters” in *The Oxford History of Christian Worship*, ed. Geoffrey Wainwright and Karen B. Westerfield Tucker (New York: Oxford UP, 2006): 504.



James had certainly disappointed the radicals at Hampton Court by his outburst against presbyterian government and refusal to capitulate to Puritan demands to further “purify” the liturgical structure of the English Church. However, this is not to say that James yet possessed any ambivalence towards Calvinism as a theological system in the 1610s. Whatever the controversies over ceremonies in the Jacobean Church or the disputes over the ideal form of Church government, the majority of churchmen—conformist, partially conforming, and zealous Puritan—shared at least a degree of common allegiance to Calvinist tenets and to a Calvinist interpretation of the Thirty Nine Articles.<sup>81</sup> Consequently, the king’s policy toward the Church of England for the major part of his reign had been to balance ecclesiastical power so as to reflect the long-standing “Calvinist consensus” of the Church.<sup>82</sup> In approving the elevation of Richard Bancroft (a lukewarm Calvinist at best) to Canterbury in 1604, James may have merely meant to demonstrate his acceptance of the existing form of Church government upon his ascension because

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<sup>81</sup> Claire Cross, *Church and People: England 1450-1660*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1999): 149. Cross, Tripp, and Macy remind us that because of its indebtedness to the varied importation of Continental theology, the English Reformation’s stance on both the sacraments and on the Eucharist in particular was, by the Jacobean period, not entirely clear. Official theology under Henry remained fundamentally that of the late Middle Ages; Henry did not like control by Rome, but he did, for the most part, support the theology of the Church of Rome. Yet, despite Henry’s opposition, the influence of Luther and Calvin was to be felt more strongly in England when Henry appointed Thomas Cranmer as archbishop of Canterbury in 1532. In both the *Book of Common Prayer* (especially the 1552 and 1559 editions discussed at greater length in Chapter 1) and in his many writings on the Eucharist, Cranmer would show a growing preference for the position of Martin Bucer, disciple of Zwingli and predecessor of Calvin. The Black Rubric (included in the 1552 *Prayer Book*), for example, seemed to commit Anglicans to a Zwinglian account of the Presence but, at the same time, the placement of the Dominical words of institution at the climactic end of the Prayer of Consecration allowed Cranmer’s rite to leave room for a Lutheran, or even more conservative, interpretation of the Eucharistic celebration. If ultimately—and despite this sort of very real ambiguity—the Thirty Nine Articles were most regularly interpreted through a Calvinist lens by the Jacobean period, it was because interpretive habit made it so, not because the doctrine of the Church was inherently Calvinist. David Tripp, “The image of the body in the formative phases of the Protestant Reformation” in *Religion and the Body*, ed. Sarah Coakley (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997): 143. Gary Macy, *The Banquet’s Wisdom: A Short History of the Theologies of the Lord’s Supper* (New York: Paulist Press, 1986): 170. See also Bernard M.G. Reardon, *Religious Thought in the Reformation* (New York: Longman, 1981): esp. 244.

<sup>82</sup> Most English clerics by James’ reign “followed broadly the prevailing Reformed theology, which was a synthesis of [the] teachings of Calvin, Beza, Bullinger, [and] Vermigli” to name but a few. Most clerics viewed the Church of England as Reformed, “though having its own distinct polity.” Spinks, “Anglicans and Dissenters,” 504.

“[c]ertainly his other [later] episcopal appointments indicate that Bancroft’s promotion had not been intended to mark a new trend in the development of the Church.”<sup>83</sup> George Abbot, who followed Bancroft in 1611 and held the see of Canterbury until his death in 1633, “was a convinced Calvinist [...] who believed as firmly as any of the ‘godly’ that the Bible contained all the essentials for salvation and placed little emphasis on tradition in the Church.”<sup>84</sup> Other major bishoprics went to men of a similar stripe. At York, Toby Matthew succeeded Matthew Hutton from 1607-1628. Lincoln went to John Williams in 1621.

But by 1618, staunch Calvinist pressure from those very episcopal appointments compelled James to get involved in the Continental debate between Calvinism and Arminianism brewing at the Synod of Dort and to intervene on behalf of the Dutch ultra-Calvinist party. In short, after the death of Dutch Protestant theologian Jacob Arminius, his followers had presented objections to the teachings of John Calvin and Theodore Beza in *The Remonstrance* (1610). Contra the central doctrines of salvation on the Calvinist model—total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace, and the perseverance of the saints—*The Remonstrance* promulgated the doctrines of salvation on the basis of foreseen faith, a universal atonement, resistible grace, and the possibility of lapse from grace. Of particular issue at Dort was Calvin’s pivotal doctrine of double predestination (God preordains both damnation and salvation) versus Arminius’ doctrine of the predestination of the saved (but not the predestination of the damned, thus allowing for both God’s foreknowledge of who will choose Him and human free will to choose). That England intervened at Dort on behalf of the Dutch Calvinists in the controversy over Calvin’s doctrine of double predestination matters for the present study because ecclesiasti-

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<sup>83</sup> Cross, *Church and People*, 150.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 150.

cal decisions about predestination track directly into England's own perpetual controversy over the proper uses and effects of sacrament and ceremony.

Because Calvin insisted that salvation was a freely given and preordained gift of God, and that nothing one did could possibly justify one before God or change His immutable decision, he necessarily maintained that the liturgy could never earn one any merit, not could it provide anything further than the gift of faith already given to the Elect.<sup>85</sup> Relatedly, because the presence of Christ in the Eucharist was a purely spiritual presence for Calvin, not a physical one (as in both the Roman Catholic doctrine of Transubstantiation and the Lutheran doctrine of Consubstantiation), only the spiritually right Elect actually received the spiritual presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper. While Calvin argued that the whole community may, theoretically, receive the Sacrament, he argued that the unworthy did not actually receive the spiritual presence of Christ's body: "adulterers, rogues, thieves, rapists, toppers and gluttons, and such like, [were] in danger of receiving at the Lord's Table, not Christ's body and blood, but damnation."<sup>86</sup> The Eucharist was, therefore, a confirmation of the active gift of the Spirit which is salvation—it neither makes that gift possible nor adds anything to it.

For Calvin, the purpose of the Lord's Supper was to strengthen and confirm the gift of faith given to the saved by God through Christ: "the person who supposes that the sacraments confer any more upon him than that which is offered by the Word of God, and which he receives by a true faith, is greatly deceived. Hence also it may be concluded that confidence of salvation does not depend on the participation of the sacraments as though that constituted our justifica-

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<sup>85</sup> Macy, *The Banquet's Wisdom*, 162.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 166-167. John Calvin, "Forme de prières ecclésiastiques" (1542), cited in Tripp, "The image of the body," 141.

tion.”<sup>87</sup> According to Calvin, any thought that humans could control or affect their salvation through participation in the ceremonial life of the Church was intolerable.<sup>88</sup> Because participation in the Lord’s Supper confirmed the faithful in their trust that they were saved and because the faithful had already been joined to Christ by the gift of faith—in no way could the Lord’s Supper be “a common sacrifice offered equally for the whole Church.”<sup>89</sup>

However, despite his insistence that the Eucharist affirmed the union of God and His Elect but did not bring about the union of God and the Christian community at large, Calvin could nonetheless envision a new and glorious body politic “growing up in a life springing from baptism and fed by the Eucharist”; he continually looked “beyond the individual to the corporate life of the Church and of society in general.”<sup>90</sup> In his exposition of 1 Corinthians 12, for example, Calvin noted that “every human society is a body, within which reconciliation of conflicting interests is naturally and rightly sought.”<sup>91</sup> In his “Sermons upon the Booke of Iob,” Calvin explains that “God will have us pray together in common, as it were with one mouth, to the end there may be one solemn confession of our faith, and every man be edified by his neighbor.”<sup>92</sup> In fact, Calvin spoke often and movingly about the acts of charity and the regard for one’s brothers and sisters that must flow from the union of Christ and the faithful:

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<sup>87</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, vol. 2, ed. and trans. John Allen (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1909): 4:14:14 cited in Macy, *Banquet’s Wisdom*, 162.

<sup>88</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 4:18:14 cited in Macy, *Banquet’s Wisdom*, 162.

<sup>89</sup> Macy, *Banquet’s Wisdom*, 162. Calvin, *Institutes*, 4:18:14 cited in Macy, *Banquet’s Wisdom*, 162.

<sup>90</sup> Tripp, “The image of the body,” 140.

<sup>91</sup> Calvin as quoted in Tripp, “The image of the body,” 140.

<sup>92</sup> John Calvin, “Sermons upon the Booke of Iob” (London: 1574): 226 cited in Tripp, “The image of the body,” 140.

[W]e cannot love Christ without loving him in our brethren; that such care as we take of our own body, we ought to exercise the same care of our brethren, who are members of our body; that as no part of our body can be in any pain without every part feeling corresponding sensations, so we ought not to suffer our brother to be afflicted with any calamity without our sympathizing in the same.<sup>93</sup>

Consequently, Calvin attributed a special unifying power to the Eucharist: “we shall be distinctly fed with his flesh under the sign of bread, nourished with his blood under the sign of wine, so as to have enjoyment of him in his wholeness.”<sup>94</sup> Indeed, Calvin’s key to the unity of the spiritual and the worldly—“both in worship and in citizenship, both in private and corporate spirituality”—was the unity of God and man in the person of Christ (spiritually) present in the Eucharist.<sup>95</sup> Ultimately, though, Calvin maintained that this community was an exclusive one: true Christian believers form “a spiritual and secret Body of Christ.”<sup>96</sup>

As evidenced by Calvin’s writings on the effects of the Eucharist, whether one accepted the Calvinist stance on the issues of grace/free will and predestination/election had the power to determine one’s answer to questions about the efficacy of sacrament and ceremony. It was precisely the accessibility of grace in the sacraments and the effects of ritual that were integral to English concerns for the reception of the returned and repentant renegade. If Englishmen accepted a strict Calvinist double predestination, it could now be argued that the sacraments (as efficacious vehicles of grace for all who choose to partake of them) become nearly irrelevant to the recovery of renegades: the sacraments convey grace only to the Elect, and ceremony cannot effect any positive change in those predestined to damnation. What effect would that have on the

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<sup>93</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 4:18:38 cited in Macy, *Banquet’s Wisdom*, 162.

<sup>94</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, IV.XVII.18, cited in Tripp, “The image of the body,” 140.

<sup>95</sup> Tripp, “The image of the body,” 141.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 140.

unity of the commonwealth? The *de facto* Calvinist orthodoxy of the Church of England that had appeared to be, finally, endorsed at Dort now sparked a landslide of pressing questions about how, and if, the reconversion and reintegration of a renegade could be successfully executed: Is apostasy a sign of non-Election? Is reconversion possible? Can conversion be undone? Can the ceremony (most especially access to the sacrament of the Eucharist, the body of Christ) of the Church facilitate the apostate's reconciliation to Church and state (the Body of Christ) if the Sacrament is *not* efficacious for all? The Eucharist had long been described as a medicinal agent for those affected by sin, but who was eligible for access to its healing power? What would happen to both apostates and to the community if English renegades could not be recovered?

In the face of such pressing questions and the concerns identified in the previous section, civic leaders and clergy alike sought for ways to effect the reconversion and reintegration of renegades despite the Calvinist interpretive consensus currently at work in the Church of England. Because very few renegades would have converted back to Christianity while still in Muslim territory—and of those, fewer would have lived to tell, since the punishment for apostasy in Islam was death—reconversion, if it was to happen at all, *had* to happen upon the convert's return to England.<sup>97</sup> However, it was yet unclear how such a return was to be enacted and then verified: in the Jacobean period, it was still left to the discretion of local communities to decide exactly what actions demonstrated sincere reconversion and what constituted sufficient restitution.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Matar, *Islam in Britain*, 60. As a result, confirmed Paul Rycaut in 1678, “[w]e have few Examples of those Apostates who return from the Mahometan to the Christian faith [while in Muslim lands]; for none dares own such a Conversion but he who dares to dye for it.” Rycaut, *Present State*, 287.

<sup>98</sup> There was no official, uniform order of ceremonies for reintegration into the Church of England until Archbishop William Laud's “A Form of Penance and Reconciliation of a Renegado or Apostate from the Christian Religion to Turkism” was disseminated in 1637 (and which we will examine in greater detail later).

At the civic level, some returning renegades provided information: once a former captive returned to England, he was (officially) required to submit a deposition to the local authorities detailing the whereabouts of other captives, of the Turks' military fortifications, and of the naval locations of corsairs. This deposition would then be forwarded to the Privy Council.<sup>99</sup> Others provided accounts of their captivity and military service.<sup>100</sup> Still others offered "insider" intelligence by describing Islamic religious culture and social custom, language, and governance.<sup>101</sup> For those who formally converted to Islam, the need to purify oneself and clear one's name was great.<sup>102</sup> One such convert, Joseph Pitts from Exeter (who benefitted quite handsomely from his conversion, enjoying the full privileges of a free citizen of the Ottoman Empire and sailing with a corsair fleet), explicitly offered his account in an attempt "to do some good" and to "make some manner (at least) of restitution and reparation for [his] past defection."<sup>103</sup>

At the ecclesiastical level, sermons for the public reintegration of apostates were preached at the discretion of local bishops. In such cases, it was often to the Apostle Paul's doc-

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<sup>99</sup> Matar, *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen*, 74-75. See, for example, the deposition of Christopher Pige in *Calendar of State Papers* 16/316, f.52 cited in Matar, *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen*, 74-75.

<sup>100</sup> Richard Hakluyt, "The worthy enterprise of John Fox and Englishman in delivering 266 Christians out of the captivity of the Turks at Alexandria, the 3 of January 1577" in *Voyages and Discoveries: The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation*, ed. Jack Beeching (New York: Penguin, 1972): 164-171. See also the expanded version of John Fox's narrative, *The Admirable Deliverance of 266. Christians by Iohn Reynard Englishman from the captiuitie of the Turkes* (London: 1608).

<sup>101</sup> See, for example, Joseph Pitts' account of Muslim culture observed during his time in captivity from 1678-1694 in his *A True and Faithful Account of the Religion and Manners of the Mohammedans, with an Account of the Author's Being Taken Captive* (London: 1704).

<sup>102</sup> In fact, Joseph Pitts' account is an excellent example of a captivity narrative in which the author formally converted to Islam. By the end of his career in Algiers, though, Pitts had become a full-fledged "renegado," enjoying the privileges of a free citizen of the "Turkish" community; Pitts even served in a corsair fleet that preyed on Christian shipping in the Mediterranean. As such, his need to demonstrate his English loyalty was of the utmost importance. As Daniel Vitkus succinctly puts it, "Pitts offers an exchange: information and testimony about and against Islam in exchange for his redemption and reintegration." Vitkus, *Piracy, Slavery, and Redemption*, 219.

<sup>103</sup> Pitts, *A True and Faithful Account*, 221 in Vitkus, *Piracy, Slavery, and Redemption*, esp. 218-340.

trine of circumcision—the metaphorical “circumcision of the heart” of Christian faith—that English preachers directed their focus in an effort to shift attention away from the irreversible circumcision of the body to the interior life of the convert (Romans 2:29 and Gal. 5:6). Emphasis was placed upon one’s inner constancy and true repentance, as opposed to one’s actions.<sup>104</sup> Even if the inner repentance and reconversion of the renegade was possible, the obvious problem that arises from this model, however, is that a purely internal repentance is unverifiable: how does the community diagnose the condition of one’s heart?

In the wake of England’s involvement at the Synod of Dort, *The Renegado* explores both England’s struggle with its own questions surrounding the recovery of renegades and the implications of the Church’s Calvinist consensus upon the healing of the body of the commonwealth wounded by apostasy. While Act 1 constructed an image of Grimaldi in line with the debauched and villous renegade of popular polemic and poem—the morally corrupt defector from Christian society benefitting handsomely from his apostasy—by Act 2, Massinger begins to shift the expected trajectory of Grimaldi’s character. The renegade’s penchant “to wallow in / All sensual pleasures” catches up with him (1.3.53-54). Incurring the wrath of the viceroy, Asambeg, for shirking his duty to watch over the Tunisian harbor, Grimaldi has “suffered / Those thieves of Malta [...] / To board a ship and bear her safely off” (2.5.23-25). Interestingly, instead of offering obsequious apologies in order to retain the favor of the viceroy, Grimaldi defends and praises the Christian Knights of St. John, “blasphem[ing] the Ottoman power” through a breathless round of insults to the competence of the Tunisian military (2.5.78, 2.5.51-59, 62-73, 75-77). Punished for yet another act of “blasphemy”—this time against his adopted Muslim society—Grimaldi is left to “taste / The misery of want” (2.5.84-85). Bereft of the benefits brought by his

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<sup>104</sup> Robinson, *Politics of Romance*, 99.



defection to the Ottomans and unable to return home to Christian Venice, Grimaldi finds himself in the same desperate situation as John Ward at the end of Daborne's *A Christian Turn'd Turk*. So far, perhaps, it seems that it could be argued Grimaldi's story is a familiar one. However, where Ward's story ends in tragedy quickly thereafter, Massinger's renegade is forced into a radical reckoning with the "black guilt and misery" of his initial act of apostasy (3.2.62).

In his reading of *The Renegado*, Daniel Vitkus argues that "Grimaldi's desperate condition is brought on by a guilty conscience that leads him to believe he deserves damnation." He elaborates that "Grimaldi's spiritual struggle reflects the seventeenth-century understanding of religious conversion and its psychology. There were well known cases involving apostates who attempted to rejoin Christianity but were agonized or destroyed by remorse and hopelessness."<sup>105</sup> While certainly true, this assessment neither interrogates the construction of that despair nor provides any specific point of entry into an analysis of how exactly Grimaldi's transgression leads the renegade to be convinced of his own damnation.

However, in Act 3, Massinger extends the figurative corruption of bodies (the body politic and the ecclesiastical body) set in motion by Grimaldi's initial act of sacramental desecration before the commencement of the play's action into his descent into the madness of despair. Where the play's construction of Grimaldi's crime was predicated on the pirate's wounding of the body of Christ in both its sacramental and communal forms, here that rhetoric of the Eucharistic body and its destruction by an individual act of disruption evolves yet again as Grimaldi prepares to turn the language of bodily wounding against himself. In the face of the seriousness of his fall from Ottoman favor, the renegade believes that his crimes have disbarred him from the hope of forgiveness, no matter how strong his repentance runs:

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<sup>105</sup> Vitkus, *Three Turk Plays*, 42-43.

Though repentance  
 could borrow all the glorious winds of grace,  
 My mountainous weight of sins would crack their pinions  
 And sink them to hell with me. (3.2.69-72)

Grimaldi's despair is so profound that he can see no possibility for his redemption, no effective means by which the movement of grace could act against the weight of his offense.

In a string of imagery striking for its dark reimaging of that medieval conception linking the human body to the harmony of the natural world and the four earthly elements, Grimaldi can now envision only his own very literal and individual bodily destruction—suicide:

I have heard  
 Schoolmen affirm man's body is composed  
 Of the four elements; and, as in league together  
 They nourish life, so each of them affords  
 Liberty to the soul when it grows weary  
 Of this fleshy prison. Which shall I make choice of? (3.2.77-83)

Grimaldi eventually seems to settle on drowning himself in the sea as the most fitting punishment for his crimes committed against the Venetian religio-political body through his acts of piracy (1.3.49-76). "The sea?" he muses, "Aye, that is justice. There I ploughed up / Mischief as deep as hell. There'll I'll hide / This cursed lump of clay" (3.3.91-93). For Grimaldi's purposes, the life-abundant ocean will become a life-denying "ravenous womb" and an all-devouring "tomb" (3.3.97-98). But this rhetoric of despair as expressed through a desire for suicide quickly slips into yet another bodily image.

By Act 4, the register of Grimaldi's preoccupation with the destruction of his individual body takes on a strikingly Eucharistic tenor. Grimaldi has turned to perusing the Scriptures for advice to apply to his situation, and the renegade ponders a string of Old Testament prescriptions for the reparation of offenses to God and the community—all of which require the wounding of the personal body in either an economic or a physical sense as mandated in Exodus, for example:

Oh, with what willingness would I give up  
 My liberty to those that I have pillaged,  
 And wish the numbers of my years, though wasted  
 In the most sordid slavery, might equal  
 The rapines I have made, till with one voice  
 My patient sufferings might exact from my  
 Most cruel creditors a full remission:  
 An eye's loss with an eye, limb's with a limb—  
 A sad account! (4.1.53-61, cf. Exodus 21:23-25)<sup>106</sup>

His inept selective reading, however, only confirms his sense of hopelessness in the face of his crimes against the Christian community. Despairing of forgiveness and in a desperate bid to make reparation for his crimes, Grimaldi exclaims that he is willing to “do a bloody justice on [himself],” his threat culminating in his preparation for a very literal, bodily chastisement (4.1.66). Grimaldi declares that he will self-inflict punishment and

with this hand cut off  
 This instrument of wrong, till naught were left me  
 But this poor bleeding limbless trunk, which gladly  
 I would divide among them [his victims]” (4.1.69-72).

Here, the renegade is finally left with a desire for the reparative division and distribution of his physical body in a manner that grotesquely mirrors the sacrificial breaking and distribution of Christ's body by the priest's hand during the celebration of the Eucharist, but Grimaldi's broken body can never accomplish the communal reconstruction and personal redemption afforded by the Sacrament.

Grimaldi's rejection of the broadly efficacious Sacrament celebrated at that original Venetian feast of Corpus Christi has left no room for his recovery. Through an act of iconoclastic violence—the desecration of the Eucharist offered for the whole community—Grimaldi has removed himself from a theological system that could hold out the possibility of later redemption

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<sup>106</sup> Exodus 21:23-25: [23] “And if any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life, [24] Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, [25] Burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.”

(afforded by both Arminianism and Roman Catholicism's rejection of double-predestination and maintenance of widely accessible grace in the sacraments) *and* rendered his fate legible on the Calvinist model (surely only one of the reprobate could contemplate such disrespect of the Lord's Supper). Indeed, if one accepted a strict Calvinist double predestination, the healing afforded by the sacraments as efficacious vehicles of grace for all who partake of them was impossible anyway. Grimaldi's despair of redemption, then—the sense with which he is sure he is destined for damnation in the face of both his blasphemous act and his defection from the Body of Christ—is the only logical conclusion to be reached about the apostate's fate. In Grimaldi's despairing of redemption, Massinger's play renders the stakes of a strict Calvinist theology apparent for his audiences in the face of England's questions surrounding the redemption of renegades: for a Jacobean community to deny the accessibility of grace to all via the ritual life of the Church would, indeed, irrecoverably consign even the repentant English renegade to his "black guilt and misery" (3.2.62).

#### **"zealous undertakings": A Challenge to the Calvinist Consensus**

James' intervention in 1618-1619 at the Synod of Dort seemed to set the seal upon the longstanding *de facto* Calvinist orthodoxy of the Church of England. However, just as the Church of England's Calvinist orthodoxy was near to being cemented (a number of attempts actually arose to gain legal recognition of the Dort canons in England), James was reconsidering his support of the ultra-Calvinist party at the Synod. First, any official endorsement of the Church's heretofore *de facto* Calvinist orthodoxy would fly in the face of the king's own foreign policy aspirations. During Elizabeth's reign, Calvinism had "keyed in fairly convincingly with

political reality.”<sup>107</sup> The existence of a large body of English Catholics conveniently lent credence to the identification of Protestants with the Elect and, as relations with Spain deteriorated, Calvinism also proved transferable to the international plane—Englishmen could then be portrayed as chosen by God to do battle for the true religion.<sup>108</sup> But England’s political situation shifted after James’ ascension to the throne. The king made peace with Spain, allied with Spain against the Ottomans and the Barbary States, sought a Spanish Catholic match and then a French Catholic one for his son, and tried to avoid being pulled into religious war in the Spanish Low Countries. Positioning England as part of a united Protestant front was less essential now, especially as English Calvinist teaching was, itself, becoming more extreme in-line with Continental religious developments.<sup>109</sup> Moreover, the decisions of the Synod were deeply tied to political intrigues that arose during the Twelve Years’ Truce, a pause in the Dutch war with Spain: at Dort, the Arminians were perceived as ready to compromise with the Spanish, whereas the Dutch Calvinists were not.<sup>110</sup> Given that the centerpiece of James’ plans for the recovery of the Palatinate in the early 1620s was an Anglo-Spanish marriage alliance, “it made little sense for James to countenance the Calvinist war party.”<sup>111</sup>

Not only was the king unwilling to make the Dort canons binding for England in light of developing English foreign diplomacy, but “by mid-1622 James seems to have had second

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<sup>107</sup> Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*, 4.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>110</sup> Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*, 104. In fact, so deep were the political implications of the controversy that Arminianism was considered by some in the United Provinces to be political treason; in a 1617–1618 pamphlet war, Francis van Aarssens expressed the view that the Arminians were actually working for Philip IV of Spain. See also Anthony Milton, *The British Delegation and the Synod of Dort (1618-1619)* (Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2005).

<sup>111</sup> Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*, 104.

thoughts about the condemnation of Arminianism” altogether.<sup>112</sup> His directions to the clergy, issued that August, included a prohibition of all “popular” preaching about “predestination, reprobation, or of the universality, efficacy, resistibility or irresistibility of God’s grace.”<sup>113</sup> While the reason for the king’s change of mind is not entirely clear, Nicholas Tyacke suggests that “[p]robably among those whose views the king had taken into account when issuing his directions was Bishop Andrewes.” Preaching before King James in April 1621, Andrewes referred in “highly critical fashion” to the Five Articles of Dort<sup>114</sup>: “I pray God he be well-pleased with this licentious touching, nay tossing his decrees of late, this sounding the depths of his judgments with our line and lead, too much presumed upon by some in these days of ours [...] God’s secret decrees they have them at their fingers’ ends, and can tell you the number and the order of them just with 1, 2, 3, 4, 5” (referring to the Five Points of Calvinism).<sup>115</sup> The influence of Andrewes upon the king’s change of mind is certainly a possibility—Andrewes had always been one of James’ favorite preachers—but a further possibility is that the king was forced to consider the implications of a strict Calvinist theology for his vision of the body politic. A remarkable insight into early criticism of the Church’s Calvinist consensus and the social consequences of double-predestinarian teaching suggests that this may have been (at least partly) the case.

In an open letter addressed to the king in 1613, an English convert to Roman Catholicism called Benjamin Carier made a study of “church historie and of the ancient fathers” in which he

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 105, 102.

<sup>113</sup> Bishops and deans, however, were exempted from the ban, as were “learned men” in the universities. Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*, 102-103. See also Kenyon, *Stuart Constitution*, 145-146 and 154-155.

<sup>114</sup> Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*, 103.

<sup>115</sup> Andrewes, *Works*, 3:32, cited in Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*, 103. The Five Points of Calvinism: Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace, and Perseverance of the Saints.

found “the current opinions of our great [Calvinist] preachers to be everywhere confuted.” Most astutely, Carier argued that Calvinist teaching on predestination makes both priest and sacraments redundant, a teaching with dire consequences for the body of the commonwealth: “I beseech Your Majestie let not Calvin’s ‘church of the predestined’ deceive you.” Calvinism is unfit “to keepe subjects in obedience to their sovereigns” for soon “they will openly maintayne that God hath as well predestined men to be trayters as to be kings.”<sup>116</sup> For Carier, the Calvinist doctrine that many are predestined to reprobation and that only the Elect benefit from the sacraments could only lead to civil confusion—if some men could only ever be evil and the Elect could do nothing to lose their salvation, what system of social, moral, religious, and political regulation (such as that afforded by the community’s united participation in the celebration of the broadly efficacious sacraments) could maintain the health and coherence of the body politic?<sup>117</sup>

By the 1620s, public challenges to the Calvinist diagnosis of the irredeemability of some men were making themselves known in England. Interestingly, many of these incidents specifically concerned the fate of renegades. As early as 1622, a sailor by the name of John Rawlins narrated his capture and eventual escape from the hands of pirates, men who for “sensuall lusts” or “preferment” have turned Turk and become “Renegadoes.”<sup>118</sup> But Rawlins’ story—unlike that

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<sup>116</sup> Benjamin Carier, *A Treatise written by Mr. Doctour Carier* (Liege: 1614): 10-14, 26-27, 49-52.

<sup>117</sup> Moreover, Carier’s concerns were not an anomaly. As early as the Hampton Court Conference, Archbishop Bancroft himself lamented the easy perversion of Calvinism and its potentially problematic political ethic: “how very many in these daies, neglecting holinesse of life, presumed too much of persisting grace, laying all their religion upon predestination—if I shall be saved, I shall be saved,’ which [is] a desperate doctrine.” Unlawful actions could be defended on the grounds “of predestination, as though (by the abuse of that doctrine) they meant to have had the blame of all the wicked and intended mischiefs [...] removed from themselves and layde upon the Lorde’s shoulders.” Bancroft cited in E. Cardwell, *A History of Conferences and Other Proceedings connected with the Revision of the Book of Common Prayer* (Oxford: 1840): 180. Richard Bancroft, *Dangerous Positions* (London: 1593): 162. Both cited in Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*, 16.

<sup>118</sup> John Rawlins, *The Famovs and Wonderful Recoverie of a Ship of Bristoll* (London: 1622): B2r cited in Robinson, *Politics of Romance*, 127.

of so many repentant renegades before him, men who met only condemnation, hostility, and despair—is ultimately one of redemption, both from the violence of slavery and from the sin of turning Turk: to its readers *The Famous and Wonderfull Recoverie of a Ship of Bristoll* “teacheth the acknowledgement of a powerfull, prouident, and mercifull God, who will be knowne in his wonders.”<sup>119</sup> Instead of the pre-ordained judgment of an implacable God, Rawlins is the recipient of the mercy of a beneficent one. Even sermonic literature began to shift its emphasis toward the wonderful power of God to redeem the lost-but-repentant as sermons were composed to justify the (re)conversion of a renegade and his reception by his home community. For example, much like *The Famous and Wonderfull Recoverie*, two sermons preached at Minhead in Somerset on March 16, 1627—one by Edward Kellet and one by Henry Byam (published together under the title *A Return from Argier*)—extolled the mercy of a God who welcomes the lost and allowed for man’s active participation in his willing reconciliation to God, king, and country.<sup>120</sup>

Not only is redemption possible, but both of these sermons exemplify a striking reliance on tangible, ritualized steps for reincorporating apostates as opposed to an exclusive reliance upon the private and interior faith of the convert. The sermons preached by Kellet and Byam on the occasion of a renegade’s readmission to the Church of England follow similar patterns for justifying his reintegration and share an emphasis on the utility of certain outward and material actions to aid in his redemption: good works must supplement faith, and repentance is not accomplished by inward contrition alone. For Kellet and Byam, such outward gestures as “tears,” the

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<sup>119</sup> Robinson, *Politics of Romance*, 127. Rawlins, *Wonderfull Recoverie*, E3r cited in Robinson, *Politics of Romance*, 127.

<sup>120</sup> According to the document’s prefatory note, the renegade who is the subject of these sermons was readmitted into the Church “by the authority of the Lord Bishop of that Dioces.” Interestingly, none other than William Laud was the bishop of Bath and Wells from 1626 to 1628.



changing of “Habit and Vestmentes,” and the performance of good works to “[open] the Gate of heauen”—far from being denounced as ineffectual show or deceitful playing—render the convert’s penitence apparent and verifiable for the congregation and suggest room for the positive and active participation of a man’s will in the movement back toward God.<sup>121</sup> In his insistence upon the “common diuision of Repentance” into “Contrition, Confession, and Satisfaction” Byam is aware that some will accuse him of crypto-Catholicism (especially when paired with Kellet’s pointed challenge to Calvinism’s emphasis on the unalterable will of God in his insistence that a man’s repentance has the power to halt God’s punishment and “purchase Grace”).<sup>122</sup> However, Byam is undeterred: “Wee haue fed our Auditory so long with *Sola fides* [that] if any be so tender hearted as to relieue, restore, compassionate his brother’s misery, some shall vntruelly iudge him for no true Christian and other new reformers shall neere challenge him of old Religion.”<sup>123</sup> While both Kellet and Byam were Protestants, conforming ministers of the Anglican Church, these men demonstrate the degree to which different Protestant confessions accepted more or less emphasis on ceremony and ritual in this period, even the degree to which individual confessions (like Anglicanism itself) harbored a spectrum of opinion. As their sermons rather explicitly challenge the tenets of a strict Calvinist double-predestination, specifically, they suggest that, through the ritual and sacramental life of the Church, the convert could redeem himself and reverse his path to hell.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Edward Kellet and Henry Byam, *A returne from Argier* (London: 1628): 43, 41, 44.

<sup>122</sup> Kellet and Byam, *A returne*, K2r-K3r as cited in Robinson, *Politics of Romance*, 135.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, H2v as cited in Robinson, *Politics of Romance*, 135.

<sup>124</sup> See also Degenhardt, *Islamic Conversion*, 146-147.

Like Rawlins' narrative and the sermons preached by the ministers Kellet and Byam, the redemption of the renegade in Massinger's play offers a pointed reimagining of, even a challenge to, the decided lack of potential for the reconversion of apostates under the Church of England's Calvinist consensus. But where criticism of *The Renegado* has been interested in interrogating the operation of the play's ultimately anti-Calvinist tenor, it has been preoccupied with finding a way to account for—or discount—what seems to be the influence of the “church reforms sponsored by William Laud and his followers years ahead of their time.”<sup>125</sup> As Jane Degenhardt argues,

[a]lthough *The Renegado* anticipates Laud's theological leanings in many ways, it predates the beginning of his rise to power in the second half of the 1620s. It would be a stretch to argue for the direct influence of Laud's Catholic-leaning practices in 1624 [...] The play is therefore striking for its positive portrayal of a Jesuit priest, its investment in a sacred relic and the sacramental powers of the Eucharist, penance, and baptism, and its valorization of female virginity.<sup>126</sup>

Degenhardt is certainly correct in her observation that *The Renegado* anticipates Laud's theological leanings in many ways but that the play also predates the beginning of his rise to power in the second half of the 1620s. However, an analysis of the play's decidedly anti-Calvinist response to the pressing questions surrounding the possibility of a renegade's repentance and ritual reconciliation to Church and state does not require “the direct influence of Laud's Catholic-leaning practices” at all. What Degenhardt misses in her assumption that Massinger's drama must somehow have been “striking,” anomalous, or even subversive before Laud's ascension to Canterbury is that the challenge to the Church of England's Calvinist consensus had been growing long before William Laud became Archbishop, even before the 1620s. Rather than requiring

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<sup>125</sup> Robinson, *Politics of Romance*, 120.

<sup>126</sup> Degenhardt, *Islamic Conversion*, 147.

“the direct influence of Laud’s Catholic-leaning practices in 1624” to account for the religious imagination at work in *The Renegado*, it is more necessary to widen the scope of our contextualization of Massinger’s play against the backdrop of English ecclesiastical history and the effect of that change on international politics in the early decades of the seventeenth century.

First, English opposition to the long-standing *status quo* of a strict Calvinist interpretation of the Thirty-Nine Articles had been gaining momentum in England for quite a long time. The English anti-Calvinists who would come to power during the 1630s could trace their ancestry back for at least two generations.<sup>127</sup> Even within the Elizabethan Church, where Calvinism had had such a predominant influence, there had been some clerical dissidents who had not accepted a double-predestinarian theology.<sup>128</sup> Richard Bancroft may have been the first cleric holding such views to attain high office since the Elizabethan Settlement had been passed, but it was not until after his death in 1610 that a sufficient number of like-minded clerics emerged to make up a party.<sup>129</sup> As dean of the Chapel Royal and bishop of Winchester, Lancelot Andrewes had some influence, though. Among Andrewes’ protégés was Richard Neile (later to be the bishop of Durham and then the archbishop of York). Neile, when bishop of Durham, collected together a

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<sup>127</sup> As Julian Davies suggests, to call the early anti-Calvinists all Arminians is perhaps to impose a coherence on the range of English anti-Calvinist opinion that did not quite exist yet. Davies, *Caroline Captivity*, 92-93. Cross, *Church and People*, 153.

<sup>128</sup> Davies, *Caroline Captivity*, 92-93. For most clergy, the perception of an Arminian-Calvinist division was not quite a simple polarity between grace and predestination. All English divines ostensibly accepted predestination as biblical teaching and rooted in the Articles. The question was not whether there was predestination, but when it was decreed and in what way—not whether there was a decree, but whether it was absolute or conditional, dependent on the foresight of faith or not. In other words, it was less predestination *per se* that was attacked by the anti-Calvinists than predestination to reprobation. For an extensive discussion of this false (but commonly held) opposition, see Roger E. Olson, *Arminian Theology: Myths and Realities* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006).

<sup>129</sup> Cross, *Church and People*, 154.

group of his own protégés who became known as the Durham House group, including John Cosin and William Laud himself (the future archbishop of Canterbury).

When the anti-Calvinist party is remembered at all, though, it is usually for the Durham House group's emphasis on what Laud would call "the beauty of holiness." These divines, while all strict conformists to the Church of England, "felt too much had been jettisoned by the Reformation."<sup>130</sup> As a result, they tended to stress order and decency in worship, place sacraments above preaching, and see the episcopal structure of the English Church not as a "popish" leftover but as a divine ordinance. Many of these commitments were examined in Chapter 2. Certainly, other English reformers were pleased to see English churches swept clear of their "popish" remnants, but this group was intent upon restoring some of the ceremony and grandeur of worship, which they felt had been spiritually beneficial and that had been unduly lost during the Reformation. These elements included an altar decently furnished and railed in, the use of copes, and good music. Traditional ceremony was (re)introduced, including bowing toward the altar, and copes were worn more frequently. Neile, followed by Bishop Wren, and eventually Laud, began insisting that the communion table should be placed where the old altar had stood and be railed in so that communicants could kneel in an orderly fashion.<sup>131</sup>

What is usually overlooked in any consideration of the style of worship advocated by the English anti-Calvinists, though, is why such insistence upon orderly and beautiful ceremony actually mattered—how it was deeply related to the challenge to Calvinist double-predestination and to the operation of man's will in the movement toward God. For the English anti-Calvinists, the sacraments and ritual life of the Church provided the context and the opportunity for human

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<sup>130</sup> Spinks, "Anglicans and Dissenters," 504.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 505-506.

response to God's saving grace: "let *everyman* that calls on the name of Christ depart from iniquity," said Laud.<sup>132</sup> A higher sacramental view necessarily entailed a much wider, more liberal, access to sacramental grace and *vice versa*. If one is not predestined to damnation, then one can, first, choose repentance and, second, receive the grace of the Sacrament, a grace offered to all through one's participation in the ritual activity of the Church.<sup>133</sup>

Second, "motivating much of this concern with the external visibility of the Anglican Church" was "a sincere desire to carve out a more distinct Anglo-Catholic identity and to show Roman Catholic Europe that the English Church was not just a rival to Rome, but a better advertisement than it of the catholic, apostolic Church."<sup>134</sup> But if the Church of England "was to retain any credible claim to apostolic catholicity, and if James was to retain his position as a peacemaker in confessional struggles, then the king would necessarily have to disassociate himself from a good deal of current Reformed doctrine," as described in the previous section's examination of the Synod of Dort.<sup>135</sup> Thus the reforms championed by the English anti-Calvinists signaled not only a revision of church practice but also "a wide-reaching reconceptualization of global religious politics," particularly a rethinking of England's relations with the Christian churches on the Continent.<sup>136</sup> Conveniently, the anti-Calvinists' insistence upon the historicity of the English Church and the "beauty of holiness" demonstrated there enabled conservative Anglican divines

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<sup>132</sup> *The Works of William Laud*, 1:131, cited in Davies, *Caroline Captivity*, 97 (emphasis mine).

<sup>133</sup> Indeed, this group emphasized the sacraments, rather than preaching, as the primary instrument of saving grace so far as to even approve the Roman form of private confession to a priest. Cross, *Church and People*, 154.

<sup>134</sup> Davies, *Caroline Captivity*, 23.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

<sup>136</sup> Robinson, *Politics of Romance*, 120.

to look beyond the endemic anti-Catholicism of the English Church and to emphasize the broad lines of agreement between Protestants and Roman Catholics.<sup>137</sup>

Ultimately, while for English Protestants of various stripes the crucial axis of religious difference in the early modern world lay between England and Rome, the Durham House group's insistence upon narrowing the space between Protestant and Roman Catholic sensibilities had one particularly important consequence. As the English anti-Calvinists narrowed the space between Roman Catholic and Protestant belief, they simultaneously exaggerated the difference between Christianity and Islam. If the anti-Calvinists advocated the healing of the whole body of Christendom, Islam was a form of radical exteriority delineating the boundaries of that body. On the Continent, Hugo Grotius—an avowed Arminian who would later repeatedly express his admiration for Laud—exploited the dangerous specter of Islam in a tract urging Christian reconciliation: writing of Meletius Pagas, a Greek patriarch of Alexandria at the frontlines of the conflict between Christianity and Islam, Grotius claimed that Pagas “could not refrain from tears when execrating our [Western Christianity’s] dissensions [...] and he used to beg us at long last to turn our eyes, made fierce by contemplating one another, on the Turks and the rabble of barbaric nations.”<sup>138</sup> In England, Richard Montagu condemned the divisions caused by confessional conflict, lamenting that there were some who, out of a “furious zeale without discretion [...] proceeded so farre [...] as to professe that Turks and Turcisme is to be preferred before, and rather embraced, than Papists and Popery.”<sup>139</sup> Instead of English Protestants wasting their efforts

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<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 120.

<sup>138</sup> Hugo Grotius, *Meletius sive De iis quae inter christianos convenient epistola*, 105 cited in Robinson, *Politics of Romance*, 131-132. See also Patterson, *Reunion of Christendom*, 140-152.

<sup>139</sup> Richard Montagu, *Apello Caesarem* (London: 1625): Qlr-v cited in Robinson, *Politics of Romance*, 131-132.

in an endless, misguided doctrinal battle with Roman Catholicism, the anti-Calvinists argued, religious hatred should be directed toward its proper object: “the Turke” is the Common enemy” of Christendom, even though the Christian nations of Europe pursue “those wofull warres [...] where one Member wounds another to the hazard of the whole body.”<sup>140</sup>

Benedict Robinson reminds us that, in some ways, anti-Calvinist appeals to crusade against the Turks rather than the Roman Catholic powers of Europe “represented an intensification of a Jacobean political rhetoric that used the specter of a Turkish enemy to justify reconciliation with the Catholic powers.”<sup>141</sup> Certainly, by the mid-1620s—as some English voices extolled the “noble and excellent effects” of the Spanish Match for the possibility that it might “be the beginning and seed [...] of a holy war against the Turk”—“anti-popery was no longer the ubiquitous rhetoric” of a sixteenth century English Protestantism.<sup>142</sup> However, for those who remained loyal to the Calvinist tenets and anti-Catholic culture of the English Church, the conservative reform movement looked like a betrayal, an effort to undo the incomplete work of “godly” reform.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> Kellet and Byam, *A returne*, Klr-v as cited in Robinson, *Politics of Romance*, 135.

<sup>141</sup> Robinson, *Politics of Romance*, 132-133. Indeed, when John Digby was sent to Spain to negotiate for the Spanish Match, he was also empowered to negotiate for a league against the Algerians. Diplomatically, Robinson shows, reconciliation with Spain and war with the “Turks” and “Moors” could go hand-in-hand.

<sup>142</sup> Benedict S. Robinson, “The ‘Turks,’ Caroline Politics, and Philip Massinger’s *The Renegado*” in *Localizing Caroline Drama*, ed. A. Zucker and A.B. Farmer (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006): 224.

<sup>143</sup> Many hardline Protestant polemicists treated the Catholic toleration petitions of the early 1600s, in particular, “as an attempt to bring about a change of religion which would snowball into a subversion of the commonwealth.” When Archbishop Marc’ Antonio de Dominis asserted to Bishop Richard Nellie in 1622 that Rome was “a true Church,” Nellie did not deny it, but said that “the toleration of two Religions would bee a certaine cause of combustion in the Church; and subversion of the whole State.” Michael Questier, *Conversion, Politics, and Religion in England, 1580-1625* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996): 6. Richard Neile, *M. Ant. de Dnis. Archbishop of Spalato, his Shiftings in Religion* (1624): 10-11 cited in Questier, *Politics of Conversion*, 6.

As the combined effects of England's amicable relations with Spain and the rise of the Arminian movement in the Church of England increasingly became a site of controversy, a bodily rhetoric was again adopted and redeployed by James' hotter Calvinist opposition. In 1622, Francis Rous—layman apologist for English Calvinism—published *Diseases of the Time*, followed by *The Only Remedy* in 1627, two treatises establishing what he understood to be the root cause of contemporary disasters (the same sorts of problems that often made apostasy in the Barbary states and the Levant an attractive option for Englishmen). In Rous's estimation, plague, poverty, harvest failure, and economic depression were all "divine punishments" for what he saw as a *national* apostasy begun under James I—by way of the steady adoption of Arminian-inflected doctrine, England was, in essence, selling out to "Roman tyranny and Spanish monarchy." As long as "God's wrath [was] still unassuaged, domestic sores [would] continue to fester."<sup>144</sup>

### **"such cures as heaven hath lent me": High Sacramentality and Ritual Reintegration**

In many ways, then, the historical situation of the composition and first performances of *The Renegado* was an ambiguous one, fundamentally caught up in competing visions of not only

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<sup>144</sup> Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*, 139. It should be mentioned here that, in October 1623, when Charles and Buckingham returned to London, disgusted and convinced that the Spanish had no intention of finalizing the marriage, they set out to engineer what Robinson calls "one of the most rapid reversals in early seventeenth-century politics, forming a coalition with Parliament dedicated to the project of maneuvering James into a war he did not want." A flood of anti-Catholic literature was produced from the end of 1623 into 1624. On 6 April 1624, James officially announced the failure of negotiations with Spain, and on 23 April the king signed the Petition of Religion which included among its provisions the clause that no concessions to Catholics be made part of any future marriage treaty. In between these dates, though, rumors circulated that James was still looking for a way to reconcile himself with Spain, marriage negotiations with Catholic France were opened (which, Roger Lockyer argues, the Petition of Religion was intended to hamper), and on 17 April 1624, *The Renegado* was licensed for the stage. Robinson, *Politics of Romance*, 128-130. Roger Lockyer, *Buckingham: The Life and Political Career of George Villiers, First Duke of Buckingham, 1592-1628* (New York: Longman, 1981): 199. See also S.L. Adams, "Foreign Policy and the Parliaments of 1621 and 1624" in *Faction and Parliament: Essays on Early Stuart History*, ed. Kevin Sharpe (Oxford: Clarendon, 1978): 139-171; Jerzy Limon, *Dangerous Matter: English Drama and Politics in 1623/4* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986); Thomas Cogswell, *The Blessed Revolution: English Politics and the Coming of War, 1621-1624* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989).



the future of the English commonwealth but its very identity. But when it came to England's pressing concern for the healing of its socio-political wounds caused by both the imagined apostasy of a challenge to the Church of England's Calvinist *status quo* and by actual apostasy as Christian Englishmen converted to Islam abroad and then returned home, a higher valuation of the power of ceremony and sacrament that so smacked of Roman Catholicism to its hotter Calvinist opponents seemed to anti-Calvinist churchmen to be exactly the cure needed. English audiences had seen what happens when the ceremonial reception of the repentant renegade is disallowed in Daborne's *A Christian Turn'd Turk* and the ways in which an overemphasis on the purely interior, Pauline circumcision of the heart could go tragically wrong in Shakespeare's *Othello*. Interconnected developments in English politics and ecclesiology in the wake of the Synod of Dort made the late Jacobean moment ripe for a new exploration of the commonwealth's ability to manage the effects of apostasy and reconversion.

We have already examined the fact that, in the years between the earliest performances of *The Renegado* and its publication in 1630, the English government and church parishes increasingly confronted the problem of what to do with real-life renegades who needed to be reincorporated into English society. But by the 1630s, Laud's influence over the direction of the Church of England's challenge to its own so-called Calvinist consensus had opened a space in which the ceremonial life of High-Church Anglicanism could effect a reversal for the Christian who turned Turk, achieving what a stringent emphasis on interior faith alone could not.

In response to a query from John Hall, the Bishop of Exeter, Archbishop Laud wrote that there were captives who had converted to Islam in Morocco and who were now back in England

and seeking (re)admission to the Church.<sup>145</sup> Laud thus presented to Parliament in 1637 “A Form of Penance and Reconciliation of a Renegado or Apostate from the Christian Religion to Turkism.” In this “Form,” Laud urged that the process of re-adoption into the Church should take a few weeks and entail a public act of humiliation on the part of the renegade. What the Archbishop essentially suggested was a “quasi-drama of return,” a kind of ritual of reacceptance.<sup>146</sup> Under the Laudian rite, “a slight and ordinary sorrow is not enough for so grievous an offence” as apostasy.<sup>147</sup> The penitent must publicly make amends to both God and the socio-spiritual body of the church, because his sin of apostasy adversely affects an entire system of relationships: physician-like, the minister of the rite must “lay open and aggravate the heinousness of his [the renegade’s] sin both in respect of God, the Church, and his own soul” if the wound is to be properly healed.<sup>148</sup>

Laud’s prescription for the reintegration of the English renegade was a highly public ritual and involves a series of penitential actions to be performed over several (at least three) Sundays. During each successive phase of the ceremony, the penitent modifies the presentation of his own body when he dons ceremonial garb of “a white sheet and with a white wand in his hand, his head uncovered, his countenance dejected” and upon his knees outside the church door “humbly crave[s]” the prayers and acknowledgement of the congregation:

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<sup>145</sup> *The Works of William Laud*, 7 vols. (Oxford: Parker, 1847-1860): 5.2.352 referenced in Matar, *Islam in Britain*, 69.

<sup>146</sup> Matar, *Islam in Britain*, 69.

<sup>147</sup> William Laud, “A Form of Penance and Reconciliation of a Renegado or Apostate from the Christian Religion to Turkism,” in *Piracy, Slavery, and Redemption: Barbary Captivity Narratives from Early Modern England*, ed. Daniel J. Vitkus (New York: Columbia UP, 2001): 365.

<sup>148</sup> Laud, “Form,” 361.

There let him penitently kneel [and] make his submission and ask mercy of God in the form of the following: [...] ‘O God, forgive me this heinous and horrible sin, with all other my grievous sins against Thee, and let me, upon Thy gracious pardon and infinite mercy, be restored to the sight and benefit of this blessed sacrament which I have so wickedly abjured, and be received (though most unworthy) into Thy gracious favor and the communion of Thy faithful people.’<sup>149</sup>

Obviously, the outward, performative, and communal focus of the Laudian rite stands in marked contrast to the kind of primacy placed on sheer interior reformation in older sermonic literature that drew more explicitly upon the Pauline epistles to structure their varying forms of reintegration. More subtly, the prayer transcribed above (to be recited on the second Sunday of the rite) makes very clear the central role the Eucharist plays in the re-formation of the Christian body enacted through the Laudian form. Laud’s rite maintains its emphasis on the multivalent registers of the body (penitent’s body, Eucharistic body of Christ, communal body of the Church) when on the third Sunday the penitent renegade makes explicit his desire to take up his place as a contributing member in the communal life of the parish, and reiterates that this is a life centered around the sacramental, Eucharistic body:

[B]lessed be the holy Catholic Church, and all you the servants of the Lord Jesus Christ; the name of God be blessed evermore for the assembly of His saints, and of the divine ordinances of His holy word and sacraments, and of His heavenly power committed to His holy priests in His Church, for the reconciliation of sinners unto Himself [...] I humbly beg the assistance of all your Christian prayers [...] receive me into that grace and into the bosom of the Church [...] reconcile me unto the mystical body of Christ Jesus, my Lord and Savior.<sup>150</sup>

Most interestingly, Vitkus points out that the culmination of the final movement of the Laudian “Form of Penance and Reconciliation” is actually a slight modification of the absolution offered in the form for the Visitation of the Sick: indeed, near the close of the Laudian rite, the spiritually

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 362.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 364-365.

sick renegade prays that the Lord will “renew in him [...] whatsoever hath been decayed by the fraud and malice of the Devil or by his own carnal will and frailness” and that He “preserve and continue him in the unity of the Church.”<sup>151</sup> After this, instructs Laud, “let him be openly promised that upon any communion day following he shall be admitted to the holy sacrament” and thus fully reintegrated into the collective life of the parish.<sup>152</sup>

Through the composition and issuance of his “Form,” Laud showed that the state-sanctioned Church was assuming responsibility for dealing with the seventeenth-century’s crisis of apostasy and, more importantly, for bringing English renegades back to their social and religious communities. Moreover, Nabil Matar muses that Laud “may have sought to establish a dramatic equivalent to the renegade on stage” by depicting “the real rather than the fictional renegade” in his ritual of recovery.<sup>153</sup> “Dramatists invented the repentant renegade,” says Matar, “and Laud made that repentance possible, not onstage, but in church, and not in the imaginary world of the Mediterranean, but in England.”<sup>154</sup> This assertion, however, assumes far too wide a distance between the ceremonial methods of the Church and the imaginative ones of the theatre when it came to the work of repairing the communal body damaged by apostasy. In the scene in which the priest, Francisco, mobilizes Grimaldi’s final repentance, those very distinctions between the purview of the church and the purview of the playhouse are blurred as Grimaldi’s redemption is predicated on both Eucharistic reverence and a theology of faith enlivened by sacramentally accessible grace and good works.

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 365.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 366.

<sup>153</sup> Matar, *Islam in Britain*, 70.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 70.

However, while Daniel Vitkus observes that “in the end [Grimaldi] is rehabilitated and restored to sanity by Francisco” and, thus “[r]estored to Christian virtue [when his] unruly masculinity is recuperated for the service of Christendom,” he ignores the method by which that rehabilitation is enacted, how Grimaldi is recuperated for the service of Christendom and why that method matters.<sup>155</sup> In its imagining of the healing of the religio-political communal body, *The Renegado* places its conceptual emphasis on reintegration through ritual enactment in the vein of the medieval *corpus mysticum* and the Eucharistically-inflected politics of James I. Indeed, the thematic centrality of the Eucharist as the body of Christ (personal and communal) which structures both the destructive and redemptive movements of Grimaldi’s apostasy and reconversion should at least be placed in direct conversation with those English discourses on the role of ceremony and sacrament in a late Jacobean civil and ecclesiastical climate. Moreover, in its insistence upon the necessity of ceremony for the healing of the individual and the commonwealth corrupted through acts of apostasy, *The Renegado* anticipates the re-conversion procedures as later structured by William Laud, a reintegration of the individual to English civic life that centers on ritual performance and the broadly-efficacious sacramentality that, to the hotter English Calvinist faction, seemed to blur the lines between Roman Catholicism and English Protestantism.

We have explored how Grimaldi grievously wounds the sacramentally-constructed body of the Venetian community (the Body of Christ) by his desecration of the Eucharist (the body of Christ) in *The Renegado* and posited that the only way for the repentant pirate to be reincorporated into the Christian socio-political body is through the grace offered by that very sacrament. Of course, *The Renegado* does not stage Grimaldi’s reception of the Sacrament in an authentic

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<sup>155</sup> Vitkus, *Three Turk Plays*, 43.

religious setting as Laud's rite would have, but it does stage a ritually-inflected, healing reenactment of the moment of Grimaldi's mistake. The honorable preist, Francisco—from whom Grimaldi snatched the consecrated Host in Venice—declares that he will “cure the wounded conscience of Grimaldi” upon his observance of the renegade's true remorse: “I'll provide / A lodging for him and apply such cures / To his wounded conscience as heaven hath lent me,” he says (3.5.9, 3.3.100-102).

Near the beginning of Act 4, just after Grimaldi has expressed the mad imagining of a Eucharistic division of his personal body, Francisco enters the scene “in a cope like a bishop” (s.d.). At Francisco's appearance, the sight of the priest launches the renegade into a theatrically-abbreviated version of the penitential movements required for reconversion and reintegration into the Eucharistically-organized communal body. “All I am turned into eyes,” remarks Grimaldi as his entire being momentarily becomes an instrument of visual perception; his physical and spiritual sight are retrained in preparation for his re-admittance to the Christian fold. Grimaldi gazes on the ritually-attired Francisco and the vision prompts an examination of conscience, exacerbating the grief the renegade bears over his blasphemy: “I look on / A deed of mine so fiend-like that repentance— / Though with my tears I taugth the seas new tides— / Can never wash off” (4.1.74-77). The memory of his destructive act of apostasy prompts the further recollection of heinous deeds (“my thefts, my rapes”) but all are deemed “venial trespasses compared to what / I offered to that shape” of the priest in his cope, he says (4.1.76-78).

Finally, in a moment that blurs the continually-flickering boundaries between the civic and the ecclesiastical, Grimaldi assumes the appropriate penitential posture that he should have while in communion with the worshippers at St. Mark's in Venice, “a place [...] Where [he]

stood bound to kneel” in front of Francisco and the Eucharistic offering (4.1.78-79). Now, (Francisco’s recreation of) the moment is met by a penitent convert and so it gives Grimaldi a chance to undo his original blasphemy:

FRANCISCO: ‘Tis forgiven.  
 I—with this tongue whom, in these sacred vestments,  
 With impure hands thou didst offend—pronounce it.  
 I bring peace to thee: see that thou deserve it  
 In thy fair life hereafter. (4.1.80-84)

Grimaldi must now “purchase” his pardon with “zealous undertakings,” actions that will help to restore the newly healed Body of Christ in its sacramentally-structured, religio-political form—the Christian community (4.1.86-87).

While Jane Degenhardt has argued that those “zealous undertakings” as the “purchase” of Grimaldi’s pardon invoke “a Catholic practice that was condemned by Protestants for its emphasis on outward actions,” it should now be clear that this simplistic choice between “Roman Catholic” or “Protestant” practices does not always hold up in a late-Jacobean religio-political climate.<sup>156</sup> Because the Calvinist consensus of the Church of England was being challenged ever more seriously (by committed English Protestants) in the 1620s and 1630s, it is imperative to remember that the notion that outward acts can anchor and enforce inward conviction was not the exclusive purview of Roman Catholicism. This historic and intimate interconnection between the inward and the outward is especially well demonstrated in Grimaldi’s new resolve to “rise up a wonder to the world” (4.1.97). Francisco has “reconciled [him] to [himself],” bringing a cessation to Grimaldi’s inner turmoil, and now the newly re-converted former renegade will do something to “witness” his “good change” (4.1.110, 113). In a sweeping act of communal rescue and regeneration in the face of an encroaching Turkish menace, it is Grimaldi and his crew who spirit

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<sup>156</sup> Degenhardt, *Islamic Conversion*, 146.

away back to Venice the hero, Vitelli, and Vitelli's newly converted bride. For the re-converted Grimaldi, "ingratitude [cannot] be the parent / To our unfeigned repentance" (5.2.10-11). When understood in the context of English anti-Calvinist insistence upon ritual and the necessity of works as well as faith, their refusal to condemn aspects of Roman Catholic faith, and their promotion of a sense of broad Christian unity, *The Renegado* appears strikingly English, indeed a model of Englishness deeply aware of both its present and its own medieval past.

### **"a wonder to the world": Conclusion**

If Philip Massinger's *The Renegado* may be said to rewrite and re-right the bodily destruction enacted in other early modern "Turk" plays such as Richard Daborne's *A Christian Turned Turk*, it does so through its adoption and adaption of the bodily rhetoric of a sacramentally-enacted collective of the early modern body politic—a rhetoric that stretches both back and forward along the continuum of English history. So while critics such as Jane Degenhardt and Leike Stelling tend to draw boundaries between the sacramental and the socio-political and between spirituality and embodiment as though these were separate and discrete issues, the case of Grimaldi's iconoclastic conversion and ritual re-conversion in *The Renegado* illuminates the ways in which those binaries collapse.<sup>157</sup> *The Renegado* adopts and redeploys an older, recognizable Eucharistic and bodily rhetoric that connects to the social and sacramental *corpus mysticum* of the medieval Church and links forward into the (still sacramental but more highly politicized) mystical body of the early modern commonwealth. The violation of sacred and communal bodies that sparks one of the play's most important conflicts opens a creative space in which to

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<sup>157</sup> Degenhardt even claims that the play's interest in the bodily "dramatizes the limitations of Christian spiritual faith," building what is essentially "a tension between spirituality and materiality." Degenhardt, *Islamic Conversion*, 122, 123.



engage with the very real, complex ramifications of religious difference within an (ideally united) political body.

The play's investment in the imagery of diseased or mutilated bodies of various kinds—and their subsequent healings—can help us situate *The Renegado* along an historical continuum that includes medieval fashionings of a Christian community's recognizable identity, fashionings that made use of a bodily discourse that would survive in theological and political writings through the early modern period. This chapter is not arguing is that Massinger wrote *The Renegado* as a deliberate piece of proto-Laudian propaganda but, as Benedict Robinson suggests, it must be acknowledged that “the effort to salve the anxieties of ‘commerce’ with Islam—both an expanding global market and the cross-cultural encounters encouraged by that market—also opened up tensions within English Protestantism. The effort to imagine a Christian world purified of its relations with ‘the Turks’ forced once again the question of what ‘the Christian’ could be.”<sup>158</sup>

By the 1630s, however, as the Caroline English court and Church acquired a more distinctly Roman Catholic cultural ambiance, many Puritans suspected that “this external worship [...] rather than developing into a charitable construction of the religious intentions of others, resolved itself into a concern for passing, cosmetic appearances.”<sup>159</sup> As an Englishwoman converts herself into a Moor in Richard Brome's *The English Moor* (1637), willingly assuming the physical, bodily manifestation of religious and cultural otherness in order to avoid consummating an unwanted marriage, the disruptive otherness that had previously only been dealt with in foreign spaces (Venice, Cyprus, and Tunis) enters into the English body politic itself. In fact, *The*

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<sup>158</sup> Robinson, *Politics of Romance*, 141-142.

<sup>159</sup> Davies, *Caroline Captivity*, 22.

*English Moor*'s explicit interest in the effects of performance and disguise will reassert the need to continually keep one eye on the highly theatrical valences of "conversion" and the delight in changeability that so troubled Puritan opponents of the theatre and which prompted serious religious and political questions—even in a comedy like Brome's.

## CHAPTER 4

### PERFORMING MOORISHNESS, DEBATING SPECTACLE IN *THE ENGLISH MOOR*

“This last Month the Queen’s Chapel in Somerset-House-Yard was consecrated by her Bishop; the Ceremonies lasted three Days, Massing, Preaching, and Singing of Litanies, and such a Scene built over the Altar, the Glory of Heaven, Inigo Jones never presented a more curious Piece in any of the Masks at Whitehall.”<sup>1</sup>

— unknown correspondent, letter to the Earl of Strafford

“There is nothing more frequent in all our stage-plays [...] than amorous pastorals or obscene lascivious love songs most melodiously chanted out upon the stage [...] to enflame the outrageous lusts of lewd spectators who are oftentimes ravished with these ribaldrous pleasing ditties and transported by them into a Mohametan paradise or ecstasy of uncleanness.”<sup>2</sup>

— William Prynne, *Histriomastix: The Player’s Scourge*

By Act 3 of *The English Moor*, the old moneylender Quicksands is consumed with the jealous worry that his new wife will cuckold him. The consummation of their marriage has already been disrupted by the antics of several young gallants “in which,” they gleefully describe, were “presented / The Miseries of inforc’d Mariages” in a ribald antimasque, and Quicksands fears that this sort of nighttime revelry might have the power to turn his young wife “false” (2.1.190-191, 27).<sup>3</sup> While affronted by Quicksands’ insinuation that it could be within the power of the gallants’ masquing to “destroy [her] virtue,” Millicent is nonetheless keen to avoid the

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, *Letters and Dispatches* 1:505 as cited in Erica Veevers, *Images of Love and Religion: Queen Henrietta Maria and court entertainments* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1989): 168.

<sup>2</sup> William Prynne, *Histriomastix: The Player’s Scourge* (1633) in *Shakespeare’s Theater: A Sourcebook*, ed. Tanya Pollard (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004): 293.

<sup>3</sup> All in-text citations of *The English Moor* (unless otherwise noted) are from Richard Brome, *The English Moor; or, The Mock-Marriage*, ed. Sara Jayne Steen (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1983).

consummation of a marriage she never wanted, in love, as she is, with someone else (2.1.33).

Sensing an opportunity offered by Quicksand's slight, Millicent declares that she will prove her virtue by taking a vow of chastity for one month. To prevent the further antagonism of Quicksands, as well, she and her husband agree to put out the story that Millicent has gone down to the country for a while—the problem, however, becomes what to do with her in the meantime. Here, Quicksands employs “the quaint devise / Of a Venetian merchant” to “guard [her] safe / From all that seeke subversion of [her] honor” (3.1.53-54, 63-64). Millicent is disguised as a “Moore” in service to Quicksands' household, complete with a veil and “Tincture [...] layd vpon [her] face” (3.1.67). While “[s]ome can be pleas'd to lie in oyles & paste / At Sinnes appointment, which is thrice more wicked,” argues Quicksands, referring to the disruptive performance of the gallants, *this* bit of theatricalism “(which is sacred) is for Sinnes prevention” (3.1.77-79).

The application of Millicent's disguise activates a familiar network of interconnected themes. As an Englishwoman agrees to convert herself into a Moor for the disruption of her marriage and the preservation of her virtue, Richard Brome's 1637 comedy revives the tangled discourses of virtue and vice, theatricalism and morality, and religious and racial otherness examined across the previous three chapters. Although the conversion at the heart of *The English Moor* is not an explicitly religious conversion, Millicent's transformation into a Moor via her disguise points to the elision of the discourses of religious spectacle, theatricalism, and deception that defined Puritan criticism of the High Church character of the Church of England in the 1630s. While even the most ardent Puritan polemicists would not have argued that theatrical disguise and religious conversion were actually the same thing, concerns about the nature of performativity raised by both playhouse and unreformed church were difficult to disentangle. As

Brome comedically adopts and manipulates that network of related concerns through Millicent's disguise, *The English Moor* expands upon the early modern theatre's perennial interest in religious conversion's ability to interrogate the relationship between the interiors and exteriors of persons and the ways in which performance (as ceremony, sacrament, spectacle, civic participation, transgression, or repentance) can render that relationship visible. Chapter 3 explored whether English Christians willing to embrace a renewed emphasis on the benefits of ceremony and ritual that had been challenged by the Reformation could help to bolster the body politic troubled by religious apostasy. *The English Moor*'s explicit interest in the effects of performance, however, will reassert the need to continually keep one eye on the highly theatrical valences of "conversion"—of conversion as "transformation" or "alteration"—most especially the delight in theatricalism and changeability that so troubled Puritan opponents of both the theatre and the new face of the Anglican establishment of the Caroline period.

Unlike Shakespeare's *Othello* with its very long critical history, or even Daborne's *A Christian Turn'd Turk* and Massinger's *The Renegado* with their growing critical interest, studies of *The English Moor* have remained few and far between. Where Brome's comedy has received any critical attention, though, these studies trace many of the same lines of interest that have dominated studies of other early modern conversion plays: race studies and gender studies have exerted a nearly exclusive influence over the direction that explorations of *The English Moor* have taken. For her part, Kim F. Hall traces a range of cultural stereotypes at play in Brome's text: she points out that *The English Moor* draws upon early modern ideas about "the reputed lechery of the black woman, the association of blackness with religious difference, and blackness

as a visible sign of marginality and alienation.”<sup>4</sup> It is perhaps unsurprising that a consideration of the resonances of Moorishness as religious difference at work in Brome’s text is quickly deployed in the service of highlighting the dynamics of racial and sexual power at work in the play. Hall reads the use of blackness in *The English Moor* to “comment on the moral state of the play world,” but the possible valences of morality only extend to a reading of blackness such that Millicent’s Moorish disguise “reinforce[s] negative female stereotypes and establish[es] European, patriarchal control over difference.”<sup>5</sup> Where the play “allows for a continual slippage of racial, cultural, and religious difference, all [are] in the service of maintaining patriarchal prerogatives,” says Hall.<sup>6</sup>

Following Hall’s lead, Farah Karim-Cooper also explores the nexus of race and gender at work in Brome’s comedy. Karim-Cooper, however, expands her study of race and gender on the Renaissance stage into an examination of “the wider social discourse of cosmetics” in the period. In Karim-Cooper’s estimation, it actually would be more “useful to unpack the play’s preoccupation with paintedness and gender before taking into account its then secondary relation to race.”<sup>7</sup> Conceding that “[w]hile race and staged blackness are inextricable,” she focuses on Brome’s interest in the gender dynamics governing the social and religious norms that regulate the accepta-

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<sup>4</sup> Kim F. Hall, *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1995): 166.

<sup>5</sup> Hall, *Things of Darkness*, 166.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 175. Ira Clark also reads the problem at the heart of *The English Moore* in terms of “patriarchal compulsion” but, for Clark, this “patriarchal compulsion issues from greed”—Brome’s play is a picture of “the prevalent upward striving and greedy grasping of London’s citizens [...] fostered by the city’s environs.” Ira Clark, *Professional Playwrights: Massinger, Ford, Shirley, & Brome* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1992): 166, 164.

<sup>7</sup> Farah Karim-Cooper, “‘This alters not thy beauty’: Face-paint, Gender, and Race in Richard Brome’s *The English Moor*” in *Early Theatre* 10.2 (2007): 140-149, 140. One might also find Eleanor Lowe’s “Issues in Review” summary of Karim-Cooper’s argument useful: Eleanor Lowe, “Offstage and Onstage Drama: New Approaches to Richard Brome” in *Early Theatre* 10.2 (2007): 109-116.

bility of cosmeticized, female bodies.”<sup>8</sup> For her part, Andrea Stevens takes up both Karim-Cooper’s insistence upon the necessity of examining early modern attitudes toward painted women and Hall’s acknowledgement of Brome’s indebtedness to Ben Jonson’s masques. Jonson’s use of paint in the *Masque of Blackness* (1605) and *The Gypsies Metamorphosed* (1621), suggests Stevens, inspired “particularly vivid fantasies about its effect on, and between, persons,” an effect that, in the masques, could only be soothed by the orderly and blanching effect of the English Sun-King’s light.<sup>9</sup> Thus blackness is figured not only “in relation to James’ reign and an emerging British nationalism,” but to “a patriarchal authority that sought to manage female bodies.”<sup>10</sup> In Brome’s play about “a miscarried masque of blackness,” then, she argues, “Brome parodies Jonson’s experience with the medium, depicting the failure to manage racial transformations within a performance as a failure of theatrical and patriarchal authority.”<sup>11</sup>

Indeed, studies of Caroline drama have long acknowledged Ben Jonson’s influence upon Richard Brome’s body of work.<sup>12</sup> However, one significant effect that this oft-invoked dramatic precedent has had on studies of *The English Moor* is that it has tended to skew both the contextualization of Brome’s play and the readings of the Moorish conversion at its heart. Hall provides a

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<sup>8</sup> Karim-Cooper, “Face-paint, Gender, and Race,” 140.

<sup>9</sup> Andrea Stevens, “Mastering Masques of Blackness: Jonson’s ‘Masque of Blackness,’ The Windsor text of ‘The Gypsies Metamorphosed,’ and Brome’s *The English Moor*” in *English Literary Renaissance* 39.2 (Spring 2009): 396-426, 408.

<sup>10</sup> See Mary Floyd -Wilson, *English Ethnicity and Race in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003) and “Temperature, Temperance, and Racial Difference in Ben Jonson’s *The Masque of Blackness*” in *English Literary Renaissance* 28.2 (Spring 1998): 183-209. For a more general discussion of blackness in English drama, see Anthony Barthelemy, *Black Face, Maligned Race: The Representation of Blacks in English Drama from Shakespeare to Southerne* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 1987).

<sup>11</sup> Stevens, “Masques of Blackness,” 400.

<sup>12</sup> For example, see also R.J. Kaufmann, *Richard Brome: Caroline Playwright* (New York: Columbia UP, 1961) and Clark, *Professional Playwrights*.

useful example of this effect. In her reading of *The English Moor*, Hall posits that, because of Brome's indebtedness to the dramatic precedent set by Jonson in the *Masque of Blackness* and *The Gypsies Metamorphosed*, *The English Moor* engages "Elizabethan and Jacobean England's vacillating relationship with the peoples of Africa and with Africans in England." She reminds us that "Elizabeth twice attempts to expel 'Blackamoors' from England while James and Anne bring Africans to the country and generate an Africanist discourse at the center of power." But both gestures, she claims, come "to rely on both the appropriation and the denial of differences troped through blackness" in order to "preserve a sense of self" in the face of those shifting geopolitical relations with non-Europeans during the reigns of Elizabeth and James.<sup>13</sup> While certainly correct in her assertion that Elizabeth and James differed in their interactions with the peoples of Africa, such a reading fails to distinguish between the dynamics of England's relationship with sub-Saharan Africa from those of its very different relationship with Islamic North Africa across the seventeenth century. Moreover, this examination of *The English Moor*'s political and cultural contexts relies on only one of the multiple connotations of "Moor" in use in early modern English. Finally, without precluding the degree to which Brome's play reimagines tropes operative in Jonson's masques, the exclusive association of *The English Moor* with the political world of the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods misses the ways in which the driving themes of conversion, theatricality, race, and religion at work in Brome's 1637 text engaged with its own, different political and religious moment.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Hall, *Things of Darkness*, 176.

<sup>14</sup> Not only is Brome's Caroline comedy perennially read through an Elizabethan and Jacobean lens, other major studies of Moorishness in English drama—such as those by Emily C. Bartels, Jack D'Amico, and Laura Bovilsky—do not consider images of Moorishness on the Caroline stage at all, let alone examine *The English Moore*. See Emily C. Bartels, *Speaking of the Moor: From Alcazar to Othello* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008); Jack D'Amico, *The Moor in English Renaissance Drama* (Tampa: University of South Florida Press, 1991); Laura



These gaps in the existing criticism of Brome's text prompt several interconnected questions: If Brome's 1637 comedy may be considered a reimagining Jonson's masques, what could have impelled the undertaking of such a project at this particular time (beyond, perhaps, a desire to demonstrate that he could use the same conventions better than his master, subsuming "a rival playwright's use of theatrical conventions for his own 'exaltation,'" as in Stevens' reading)?<sup>15</sup> In other words, why was yet another drama of Moorish conversion timely, especially a drama that so deliberately tests the multiple valences of conversion itself? How do the intersecting theatrical and cultural conventions with which Brome frames the conversion of his heroine and its effects engage with a distinctly Caroline religio-political scene? For example, Brome's creative manipulation of the trope of conversion in his play prompts a connection to the Jacobean masques of blackness for their similar interest in "theatrical explorations of masquerade and transformation," for "focusing questions about the relationship between the depths and surfaces of persons."<sup>16</sup> But would shifting the focus of that examination onto the trope of Moorish conversion present in the neo-Platonically inflected court entertainments of the new Roman Catholic queen consort alter the terms of that comparison? Moreover, how do the purpose, enactment, and effects of Millicent's transformation engage with the simmering tensions between Laudian and Puritan supporters over the outward face of English religion in the 1630s, tensions that were colored by both conflicting responses to the Roman Catholicism of the queen consort and to the Islam of Eng-

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Bovilsky, *Barbarous Play: Race on the English Renaissance Stage* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2008). In fact, the consideration of the nexus of conversion, race, and gender at work in Sujata Iyengar's *Shades of Difference: Mythologies of Skin Color in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005)—although less interested in drama than the studies previously mentioned—actually jumps from the Jacobean period all the way to the Restoration.

<sup>15</sup> Stevens, "Masques of Blackness," esp. 420. Stevens quotes Robert N. Watson, *Ben Jonson's Parodic Strategy* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987): 1.

<sup>16</sup> Stevens, "Masques of Blackness," 407.

land's commercial and diplomatic ally? Ultimately, how and to what ends does *The English Moor* creatively conflate and manipulate tropes of theatrical, religious, and racial conversion in ways that registered Caroline England's evolving religious climate and its changed and charged ideas about actual Moors?

On one level, Brome's comedy of Moorish conversion engages Caroline foreign affairs with the Islamic world. From the earliest years of his reign through the later years of the 1630s, Charles I embarked on a conflicted course of business with the Barbary States, and Morocco in particular, as he reversed his father's policies of antagonism with the Muslim empires. Realizing the potential for mutually beneficial and highly lucrative commercial ventures, the English king signed treaties with the Moroccan king, welcomed Moors into English harbors and cities, and made provisions to protect the rights of Moroccan subjects to practice their religion unhindered on English soil. But the habits engrained by James I died hard for the subjects of Charles I. As the king negotiated for increased mercantile opportunities in North Africa, English seamen continued to antagonize Muslim shipping in the Mediterranean, escalating the crisis of the captivity and conversion of Englishmen in the Barbary States as a result. In the Caroline period, a Moorish presence was growing ever more visible in England while the Moors of North Africa precipitated the apostasy of English Christians.

At the same time that the conversion of Englishmen abroad posed a threat to the stability of English Christian identity, the defining features of English Christianity itself were again changing as now, with royal support, Archbishop Laud and his followers moved to implement the anti-Calvinist liturgical reforms that yet remained largely unrealized at the end of James' reign. In many ways, the hallmark emphasis on the "beauty of holiness" so characteristic of the

anti-Calvinist reforms of the late 1620s and the 1630s complemented the French Roman Catholicism that the new queen consort, Henrietta Maria, brought into the heart of the English court. Indeed, her brand of Devout Humanism and its attendant neo-Platonic interests mirrored those qualities that were vital to the king in his own ideal of religion. Each was interested in the visual, the performative, and the exterior as not opposed to, but useful for the cultivation of, interior states and thus sought to combine the beauty of holiness with the cultivation of virtuous personal and social relationships in the spectacular court entertainments of the era.<sup>17</sup>

As the Caroline English court and Church acquired “a more distinctly Roman Catholic cultural ambiance” under the influence of both Laud and the queen consort, however, many staunch Calvinists suspected that a theology that made a place for the usefulness of “external worship [...] resolved itself into a concern for passing, cosmetic appearances.”<sup>18</sup> Critics of the court and the English Church consistently connected stage spectacle, the queen consort’s Roman Catholicism, and the new face of Anglican ritual to the threat of apostasy posed to English Christianity abroad. In the face of a perceived destabilization of the commonwealth from both within and without, we see the Caroline revival of an historic, imaginative displacement of questions about the character of English Christianity onto Islam in the face of unresolved tensions with Islamic North Africa and within the Caroline English Church. In other words, Islam, an un/insufficiently reformed English religion, and drama are essentially triangulated in Caroline England. The availability of Islam as a trope now enabled English writers to speak to ultra-

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<sup>17</sup> Veevers, *Love and Religion*, 12.

<sup>18</sup> Jonathan Scott, *England’s Troubles: Seventeenth-century English political instability in European context* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2000): 122. Julian Davies, *The Caroline Captivity of the Church: Charles I and the Remoulding of Anglicanism 1625-1641* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992): 22.

Protestant anxieties about the Roman Catholic “infiltration” of the Church of England, claims that hinged upon fears of the deceptive power of the theatrical.<sup>19</sup>

In *The English Moor*, Richard Brome tests the multiple, overlapping, and sometimes conflicting registers of conversion and Moorishness activated in Caroline England. As an Englishwoman transforms herself into a Moor, willingly assuming the physical manifestation of religious and cultural otherness, the anxieties surrounding conversion that had previously only been dealt with in foreign spaces (Venice, Cyprus, and Tunis) enter into the English body politic itself and pose pressing questions about the use and effects of ceremony and spectacle. Indeed, both Quicksands and Millicent deploy her conversion to conflicting ends. Quicksands intends the disguise for the preservation of his wife’s chastity, but his plan quickly spirals out of his control, inflaming the lusts of the town gallants and wreaking social discord. Millicent ultimately uses her conversion to subvert her marriage but, at the same time, this subversion not only preserves her own virtue but restores the virtue of others and brings about the play’s socially-restorative conclusion. In a moment of sweeping religio-political change in the English commonwealth, could the revival of historic tropes that pejoratively conflated the idolatrous tendencies of Moorishness and Roman Catholicism with the dangerous deceptions of drama be repurposed to suggest the usefulness of Caroline ideologies that made room for the social benefits of performance in church and playhouse? Millicent’s conversion into a Moor thus not only interrogates England’s ever-conflicted ideas about actual Moors, it reactivates England’s use of the trope of the “Moor” in intra-Christian polemic, drawing connections among Moorishness, unreformed reli-

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<sup>19</sup> Stephan Schmuck, “The ‘Turk’ as Antichrist in John Foxe’s *Acts and Monuments* (1570)” in *Reformation* 10 (2005): 21-44, 27.

gion, and theatricalism, even between the ever-concerning disjunctions between interior and performed exterior enacted through Millicent's disguise.

### **“a Barbary dye”: Commerce and Conversion**

In his study of Richard Brome, R.J. Kaufmann dismisses *The English Moor* as purely “sentimental because Brome himself has not really grounded the issues” that seems to be at work in the text. Where he allows that the play is “dealing with a problem of social concern”—for Kaufmann, the “depredations wrought by the economic self-seekers in the community”—he pronounces the treatment of this theme “artificial, contrived, and misleadingly easy.”<sup>20</sup> Ira Clark, however, comes to the opposite conclusion. Far from Brome not really grounding the issues, Clark is adamant in his assertion that “Brome presented pressing issues in a pressing time.” For Clark, Brome's carefully plotted dramas suggest his “persistent concern with Caroline socio-politics” in ways that are, more often than not, “indicated by the settings and subjects of his plays.” Indeed, all those extant, except for a few of Brome's tragicomedies, “present contemporary London or its environs.” If we follow Clark's lead and take seriously the notion that “Brome's contemporary allusions do not seem casual,” Brome's decision to stage a drama of Moorish conversion in the heart of England seems to beg consideration.<sup>21</sup> Certainly there is no actual Moor in *The English Moor*. However, far from disbaring a serious examination of Brome's interest in a Moorish presence in the Caroline commonwealth, this fact seems to render even more pressing the need to tease out the multiple, overlapping, and sometimes conflicted va-

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<sup>20</sup> Kaufmann, *Richard Brome*, 136.

<sup>21</sup> Clark, *Professional Playwrights*, 157. Here, it should be pointed out that Kim F. Hall's reading is predicated on a fundamental factual error—that the play is set in Venice (this allows her to read the marriage plot in terms of a mixed marriage between a young Christian woman and a Venetian Jew). However, the play is set in London as we are explicitly told in the front matter of the first printing. Matthew Steggle notices this error, as well. See Matthew Steggle, *Richard Brome: Place and politics on the Caroline stage* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2004): 123.

lences of what Moorishness meant to the early modern English. At the same time, Clark's assertion calls us to consider the visible presence of actual Moors in London and the surrounding country, to parse the effects of this non-English presence on the developing shape of intra-national disputes and to examine this population's relationship to the changed state of English international relations under Charles I, especially with the Muslim states of North Africa.

As Imtiaz Habib has carefully shown, numerous men and women variously described in church records as "Moors," "Blackamoors," or "Barbarians" were baptized, married, and buried all around England, with the vast majority appearing in London. From between 1500 and 1677, Habib has tallied records attesting to no fewer than 448 Moors in England, a number that was likely even higher when the presence of *undocumented* residents or the possibility of records no longer extant are considered.<sup>22</sup> While Habib himself does not consider the issue of religious difference in his study of a Moorish presence in early modern England—of what Habib terms simply "black lives in the archives"—Gerald MacLean and Nabil Matar point out that "most if not all" of the subjects of Habib's study were "presumably Muslim."<sup>23</sup> We will return more fully to the multiple connotations of the term "Moor" in its early modern usage later, but for now it is necessary to stress the historical significance of the documented presence of Moors in England,

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<sup>22</sup> Imtiaz Habib, *Black Lives in the English Archives, 1500-1677: Imprints of the Invisible* (Burlington, VT: Aldershot, 2008): 274-368.

<sup>23</sup> Gerald MacLean and Nabil Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World, 1558-1713* (New York: Oxford UP, 2011): 10. Where Habib does take into account the notoriously slippery meaning(s) of "Moor" in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English usage, it is still within a narrow consideration of "Moor" as a purely racial category: Habib allows that "[a]lthough this study's focus has been on documentary records of black people, that is not meant to suggest that the historical colored people of early modern England are all from Africa." Here, Habib also considers "the two subgroups of East and West Indians in the English black archives" (239).

the pressure they exerted on English conceptions of national character, cohesiveness, and stability, “despite their relative numerical leanness.”<sup>24</sup>

Many of the Moors to whom Habib’s work draws our attention ended up in England in the Caroline period as a result of mutually-beneficial trade and diplomatic policies enacted by the Caroline regime across the later 1620s and into the 1630s in what amounted to nothing short of a stunning reversal of the direction of Jacobean foreign relations. Where James preferred to frame English antagonism with the Islamic empires as a fundamentally religious conflict, preferring instead to build pan-Christian alliances with both Roman Catholic powers and states of various Protestant stripes on the Continent, his son saw the lucrative potential in renewing peaceable relations with the Islamic world. Mere months after his ascension to the throne in 1625, Charles I received a well-wishing Algerian *chaius* bringing presents of Barbary horses, tigers, and lions. In 1627, the king received two ambassadors from Salee for the negotiation of the possible use of the Moroccan port city as a base of operation.<sup>25</sup> In 1628, Charles again received commissioners from the port of Salee, this time for a visit that was now both military and commercial in purpose: “the ambassadors sought arms from England in return for trading concessions to the Barbary Company and assistance in England’s Mediterranean confrontation with France and Spain.”<sup>26</sup> Their visit must have been successful because, as Matar points out, the long-term accommodation of Muslims in England was usually “conducted with an eye to trade.”<sup>27</sup> Treaties signed between Charles I and the North African regencies widened commercial links and allowed Turkish and Moorish

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<sup>24</sup> Habib, *Black Lives*, 256.

<sup>25</sup> Nabil Matar, *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery* (New York: Columbia UP, 1999): 35.

<sup>26</sup> Matar, *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen*, 23.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

seamen to use English and Welsh harbors. As England expanded its commercial activity into Muslim dominions, then, it also welcomed Muslim seamen into its coastal towns. Between November 1631 and February 1632, for example, yet another treaty was signed between Mulay al-Walid and Charles I in which “Moores” were to buy and sell goods in England.<sup>28</sup> Anglo-Barbary trade not only helped to define the terms of English engagement with the Moors of North Africa, but also brought Moroccan subjects to London.

In Brome’s play—very much as England’s actual commercial and diplomatic ties with Morocco suggest—it is English trade that first brings the Moor of *The English Moor* into being and into London. Matthew Steggle notices that Quicksands’ financial activities have clearly included trade with the East; indeed, Quicksands says as much himself when he explains how he came by the idea to disguise his new wife “Vnder a Barbary dye”: “First know, my Sweet, it was the quaint devise / Of a Venetian merchant, which I learnt / In my young factorship,” he explains (4.3.46, 3.1.53-55)<sup>29</sup>. Later, when he tells his neighbors of his plans to stage a pageant of Moors, he reveals his familiarity with the London merchant community conducting trade with the Islamic empires: “I have borrowed other Moors [for dancers] of merchants / That trade in Barbary, whence I had mine own here [Millicent disguised as his servant], / And you shall see their way and skill in dancing” (4.4.66-68).<sup>30</sup> More importantly, though, Millicent’s first entrance after her conversion suggests the extent to which trade has made the appearance of a Moor in England possible. As Quicksands assesses his handiwork, the language with which he reassures the dis-

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>29</sup> See Matthew Steggle, *Richard Brome: Place and politics on the Caroline stage* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2004): esp. 123-124, 126.

<sup>30</sup> Found in the 1659 printed edition of the play. Steen’s reproduction of Brome’s manuscript omits these lines.



guised Millicent that her reveal will come soon enough assumes the rhetoric of the commodities of Eastern trade: her “rich imprison’d beauty,” he tells her, “Shall (like my Gold and Jewells) be drawne againe / Out of [its] Ebon Casket and shine forth / In [its] admired glory” (4.1.3, 9-11). Steggle points out that ebony and gold were products of trade with North Africa. Certainly, Millicent’s physical blackness is evoked through the comparison with ebony, but even racial difference here is rendered intelligible through the language of Eastern commerce. On one level, then, the play’s interest in ideas of Moorishness are placed firmly into the economic and geographical framework of Caroline England’s extensive trade with the Barbary States.<sup>31</sup>

However, this picture of productive Anglo-Barbary is quickly complicated. Simultaneous with what Matar calls “this commercial and political *convivencia*” of the Caroline period was an ongoing piracy committed by both Britons and Muslims against each other: breaking the habits that had governed English interactions with the Moors under James I proved difficult, and “amicability and battle went hand in hand with trading and raiding.”<sup>32</sup> Despite Charles’ positive commercial and political relations with North Africa, English privateers often carried out their own raids on Muslim shipping while there were no particular methods in place for securing the safety of merchants and their employees in the Mediterranean. During the Caroline period, “captivity constituted the chief foreign affairs crisis between Britain and the Barbary region.”<sup>33</sup> The very course of domestic economic and foreign policy was challenged and changed by the power of Barbary corsairs and the North African potentates. With the rise in the number of captives seized and taken to North Africa, the impact of the Barbary States became religiously, politically,

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<sup>31</sup> Steggle, *Place and politics*, esp. 123-124, 126.

<sup>32</sup> Matar, *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen*, 24.

<sup>33</sup> Matar, *Britain and Barbary*, 9.

and financially destabilizing, so much so that one of the many causes of the Civil Wars that can be traced back through the 1630s “lay in the slave ports of Salee and Tunis, Algiers and Tetuan. Although ecclesiastical, financial, and national issues polarized Parliament against the monarch, the matter of captives proved instrumental in highlighting that polarization.”<sup>34</sup> The seizure and enslavement of Britons in Barbary cities played an important role in compounding the conflict between Charles and members of the Parliamentary opposition, many of whom were closely associated with the Levant and East India Companies whose sailors and merchants were the target of Barbary attacks.

Throughout his reign, though, Charles did not, or could not, pay enough attention to the captives in Barbary; these companies lost “hundreds of employees and scores of ships to the corsairs and blamed the king for not spending the monies raised through customs, tonnage and poundage, forced loans, and Ship Money [...] on maritime security.”<sup>35</sup> In 1636, the preacher Charles FitzGeffry expressed the growing hostility to the king and his failure to sufficiently address the problem of Barbary captivity and conversion. In a sermon given in Plymouth, a port city that saw “hundreds of seamen sail away and never return,” FitzGeffry berated the monarch: while the king and his court enjoyed their masques and plays, hardworking captives were miserable and helpless in North Africa.<sup>36</sup> “How much hath beene lavishly expended in Pompes, in Playes, in Sibariticall-feasts, in Cameleon suites, and Proteus-fashions, besides other vanities?” he asked. “How many soules might have beene ransomed from that Hell on Earth, Barbarie,

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 58-59.

with halfe these expences?”<sup>37</sup> In light of the king’s neglect, by the end of Charles’ reign the Barbary captives had “precipitated a social crisis that was felt by their wives and families, who, left destitute after the seizure of their husbands and breadwinners, petitioned the king, the Parliament, the Privy Council, and anybody else in power for assistance toward ransoming the captives.”<sup>38</sup>

When the English king did move to take more decisive action in the matter of the Barbary captives—Charles did, ostensibly, want to re-establish peace with Morocco and to reduce piracy—the king’s subjects found his interventions to be too little too late. Perhaps the most important event in the history of Anglo-Islamic military cooperation occurred in 1637 when, for the first time, an English monarch approved his fleet’s support for one faction of Muslims over another. In this year King Charles authorized his fleet to aid Mulay Mohammad Esheikh against rebels in Salee. Charles stepped forward to help the Moroccan king and, in return, later that same year the Moroccan ambassador brought with him 366 British captives, 350 of whom had been ransomed by the king himself, the remaining 16 of whom were released free of charge by the Moroccan king as a sign of his goodwill.<sup>39</sup> But, also in September 1637, another treaty was signed between Mulay Mohammad Esheikh and King Charles in which the subjects of the Moroccan king were actually allowed to “exercise their religion [...] in the Kingdome of the King of great Britaine.”<sup>40</sup> By the later 1630s, then—at the same time that the crisis of Barbary captivity had reached a new high—there were not only protected Moorish populations in England but

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<sup>37</sup> Charles FitzGeffry, *Compassion towards Captives, chiefly towards our Bretheren and Country-men who are in miserable bondage in Barbarie* (Oxford: 1637): “Preface to the Reader.”

<sup>38</sup> Matar, *Britain and Barbary*, 8-9.

<sup>39</sup> Matar, *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen*, 36.

<sup>40</sup> *Les Sources Inédites de L’Histoire du Maroc: Archives et Bibliothèques D’Angleterre*, Le Comte Henry de Castries, ed. (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1918, 1925): 3: 332 as translated by Nabil Matar in *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen*, 23.

their religion could also be present in a visible manner. The king had not done enough to mitigate the crisis of English captivity and conversion in the Barbary States, but he had effectively given the religion of the Moors a place in the heart of the commonwealth.

In light of England's conflicted relationship with Islamic North Africa in the Caroline period, Jonathan Burton reminds us that the idea of the religious conversion of English men and women was still a pressing concern—much as it was in the Jacobean period—and was still drawing theatre-going audiences to plays featuring “Turkish” and “Moorish” material as a means of exploring and processing those fears, “especially at times of military conflict.”<sup>41</sup> And, as we have seen, English relations with the Moors of North Africa were a positively explosive topic in the year of *The English Moor*'s first performances. “There is very little doubt that *The English Moor* registers the religious anxiety and ethnocentric fear of the Moorish presence in Europe in the early modern period,” says Karim-Cooper.<sup>42</sup> For instance, she recognizes that *The English Moor*'s use of black paint in the enactment of Millicent's Moorish disguise likely served as “a threatening signal of the pervasiveness and infectiousness of foreigners, their culture, religion, and sexual behavior”; thus, the painted face “staged a complex negotiation between multiple and conflicting significations related to sexual politics, gender, and art, as well as to race.”<sup>43</sup> Because blackness was “aligned with the exotic [and] the Other, painted blackness was able to literalize anxieties about the mutability of identity and the very loss of Englishness itself.”<sup>44</sup> Indeed, it may well be that political anxiety about Moors in London drove playwrights to blacken them onstage; how-

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<sup>41</sup> Jonathan Burton, *Traffic and Turning: Islam and English Drama, 1579-1624* (Newark, NJ: University of Delaware Press, 2005): 29. MacLean and Matar, *Islamic World*, 26.

<sup>42</sup> Karim-Cooper, “Face-paint, Gender, and Race,” 147-148.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 141-142, 143.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 145.

ever, the act of blackening Moors always operated “with all the historical and theological associations that blackness evoked in the imagination.”<sup>45</sup> If Millicent’s skin-darkening, Moorish disguise activates a network of sexual and racial politics, what Karim-Cooper glosses over is the degree to which early modern religious sensibilities influenced English construction and consumption of those significations and from which they cannot easily be disentangled.

Given the religio-political climate of which Brome’s work is a part, it is essential for readings of *The English Moor* to bear in mind the notorious fluidity of the word “Moor,” especially the frequently overlooked early modern definition of “Moor” as “a Muslim.”<sup>46</sup> For her part, Lynda Boose cautions that English notions of Moorishness were shaped less by anything resembling “the modern sense of some definitively racial shared ‘Europeaness’” than by the ways in which the difference “between a ‘Moor’ and someone we would call a ‘European’ [was] conceptually organized around the religio-political geography of Christian vs. Muslim” rather “than around a geography of skin color.”<sup>47</sup> Insofar as “Moor” was a term of racial description, though, Michael Neill urges readers to remember that this term “could refer quite specifically to the Berber-Arab people of the part of North Africa then rather vaguely denominated as ‘Morocco,’ ‘Mauritania,’ or ‘Barbary’; or it could be used to embrace the inhabitants of the whole North Af-

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<sup>45</sup> Matar, *Britain and Barbary*, 33.

<sup>46</sup> It is also necessary to mention the degree to which “Turk” and “Moor” were often used interchangeably as catch-all phrases to refer to Muslims collectively, regardless of ethnic or geographic origin. As with “Moor,” many of the early modern texts in question in this chapter frequently use the term “Turk” or “Turke” not as an ethnic or racial signifier, but as synonymous with “Islam” and “Muslim” generally. “Moor, n.2.” *OED Online*. June 2017. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/121965>. See also Christopher Toenjes, *Islam, the Turks, and the Making of the English Reformation: The History of the Ottoman Empire in John Foxe’s Acts and Monuments* (New York: Peter Lang, 2016): 1; Bernard Lewis, *Islam and the West* (New York: Oxford UP, 1993): 7; Burton, *Traffic and Turning*, 13.

<sup>47</sup> Lynda Boose, “‘The Getting of a Lawful Race’: Racial discourse in early modern England and the unrepresentable black woman” in *Women, Race, and Writing in the Early Modern Period*, ed. Margo Hendricks and Patricia Parker (New York: Routledge, 1994): 225-239, 235-254, esp. 306n.

rican littoral; or it might be extended to refer to Africans generally (whether ‘white,’ ‘black,’ or ‘tawny’ Moors; or, by an even more promiscuous extension, it might be applied (like ‘Indian’) to almost any darker-skinned peoples—even, on occasion, those of the New World.”<sup>48</sup> To read with an awareness of “the uncertain denotation of ‘Moor,’”—to maintain that this word cannot be identified “with a specific, historically accurate racial category”—is not to suggest that this word is ever “*simply* religious or even cultural,” though.<sup>49</sup> This is not to replace one reductive reading with another. What is important is the extent to which each discourse could impinge upon the other.

The English brought important cultural “baggage” to their encounters with foreign peoples, and the ways in which even those slippery significations of human difference like “Moor” or “Turk” had to be interpreted—“ideas about genealogy, about the biblical separation of humankind, and about the moral symbolism of color” conditioned what Moorishness or blackness as a complex signifier meant, and this baggage was most often tied to religion.<sup>50</sup> This is particularly so in the case of interpreting the meaning of physical color. Virginia Mason Vaughan reminds us that in religious plays from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, for example, “Lucifer’s fall from grace was commonly signaled by a blackened face.”<sup>51</sup> Stemming from its biblical associations with the devil, then, blackness became “a symbol of damnation, sinfulness and, by

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<sup>48</sup> Michael Neill, “‘Mullattos,’ ‘Blacks,’ and ‘Indian Moors’: *Othello* and Early Modern Constructions of Human Difference” in *Shakespeare Quarterly* 49.4 (Winter, 1998): 361-374, 364. See also Emily C. Bartels, “Making More of the Moor: Aaron, Othello, and Renaissance Refashionings of Race” in *Shakespeare Quarterly* 41 (1990): 433-454, 434.

<sup>49</sup> Neill, “Constructions of Difference,” 366 (emphasis mine).

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 366.

<sup>51</sup> Virginia Mason Vaughn, “Everyday Exotics,” *Around the Globe* 33 (Summer 2006): 34.

extension, debauchery.”<sup>52</sup> Thus, Ania Loomba observes that, historically, the devil, the Saracens, and other enemies of Christianity were represented as black as a moral signification as opposed to an accurate racial descriptor (since, of course, Jews, allies of the Mongol emperors, or the Turks were also represented as black).<sup>53</sup> Precisely because the religious and racial parameters of Moorishness were seldom entirely distinct, severing an examination of a physical conversion like Millicent’s from its attendant religious connotations misses half of its imaginative work in the political and religious scene of the 1630s. So long as the language of difference remained “as shifting and uncertain as it was before the emergence of the modern discourses of race and [as] color,” questions about the nature of Moorish conversion would remain difficult to answer with any certainty.<sup>54</sup>

Moreover, the degree to which early modern England processed questions about religious identity through the conflation of (often imaginary) characteristics attributed to various faiths and their adherents adds one last layer of complexity to the interpretive problems that will be posed by Millicent’s conversion in *The English Moor*. Indeed, “Turks, Moors, and other non-Europeans could act both as an oppositional ‘other’ and as a prism through which narrators refracted attitudes toward fellow Christians,” says Jacob Selwood. We should, therefore, guard “against taking for granted the ‘otherness’ of any one group. Such difference was conditional and contextu-

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<sup>52</sup> Karim-Cooper, “Face-paint, Gender, and Race,” 144.

<sup>53</sup> Ania Loomba, *Shakespeare, Race, and Colonialism* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002): 36.

<sup>54</sup> Neill, “Constructions of Difference,” 365. See also Margaret R. Greer, Walter D. Mignolo, and Maureen Quilligan, “Introduction” in *Rereading the Black Legend: The Discourses of Religious and Racial Difference in the Renaissance Empires*, ed. Margaret R. Greer, Walter D. Mignolo, and Maureen Quilligan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007). Greer, Mignolo, and Quilligan in fact maintain that “the very different racism of western European Renaissance empires” was one that was “subtended by religious differences” (1).

al.”<sup>55</sup> For example, the availability of Islam as a trope had historically enabled English writers to speak to Protestant anxieties about Roman Catholicism and enforce claims to the truth and legitimacy of Protestantism against the Church of Rome.<sup>56</sup> That discourse was later appropriated by critics of the Jacobean settlement as staunch Calvinists inveighed against conservative Anglican emphases on liturgical structure, ceremonial action and, thus, the performativity of traditional religion. By the Caroline period, however, those historic tropes that pejoratively conflated either the theatrical, idolatrous tendencies of Moorishness and Roman Catholicism or Moorishness and a budding High Church Anglicanism were forced into triangulation as the Church and court culture of Charles and Henrietta seemed to approach a disconcerting fusion.

**“for Sinnes prevention”: Piety and Performance under the Laudian Reforms**

During the reign of Charles I, the theatre’s engagement with questions about religious conversion were still being conditioned by English responses to English ecclesiastical controversy as examined across the previous three chapters. However, the anti-Calvinist reforms that had yet been largely unrealized after James’ reconsideration of his support for the ultra-Calvinist party at Dort now came to fruition in the Caroline period. Backed by “the unqualified support of the Supreme Governor” who himself held no love for the long-standing Calvinist interpretation of the Thirty-Nine Articles, the character of the Church of England under Archbishop William Laud would ultimately become one of the last significant religio-political lenses through which the English theatre could examine its relationship with the Islamic world before the outbreak of the

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<sup>55</sup> Jacob Selwood, *Diversity and Difference in Early Modern London* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010): 163, 167, emphasis original.

<sup>56</sup> Stephan Schmuck, “The ‘Turk’ as Antichrist in John Foxe’s *Acts and Monuments* (1570)” in *Reformation* 10 (2005): 21-44, 27.



English Civil War.<sup>57</sup> Before we can make sense of the intersection at which Caroline religious controversy, debates over spectacle and theatricality, and English conceptions of Moorishness collide, we must first turn our attention towards the Caroline religious establishment of the late 1620s and the 1630s.

After the challenge to the theology of a strict double-predestination was finally given room for public expression after King James' refusal to make the resolutions of the Synod of Dort binding in England, the influence exerted by members of the anti-Calvinist Durham House group over the interpretation and enactment of the Church of England's ceremonial life was already on the rise. Critical of Calvinist teachings on grace, its sermon-centered piety, and its "obsessive aversion" to the Roman Catholic Church, the English anti-Calvinists began advocating for a vision of "decorous public worship based around a strict observance of the *Prayer Book* and its canons in which divine grace through prayer and sacraments were available to the entire Christian community, participating in an inclusive national Church primarily defined by its unbroken episcopal succession through the ages."<sup>58</sup> However, we should remember that many of the personnel (such as Laud himself) who rose to power under Charles had also been preferred in the later years of James' reign, and many of the policies of the 1630s had been set out in the Canons of 1604. In fact, Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake maintain that Caroline ecclesiastical policies and priorities only make sense in the context of James' reign: "[h]ardly any of the ideas translated into policy under Charles were intellectually novel or even new to the court by

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<sup>57</sup> Claire Cross, *Church and People: England 1450-1660*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1999): 153.

<sup>58</sup> Kenneth Fincham, "Introduction," in *The Early Stuart Church, 1603-1642*, ed. Kenneth Fincham (London, Macmillan Press, 1993): 10. See also Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

1625.”<sup>59</sup> Both kings regarded monarchy and episcopacy as divinely-ordained and complementary offices intended to promote true religion and punish sin; each proclaimed their devotion to unity; each was also more conciliatory towards Rome and English Catholics than many of their subjects.<sup>60</sup> “Notwithstanding these continuities,” say Fincham and Lake, “the Caroline synthesis which emerged was recognizably different from what had gone before.”<sup>61</sup> Indeed, it was really only after the ascension of Charles to the throne in 1625—and during the eleven years after 1629 when the king ruled without Parliament—that the Church of England moved most steadily towards what would be called a High Church stance.<sup>62</sup>

James I had attempted to construct a unified Church based on a small number of key doctrines in which advancement was open to a wide range of Protestant opinion and from which only a minority of extreme Puritans and “papists” were to be excluded: as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, “James was both the champion of Protestant Europe against Rome and the irenic diplomat.”<sup>63</sup> Charles, by contrast, regarded the Jacobean achievement of unity as illusory because “it had undermined uniformity of worship and doctrine and permitted the emergence of a popular Puritan threat to monarchy. Vigilant government in Church and state was necessary to cauterize

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<sup>59</sup> Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake, “The Ecclesiastical Policies of James I and Charles I” in *The Early Stuart Church, 1603-1642*, ed. Kenneth Fincham (London, Macmillan Press, 1993): 23.

<sup>60</sup> Fincham and Lake, “Ecclesiastical Policies,” 24. Other examples of Caroline ecclesiastical continuity include: the always-contentious *Book of Sports* (1618) which had been compiled by James, the altarwise position of the Communion table which could claim some warrant from the practice of the Chapel Royal and certain cathedrals, and the sense of alarm that met clerical dependence on the laity—it had alarmed Elizabethan conformists such as Bancroft and Hooker, as well (41).

<sup>61</sup> Fincham and Lake, “Ecclesiastical Policies,” 24.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 23. John Adair, *Puritans: Religion and Politics in Seventeenth Century England and America* (Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing, 1998): 152.

<sup>63</sup> Fincham and Lake, “Ecclesiastical Policies,” 24.

this malignancy.”<sup>64</sup> Consequently, order and obedience, authority and deference, replaced flexibility as hallmarks of Caroline policy. Like the king, so too did Laud believe passionately in outward uniformity, and he worked immensely hard to secure it: “I laboured nothing more,” wrote Laud, “than the external public worship of God—too much slighted in most parts of this kingdom—might be preserved, and that with as much decency and uniformity as might be, being still of the opinion that unity cannot long continue in the Church where uniformity is shut out at the Church door.”<sup>65</sup> Consequently, Laud began by reviving the custom of archiepiscopal visitation, sending officials to inquire into the condition of every diocese in his southern province. Every clergyman was obliged to conform to the words and liturgical order of the *Prayer Book*. Ritual acts, vestments, music, and stately processions—all designed to emphasize the sacraments and generally to convey “the beauty of holiness”—came into royal favor as the archbishop and his followers pressed on with their reforms.<sup>66</sup>

Laud found that the “fatal” teachings of Calvinism (a strict double predestination and the denial of broadly efficacious sacraments) nullified the “practice of piety and obedience,” and that the overweening confidence of the self-styled Elect was equally destructive of “external ministry” in the Church and “civil government in the commonwealth.”<sup>67</sup> This distaste for the potentially divisive effects of a Calvinist interpretation of the Church of England’s doctrine placed a greater stress on the ceremonial and liturgical aspects of the beauty of holiness: because the Eng-

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<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>65</sup> William Laud as quoted in Adair, *Puritans*, 152. No specific citation/source given in Adair.

<sup>66</sup> Adair, *Puritans*, 152. See also Nicholas Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists: The Rise of English Arminianism, c. 1590-1640* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987): 199.

<sup>67</sup> William Laud as quoted by Nicholas Tyacke, “Archbishop Laud” in *The Early Stuart Church, 1603-1642* ed. Kenneth Fincham (London: Macmillan, 1993): 65.

lish anti-Calvinists repudiated the idea that sacraments were “bare figures”—Richard Montague argued in 1624 that “Sacraments, which have their Beeing from institution, are signes of God’s love and promise, seales of his covenant and grace, and instruments and conveiances of his mercy. What they intimate, signifie, and represent, they conveigh unto the soule”—God’s presence in His house demanded the utmost reverence from all who approached that presence. The church should be a place of awe and fear in the presence of God.<sup>68</sup> That awe, fear, and reverence had, moreover, to take a directly physical form—God must be worshipped with soul and body, and so a Church at that was to dominate men’s souls must also appeal to their senses. For the archbishop and his followers, the Church of England had to be a visible Church, says Hugh Trevor-Roper, “visible in monuments, ceremonies, decent ritual, imagery, music—all those external forms which create the outer context of inner devotion.”<sup>69</sup>

To that end, Laud made the restoration and reorganization of the physical fabric of the churches a priority: the archbishop determined that churches should be rebuilt where they had fallen into decay and beautified when built, that services should be dignified, and that beauty and dignity should be so designed as to enhance authority, order, and hierarchy. The sacrament of the Eucharist should be restored to the center of worship, and consequently, the holy table should be an altar (railed off and fixed permanently at the east end of the church, not a moveable table

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<sup>68</sup> Richard Montague, *A Gagg for the new Gospell? No: A new Gagg for an old Goose* (London: 1624): 251 as cited in Bryan D. Spinks, *Sacraments, Ceremonies, and the Stuart Divines: Sacramental theology and liturgy in England and Scotland, 1603-1662* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2002): 87. Peter Lake, “The Laudian Style: Order, Uniformity, and the Pursuit of Holiness in the 1630s” in *The Early Stuart Church, 1603-1642* ed. Kenneth Fincham (London: Macmillan, 1993): 165.

<sup>69</sup> Hugh Trevor-Roper, *From Counter-Reformation to Glorious Revolution* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992): 141.

shuffled into the aisle for the occasion of Communion).<sup>70</sup> Moreover, lay participation in the service was essential, a participation contained within the structure of the liturgy: “We may not,” wrote Edward Boughen in 1638, “be like stocks and stones, like the pillars or pews in the church, always in one posture. Something or other we must be doing. We must be sometimes kneeling, sometimes standing, otherwhiles bowing when and as we are commanded [...] There is no idle time spared us in the house of God, no time for sleep and wandering thoughts.”<sup>71</sup> Finally, there should be candles, candlesticks, copes, surplices, stained-glass windows and organ music—“all those appurtenances of worship which the [earlier] Reformers had regarded as indifferent and the Puritans as superstitious and abominable.” For the Church of England’s anti-Calvinist clergy, however, “these symbols were the means of encouraging devotion in ordinary men.”<sup>72</sup>

Outward forms of behavior were viewed as a way to inculcate virtues in the souls of individual believers, but the believer’s participation did not merely affect his or her own soul but the souls of others, as well. The collective, performative action that could cultivate virtue in the Church—physical acts of reverence and piety, choreographed by the liturgy and performed by the promptings of the priest—had the potential to transform the socio-political coherence of the

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<sup>70</sup> Scott, *England’s troubles*, 129. For a full list of the principal features of Caroline religious reform, see Scott, *England’s troubles*, 128-129.

<sup>71</sup> Edward Boughen, *A sermon concerning order and decency in the church* (London: 1638): 6-7, 8 as cited in Lake, “Laudian Style,” 166.

<sup>72</sup> As Chapter 3 mentioned, it was actually Bishop Lancelot Andrewes who had earlier set the example for the adornment of the altar. “Apart from the altar coverings of silk [...] the two lighted candlesticks, and the finely carved altar rails,” though, there was also “the higher ceremonial, the censuring, [and] the mixed chalice. [...] Copes and Prayer Books were brilliantly ornamented. [...] Kneeling at the altar for the reception of Communion became only one of a series of genuflections and bowings.” Even under Andrewes, the very ceremonies to which the Puritans objected were made more elaborate. Horton Davies, *Worship and Theology in England: From Cranmer to Baxter and Fox, 1534-1690* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996): 337-339. Trevor-Roper, *Counter-Reformation*, 141. See also Nicholas Tyacke, “Lancelot Andrewes and the Myth of Anglicanism” in *Conformity and Orthodoxy in the English Church, c.1560-1660*, ed. Peter Lake and Michael Questier (Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2000): 5-33.

commonwealth.<sup>73</sup> In other words, as the Church of England was to be “an established Church, the Church of the whole commonwealth, so it was to maintain the bonds of that commonwealth, [to] promote and preserve social harmony.”<sup>74</sup> Moreover, those ecclesiastical policies for the preservation of social harmony favored by the king and the archbishop had important parallels with the secular culture of the Caroline court. In Erica Veevers’ estimation, “something of Charles’ heartfelt desire for ‘beauty and proportion’ in his religion is reflected in the emphasis on spectacle in the masques and in the ritual and ceremony of the court stage.”<sup>75</sup> The masque stage, together with its own spectacle and ritual, “may have lent itself to the expression not only of Charles’ artistic tastes, but of his liturgical tastes, as well, [suggesting] that masques themselves played a part in the contemporary debate over ‘beauty’ in church worship,” she argues.<sup>76</sup> Indeed, masques were a fitting vehicle for referring to questions of ritual and ceremony, and the links between these secular practices and Caroline styles of piety and churchmanship are extensive: in both Church and state, Charles sought “to impose order and decorum on his subjects, to suppress dispute and inculcate unity and obedience through the repetition of the ceremonies of order, hierarchy, and worship.”<sup>77</sup> The parallel between the awe and reverence due to God and the king was exploited by Caroline apologists in comparisons of Church, chancel, and altar with court, pres-

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<sup>73</sup> Lake, “Laudian Style,” 166.

<sup>74</sup> Trevor-Roper, *Counter-Reformation*, 142.

<sup>75</sup> Veevers, *Love and Religion*, 152.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 152.

<sup>77</sup> Fincham and Lake, “Ecclesiastical Policies,” 48.

ence chamber, and chair of state, for example, comparisons used to “legitimate Caroline values in the Church and to expand the beneficent effects of those values in secular politics.”<sup>78</sup>

As we prepare to turn our attention to the application of Millicent’s Moorish disguise and its attendant connotations, it is necessary to first pause here to consider the conception, purpose, and orchestration of Millicent’s performance within a culture operative in the Caroline Church and court that took seriously the efficacy of the visual and the performative for the inculcation of virtue and order. Here, it should be remembered that, in Act 1 of *The English Moor*, the marriage of Quicksands and Millicent remains incomplete. In early modern England, religious ceremony followed by social festivity and sexual consummation—a whole chain of performative signs which rendered a new union legitimate and visible to the community—made a couple man and wife.<sup>79</sup> However, a group of young gallants, financially “Vndone” by Quicksands and “all despair’d / Of meanes to be reueng’d” upon him, have finally “found that meanes / (As they suppose) by making of him Cuckold” (1.1.91-93, 95-96). On the wedding night, the couple is interrupted by the “hideous noyse” of “Outragious Roysters” (1.3.105, 117). Quicksands is immediately on guard, but Millicent, arguing that “These are some merry harmless friends,” lets in the revelers (1.3.120). The couple is to be treated to a marriage masque but, instead of a celebration of their union, the Prologue warns of an insidious “Match-maker” in the habit of joining hands,

(Old greedy Auarice) who, by his spells,  
In breasts of Parents, & of Guardians dwells,  
That force their tenderlings to loathed beds.  
Which vncouth Pollicie to Sorrow leads  
Thousands a thousand ways; of which the least  
Is this, with which we celebrate your feast [...]

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>79</sup> David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1997): 291.

Now, by this daunce, let Husband, that doth wed,  
 Bride from her proper Loue to loathed bed,  
 Observe his fortune. (1.3.145-151, 178-180)

If ill-mannered contrivances like this nighttime revelry have the power to endlessly unravel familial and social coherence, leading not to peaceful unity but drawing “Thousands a thousand ways,” the masquers argue that evil plans like the marrying off of a young woman to the advantage of only her guardian and her new husband is all the more dangerous. The masquers—“A Lawyer with stagges hornes [...] A Countrey Chuffe with Rammes hornes [...] a Vsurer with Goates hornes”—enter to a dance, and the marriage masque devolves into a nightmare vision of Quicksands’ inevitable cuckoldry, an anti-masque that leaves old, greedy Quicksands thoroughly disturbed and desperate for a plan (s.d.).

Quicksands believes that ill-wrought spectacle could destroy the ordered functioning of his household just as surely as a well-managed and completed ceremony could have cemented it, and so he fears the potential effects of the gallants’ theatrics, suspecting that, if the situation remains unaddressed, the masquers might next try to seduce his wife. In order to offset this fear, Quicksands will devise a counter-spectacle, one that will first make Millicent both unrecognizable and sexually unattractive, a disguise, he says, that

shall both  
 Kill vaine attmpts in me, and guard you safe  
 From all that seeke subuersion of your honor.  
 I’ll fear noe powdered Spirits to haunt my house,  
 Rose-footed feinds, or fumigated Goblins [...]  
 ’Twill coole theyr Kidneys & lay downe their heats. (3.1.62-66, 68)

Because Quicksands interprets the nighttime antics of the young gallants as a kind of antimasque, its powder-haired, tobacco-smoking actors and ill effects can both be banished by his orchestration of a corresponding spectacle. Subsequently, then, Quicksands plans to reveal his chaste, dis-



guised wife in a corrective masque meant to repair the disruption of what should have been the fulfillment of the marriage ceremony, so closely are the uses of ceremony and spectacle related in Quicksands' estimation. Like the gallants' antimasque, Quicksands' device will necessarily rely on a belief in the efficaciousness of the performative and the visible to influence the behavior of its participants and spectators. Unlike the antimasque, however, Quicksands will attempt to harness the power of the performative as an efficacious means of regulating immorality and inculcating virtue, restoring what he perceives to be the disordered ethics of home and community: "Some can be pleas'd to lie in oyles & paste / At Sinnes appointment, which is thrice more wicked," he says of the gallant-masquers, but his own bit of theatricalism "(which is sacred) is for Sinnes prevention" (3.1.77-79). The intent is that, if well managed, Quicksands' spectacle could be a useful tool for not only repairing the incomplete marriage ceremony, specifically, but also for orchestrating the affirmation of proper social bonds, familial hierarchy, and feminine virtue all at once: "I'm obedient," is already Millicent's consenting reply (3.1.83).

While King Charles and the Caroline divines embraced a vision of an English communal order articulated and maintained by extravagant forms of public spectacle, both sacred and secular, one important result of this affinity was their respect for Rome and their positive celebration of pre-Reformation practices that had historically embraced this usefulness of the performative. Indeed, says Anthony Milton, when they looked back to the medieval Church, the Laudians did not look back to a hidden succession of true believers, "who had preserved the essence of right doctrine despite the persecution of a church hierarchy which reviled them as heretics"; rather, they concentrated "almost exclusively upon the general Christian community in which their forefathers had participated, and upon the piety, devotion, and reverence which the medieval Church,

for all its faults, had been able to instill.”<sup>80</sup> For Laud, an albeit corrupt, impure Church was a sufficient ancestor for the Church of England. Neither was Richard Montagu concerned with the search for a pure Church or an orthodoxy “which might in any sense be invisible.”<sup>81</sup> Under the Laudian administration, praise of the medieval Church “was shifting increasingly from a defense of the kernel of true doctrine which it had retained in the midst of popish superstitions, toward a celebration of its high standards of piety and its elaborate patterns of public worship,” practices that could be profitably recovered by the Church of England.<sup>82</sup> However, to the committed Calvinist eye, and certainly to the Puritan, the ceremonial reforms ushered in by Laud and his supporters seemed uncomfortably close to Henrietta Maria’s Roman Catholicism, and the Caroline attempt to “reinvest the Catholic apparel of the Anglican Church was bound to blur the invisible boundaries between orthodoxy and popery.”<sup>83</sup>

During these same years in which the king and the archbishop continued to advocate for the restoration of the “beauty of holiness” in Anglican worship, Roman Catholicism itself was becoming “increasingly prominent” at the royal court under the protection of Queen Henrietta Maria.<sup>84</sup> While Henrietta Maria, by virtue of her outspoken Catholic devotion, would never win the favor of the masses in England, her piety was respected by many Anglican conformists at

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<sup>80</sup> Anthony Milton, “The Church of England, Rome, and the True Church: The Demise of a Jacobean Consensus” in *The Early Stuart Church, 1603-1642* (London: Macmillan, 1993): 197. See also Anthony Milton, *Catholic and Reformed: The Roman and Protestant Churches in English Protestant Thought, 1600-1640* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2002).

<sup>81</sup> Milton, “True Church,” 196.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 197.

<sup>83</sup> Certainly, a Platonic language that “constantly raises women to the dignity of saints and gives them connections with Heaven”—in a country that discouraged “idol-worship” of any kind and, especially, “woman-worship”—had to be taken seriously when centered around a Roman Catholic queen. See Veevers, *Love and Religion*, esp. 7-8. Davies, *Caroline Captivity*, 24.

<sup>84</sup> Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*, 227. Cross, *Church and People*, 163.

court precisely for its compatibility with the Laudian reforms. First, Henrietta Maria's preferred expression of Roman Catholicism—the French Devout Humanism pioneered by prelates such as St. Francis de Sales, Pierre de Bérulle, and Jacques-Davy du Perron—was recognized by contemporaries as a moderate form of Roman Catholicism, “bearing a similar relation to militant, Spanish-influenced Catholicism as Charles' Anglicanism bore to the more extreme forms of Calvinism.”<sup>85</sup> Second, and relatedly, the queen consort's Devout Humanism exemplified “certain moderate elements” that were not only “in sympathy with Charles' Anglicanism” but also with the king's religious and political concerns of the 1630s: quelling religious dissent in Scotland, enforcing conformity of religious worship in the English Church, and holding a conciliatory attitude towards moderate Catholic countries while maintaining the independence of his own Anglican rule, for example.<sup>86</sup> Increasingly significant to the king's consideration of all these concerns was Henrietta Maria's stress on the beauty of religious worship, the combining of the beauty of religious worship with doctrinal truth, and the settling of religious disputes through love, or peaceful means.<sup>87</sup> Most alarming to Puritan critics, however—more than any discernable correspondence between the “moderate” social and political programs of the king and queen consort—was likely, what seemed to them, the excessively immoderate ceremonial display at work in Queen Henrietta Maria's chapel.

When Inigo Jones completed his redesign of the Queen's Chapel in 1636, it was outfitted with a spectacular perspective scene for the celebration of the opening Mass. The scene properly belonged to a kind of religious devotion newly popular in Rome at the time, the *quarantore*. Lat-

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<sup>85</sup> Veevers, *Love and Religion*, 6.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

er known as Forty Hours Devotion, the *quarantore* exposed the Blessed Sacrament for pious adoration for a period of about forty hours, the time tradition held that Christ's body rested in the tomb.<sup>88</sup> In its sixteenth-century Roman inception, though, the *quarantore* were a kind of *theatrum sacrum* designed for use in churches; "they usually consisted of a spectacular scene built around the Eucharist, accompanied by elaborate singing and music, the purpose of which was to uplift the spirit with a display of the splendors of religion."<sup>89</sup> In this case, the church served as church, stage, and auditorium.<sup>90</sup> While Henrietta Maria's chapel opened with a full Pontifical Mass (the first to have been celebrated in England in nearly one hundred years), to mark the solemnity of the occasion, Jones and her Capuchin priests borrowed from the theatrical conventions of the *quarantore* and designed a "scenic machine" about forty feet in height to display the Holy Sacrament shining at the center of Paradise.<sup>91</sup> The scene was covered by two curtains, and

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<sup>88</sup> "Forty Hours Devotion" in *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, ed. F.L. Cross and E.A. Livingstone (New York: Oxford UP, 1997): 625. See also Veevers, *Love and Religion*, 165.

<sup>89</sup> Veevers, *Love and Religion*, 165.

<sup>90</sup> It has been pointed out how well the Church of the Gesù, for example, which became one of the main centers for the *quarantore*, lent itself to theatrical purposes: "with its flanking wings enclosing a deep room and extending towards a light backdrop, it conformed to the scenic principles in use on the court stage." Veevers, *Love and Religion*, 165. See also Per Bjurström, "Baroque Theater and the Jesuits" in *Baroque Art: The Jesuit Contribution*, ed. R. Wittkower and Irma Jaffé (New York: Fordham UP, 1972): 99-110, esp. 105.

<sup>91</sup> The best extant description of "Paradise" as featured at the opening of the Queen's Chapel comes from the notes of a Father Cyrien: a great arch was erected and supported by pillars in front of the high altar, leaving a space between columns and the walls for the priests to pass to and from a portable altar beneath the arch. The ascent to this altar was by six steps, leaving an unobstructed view in front, and by two sets of steps "in theatrical form" at either side. Over the spaces at each side of the arch were placed the choir, organ, and other instruments, and in front of each space stood the figure of a prophet. Behind the altar, forming the center of the perspective, a Paraclete was seen above seven ranges of clouds; in these were figures of archangels, cherubim, and seraphim "to the number of two hundred," some adoring the Holy Sacrament, others singing and playing on all sorts of musical instruments, the whole "painted and placed according to the rules of perspective." Thomas Birch, *The Court and Times of Charles the First*, ed. Robert Folkstone Williams, 2 vols. (Henry Colburn, London: 1848): 2: 311-314 as cited in Veevers, *Love and Religion*, 165-167.

when the queen and her court came to hear Mass, the curtains were drawn back and the scene awash in candlelight was revealed to the admiration of the assembled congregants:

At the same time, the music, composed of excellent voices, set up an anthem, the harmony of which having no outlet but between the clouds and figures of Angels, it seemed as if the whole Paradise was full of music, and as if the Angels themselves were the musicians [...] thus eye and ear found at the same time gratification in this contrivance of piety and skill.<sup>92</sup>

Henrietta Maria was pleased and, as the fame of her chapel spread throughout the court, she gave orders that it should remain undisturbed until Christmas (a period of seventeen days) to satisfy the devotion of the Catholics and curiosity of the Protestants “who never ceased coming from all parts to behold this wonder.”<sup>93</sup> On the third night, the king himself came to the chapel, gazed at the scene for a long time, “and said aloud that he had never seen anything more beautiful or more ingeniously designed.”<sup>94</sup> While the royal couple delighted in Jones’ triumphal fusion of sacred reverence and secular stage spectacle—“this contrivance of piety and skill”—the dramatic ceremonialism on display in both the queen consort’s new chapel and in the High Church reforms ushered in under the direction of Charles and the archbishop would ultimately reinforce already-existing, pejorative parallels between religious ceremony and the stage that had survived the Reformation in England.

**“the heauen that I am iustly fallen from”: Anglicans, Apostates, and Actors**

From William Tyndale on, of course, Roman Catholic liturgy in England had been compared scornfully to theatre. Later, Elizabethan and Jacobean critiques of the *Book of Common Prayer*, for example, adopted this discourse conflating ceremony and stage in their censures

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<sup>92</sup> Father Cyprien in Birch, *Court and Times*, 2: 313.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:314.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:313.

against its “popish” emphases on liturgical structure, its ritual action and, relatedly, the attendant performativity of religion on display in conservative Anglican ceremony.<sup>95</sup> By the 1630s, visual resemblances between Anglican ceremony, Roman Catholic ritual, and the stage added weight to Puritan fears that “the outward signs of ceremony were an invitation for the return of Catholicism.”<sup>96</sup> In fact, in a complaint lodged against Archbishop Laud by the Commons in 1634, the Commons cited as criticism of Laud’s project of reform an Elizabethan homily in which the whole of Roman Catholic ceremony was compared to court pageantry:

because the whole Pageant must be thoroughly played, it is not enough to thus deck Images and Idols (with Gold, Silver, Rich, Wanton and Proud Apparel, tempting their Paramours to wantonnesse) but at last must come in the Priests themselves, likewise decked with Gold and Pearls, that they may be meet servants for such Lords and Ladies, and fit worshippers of such Gods and Goddesses; and with a solemn pace they pass before the Golden Puppets, and fall down to the ground on their Marrow-bones before the honorable Idols (and their gorgeous Altars too).<sup>97</sup>

The similarities to be drawn between such a critique and the parallels that existed between Henrietta Maria’s piety and the return to traditional ceremonial form in the Anglican Church inevitably gave a Roman coloring to Charles’ presentation of his reign in the eyes of his critics. Indeed,

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<sup>95</sup> The comparison also moved in the opposite direction. By the 1590s, Puritan divine John Rainoldes was fulminating against the theatre because he found disguise sinful and theatricality inherently “popish,” an unacceptable remnant of the old, “unenlightened” ways of ritualism and idolatry: “whereas the profane and wicked toys of passion plays, plays setting forth Christ’s passion, procured by popish priests, who, being corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ, as they have transformed the celebrating of the sacrament of the Lord’s supper into a mass-game, and all other parts of ecclesiastical service into theatrical sights, so instead of preaching the word they cause it to be played.” John Rainoldes, *The Overthrow of Stage Plays* (1599) in *Shakespeare’s Theater: A Sourcebook*, ed. Tanya Pollard (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004): 170. See also Colin Rice, *Ungodly Delights: Puritan Opposition to the Theatre, 1576-1633* (Italy: Edizioni dell’Orso, 1997): esp. 14-15.

<sup>96</sup> Veevers, *Love and Religion*, 165.

<sup>97</sup> “A Sermon against Peril of Idolatry” in *The Book of Homilies* as quoted by John Rushworth, *Historical Collections* 2:180-181 cited in Veevers, *Love and Religion*, 164. It should be mentioned here that to demonstrate that some ultra-Protestant reformers deplored the pomp and theatricality of Roman liturgy and, relatedly, the theatre, is not to suggest the absolute antipathy of all Protestant reformers to the theatre in all forms, as both Colin Rice and Jennifer Waldron have suggested. See Rice, *Ungodly Delights* and Jennifer Rust, *Reformations of the Body: Idolatry, Sacrifice, and Early Modern Theater* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

at a time when the frontiers of European Protestantism were being pushed back—when the Calvinist Elector Palatine had lost Bohemia, Huguenot La Rochelle had fallen to the Catholic troops of the French king, and Poland had been regained for Catholicism by the Counter-Reformation—“the re-catholicization of Anglicanism under Charles I [...] gave the impression that the king and bishops were conspiring either to return the country to Rome or set up an English popery.”<sup>98</sup>

For Laudian supporter John Browning, failure “to perform or retain any of the most necessary reverence in our churches” or to “lightly reckon of [...] God’s reverence” was tantamount to apostasy: “O dismal decay of Christianity! O apostating fall! O backsliding generation!” was his lament in 1636 on the ceremonial laxity that had yet to be amended in the English Church.<sup>99</sup> But for congregations who for almost a century had been subjected to diatribes against the Papacy and the Roman Church and who were now expected to resume the celebration of ceremonies often disused for decades and long associated with Roman Catholicism, the Laudian reforms “represented an hostility to any form of ceremonial laxity, to Calvinist preaching, sabbatarianism, and the word-centered piety of the godly.”<sup>100</sup> Enforcement of conformity to the liturgical structure of the *Book of Common Prayer*, the required outward reverence in ceremonial action (particularly kneeling at Communion, bowing at the name of Jesus, and baptismal signation), and the wearing of the proper ecclesiastical vestments, for example, were often met with accusations

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<sup>98</sup> Davies, *Caroline Captivity*, 295. Cross, *Church and People*, 163. In fact, says Karen Britland, the French “hoped that Henrietta Maria’s marriage would lead to the conversion of Charles and his nation and, furthermore, that this conversion would draw English Catholics into an alliance with France [...] In addition it was hoped that the new queen consort would be in a better position to prevent the English from offering assistance to French Huguenots.” From her arrival in England, then, it was made clear to Henrietta Maria that “hers was a perilous position in a land lacking in grace and full of iniquity.” As an exemplary Roman Catholic princess in an apostate land, Henrietta’s social and religious role at the English court was to lead by her good example in order to draw her English subjects back to the old faith. Karen Britland, *Drama at the Courts of Queen Henrietta Maria* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2006): 27, 31.

<sup>99</sup> John Browning, *Concerning public prayer* (London: 1636) as cited in Lake, “Laudian Style,” 167.

<sup>100</sup> Cross, *Church and People*, 158. Fincham and Lake, “Ecclesiastical Policies,” 41.

of idolatry, theatricalism, and contempt.<sup>101</sup> Browning used the rhetoric of apostasy to imply that the Calvinist-influenced order of worship heretofore pervasive in English churches was tantamount to an abandonment or renunciation of a true and historical expression of English Christianity. For his Puritan opponents, though, that rhetoric of apostasy would assume a different set of connotations.

In 1632, the Scottish traveler William Lithgow was propagating a Protestant discourse as old as Luther, Calvin, and Foxe when he depicted papists and Moors in equally dismissive terms—neither were of the correct faith, and so Lithgow saw little difference between them. It was thus anti-Catholic language that Lithgow used in his *Total Discourse* to describe the “bastard show of Mahometanical religion” found in his travels in North Africa and the Levant.<sup>102</sup> More specifically, though, the religion of the North African emir in whose territory Lithgow found himself was “damnable,” redolent of the deceptions and idolatry of popery with the presence of “altars, priests, and superstitious rites.”<sup>103</sup> For Lithgow, if Islam had its array of ceremonies and outward signs, so too did the Roman Catholic Church, and the unveiling of these appearances of holiness not only would not harm true Christianity, it would serve to expose false forms of Christianity.<sup>104</sup> “Far from presenting a monolithic opposition between European and

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<sup>101</sup> For a list of citations given to non-conforming clergy in a single year (1635) by Sir Nathaniel Brent, Archbishop Laud’s official, see Cross, *Church and People*, 158-159. See also Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*, 216.

<sup>102</sup> William Lithgow, *The Total Discourse of the Rare Adventures and Painefull Peregrinations of Long Nineteen Yeares Trauayles, from Scotland, to the Most Famous Kingdomes in Europe, Asia, and Affrica* (London: 1632): sig. Ccc3r (8: 373) as cited in Selwood, *Diversity and Difference*, 164.

<sup>103</sup> Lithgow, *Total Discourse*, sig. Ddd1r (8: 377) as cited in Selwood, *Diversity and Difference*, 165.

<sup>104</sup> Toenjes, *English Reformation*, 227. A related argument was that it was precisely the “idolatry” that had infiltrated the Christian Church which was the cause of “the great weakening of all Christendom; whereby [...] hath followed the utter overthrow of the Christian religion and noble empire in Greece, and all east parts of the world, and the increase of Mahomet’s false religion, and the cruel dominion and tyranny of the Saracens and Turks.” “A Sermon



non-European, Christian and non-Christian,” says Selwood, texts like Lithgow’s “offered a complex range of roles for a variety of peoples, shifting depictions depending upon context.”<sup>105</sup> Such texts forged images of different groups in relation, not isolation, “constructing the characteristics of particular peoples in a process of comparative ethnography” that, even in the Caroline world, were not separate from but part of broader civic and national responses to the pressing issues of religious contention at home and of captivity and conversion abroad.<sup>106</sup>

As we have seen, though, the decades during which these narratives were printed saw the rise of intense anti-Catholic sentiment linked to the conflict over the nature of the Anglican Church and—precisely because there was already an established discursive tradition that conflated two of the great religious “others” in the English Protestant imagination (Roman Catholics and Muslims)—this framework could easily be reapplied to process a new moment of heightened tension between England and North Africa and within the English Church itself.<sup>107</sup> It should be remembered that, even by James’ reign, the rising performative quality of Anglican ritual was read as not only a warning against how much damage had resulted from the “great mass of ceremonies” of the pre-Reformation Church, but as a clear sign that “idolatry” and “Barbarism had invaded the Church of God.”<sup>108</sup>

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against Peril of Idolatry” in *The Book of Homilies* (1547) (Nashotah, WI: Nashotah House Press, facsimile reprint 2013): 184, see also 193-194.

<sup>105</sup> Selwood, *Diversity and Difference*, 163.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 163.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 164, n19.

<sup>108</sup> Ulrich Zwingli, *Action or Use of the Lord’s Supper* (1525) trans. Bard Thompson in *Liturgies of the Western Church* (Cleveland: Meredian Books, 1961): 149 as quoted in Leonel L. Mitchell, *The Meaning of Ritual* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 1977): 109. *An abridgment of that booke which the ministers of Lincoln diocess delivered to his Maiestie upon the first of December last* ([W. Jones’ secret press]: 1605) cited in Charles W. Prior,

Chapter 2 began to examine the extent to which Puritan criticism of the Jacobean settlement started to blur the lines marking conceptual boundaries between ritual, idolatry, and non-Christian religion as a rhetoric of un-Christian “barbarousness” was taken up by early modern ultra-Protestants as a lens through which to interrogate what they saw as the “un-Christian” character of outward appearances at work in traditional worship.<sup>109</sup> But this was a discourse whose terms tended to alter in order to accommodate the contemporary religio-political climate; certainly, such rhetoric would be rendered useless if it was not flexible enough to be manipulated in order to speak to changing religio-political realities. The usefulness of this device would only carry through to the Caroline period and permutate yet again the face of liturgical reforms enacted by the now-ascendant anti-Calvinist party and their uncomfortable likeness to the highly visible, highly theatrical French Roman Catholicism of the new English queen. It was no long stretch to use this conflation of the dangerous character of Roman Catholicism and Islam to attack the new Laudian ascendancy in the Church of England. Essentially, for the “godly,” the ritual life of a newly un-Reformed English Christianity had not only assumed the characteristics of a non-Christian religion entirely, as the Caroline English Church acquired “a more distinctly Roman Catholic cultural ambiance,” many Puritans suspected that those theologies that made a place for the usefulness of “external worship [...] resolved itself into a concern for passing, cosmetic appearances,” indeed a preoccupation with dangerous theatrical playing.<sup>110</sup>

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*Defining the Jacobean Church: The Politics of Religious Controversy, 1603-1625* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2005): 161.

<sup>109</sup> Toenjes, *English Reformation*, 207-208, 227.

<sup>110</sup> Scott, *England's Troubles*, 122. Julian Davies, *The Caroline Captivity of the Church: Charles I and the Remoulding of Anglicanism 1625-1641* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992): 22.

In *The English Moor*, Brome begins to interrogate the conceptual intersection of unreformed religion, Moorishness, and theatricalism in the scene of Millicent's conversion. In Act 3, before Quicksands' reveals the details of his plan to Millicent, he reiterates the intended effects of her transformation:

Come precious marke  
Of Beauty & Perfection, at which Envy  
And Lust ayme all their ranckling poysonous arrowes,  
But I'll provide they nere shall touch thy blood [...]  
That I may foole Iniquity, & triumph  
Ouer the Lustfull Stallions of our time (3.1.27-30, 47-48)

To combat the threat he believes the wanton theatricalism of the gallants posed to his wife's feminine virtue, Quicksands will respond with a theatrical device of his own, one intended to answer lust with chastity. Quicksands holds this impending bit of theatricalism in direct opposition to the first, as a "sacred" corrective to the gallants' sinful "subuersion" of his wife's "honor" (3.1.79, 64). However, as Quicksands reveals his "queint devise" and initiates Millicent's conversion into a "Moore," beginning "to paint" Millicent in front of the audience, this onstage painting actually begins to complicate audience perception of the potential effects of his device (3.1.53, 56, s.d.). "By showing Millicent's transformation unfold in real theatrical time," Stevens points out, "Brome depicts a method of theatrical preparation that otherwise took place 'behind the arras' and out of the public eye."<sup>111</sup> Interestingly, rather than cement Quicksands' professed intent that both Millicent's disguise and her eventual dramatic reveal will mobilize the correction of the interrupted marriage and safeguard her chastity in the meantime, "the metadramatic spectacle of Millicent's public blackening" forces the audience to contemplate the artifice of theatrical illusion and to experience the anxiety of conversion: not simply Millicent's conversion into a Moor,

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<sup>111</sup> Stevens, "Masques of Blackness," 422.

though, but also the dangerous conversions offered by theatricality and deception, as well as the threat of playing itself as a kind of dangerous apostasy.<sup>112</sup>

In the offstage world of the Mediterranean, conversion *from* Islam to Christianity raised the possibility of hypocrisy and fraud, and conversion *to* Islam was blamed for being the cause of “the loss of countless souls drawn away from Christianity through coercion or allure”; in both cases, conversion was “invariably seen as the result of some form of deceit.”<sup>113</sup> As early as 1542 the English translation of Antoine Geuffroy’s *The order of the greate Turckes courte* argued that this was only to be expected since Islam itself was composed of “deceytes, gyles, delusions, treasons, and conspiracies.”<sup>114</sup> If Moorishness and an un/insufficiently reformed English religion were conflated in the early modern English imagination because of the related dangers of spectacle and deception thought to be inherent in their ritual forms, it bears consideration that the charges to which English actors were regularly subjected in the climate of religious debate—“of falsehood, lewdness, and other sins that lured Christians away from the Church”—were uncannily similar to those leveled against Muslims, especially converts.

Like religious apostates, so too were actors considered not only deceitful counterfeiters—“the Arch-agents, Instrument, and Apparitors of their original Founder and Father, the Devil”—but apostates as well.<sup>115</sup> Impersonation, which involved both self-transformation and lying, was an unlawful violation of God’s will; because impersonation and imitation were therefore false,

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 422.

<sup>113</sup> Toenjes, *English Reformation*, 322.

<sup>114</sup> Antoine Geuffroy, *The order of the greate Turckes courte, of hys menne of warre, and of all hys conquests, with the summe of Mahumetes doctrine. Translated out of Frenche* (London: 1542): sig. 3r as cited in Toenjes, *English Reformation*, 222. See also Linda McJannet, *The Sultan Speaks: Dialogue in English Plays and Histories about the Ottoman Turks* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006): esp. 35-39.

<sup>115</sup> Burton, *Traffic and Turning*, 29. Burton quotes William Prynne’s *Histriomastix* (London: 1633): 134.

the substance of plays was inherently treacherous. So serious was the fear of a devilish deception inherent in the theatrical that, for some, playing was tantamount to defection from the Christian fold entirely. For Stephen Gosson, plays were not only the work of the devil, established on earth to lead men into blasphemy, idolatry, and sin, playing was described as “horrible ingratitude” for the very gift of Christian baptism. In plays, argued Gosson, “we follow the pomp and vanity of the wicked world, which we renounced in baptism, [f]or to maintain the doctrine and invention of the devil is a kind of apostasy and falling from the Lord.”<sup>116</sup> Gosson echoes Anthony Munday’s concern when he asked, “[w]hat is the first profession of Christians at their baptism? They protest they will renounce the devil and all his works, his pomps, and vanities. Therefore,” says Munday, “by our own confession, shows and pomps are the work of the devil.”<sup>117</sup>

Unlike most early modern English dramas of Moorish conversion, however, which responded to this double fear of apostasy and theatrical deceit by staging successful conversions *from* Moorishness—or even the Jacobean masques of blackness in which emphasis is placed on the corrective whitening of the masquers—Brome places his emphasis squarely on Millicent’s conversion into a Moor and on Quicksands’ act of deception. Interestingly, any audience trepidation in the viewing of this scene is initially conditioned by its actor, Millicent. She is positively wary of the association of Moorishness with Hell and even fears that God’s handiwork evident in her own visage could be defiled by the application of Quicksands’ black paint: “Bless me! You fright me Sir [...] Would you blot out / Heavens Workmanship?” she asks (3.1.69, 70-71). Certainly operative in this moment are the “[c]ultural assumptions about what constituted true beau-

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<sup>116</sup> Stephen Gosson, *Plays Confuted in Five Actions* (1582) in *Shakespeare’s Theater: A Sourcebook*, ed. Tanya Pollard (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004): 100, 88.

<sup>117</sup> Anthony Munday, *A Second and Third Blast of Retreat from Plays and Theatres* (1580) in *Shakespeare’s Theater: A Sourcebook*, ed. Tanya Pollard (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004): 67.

ty [which] were undermined by the donning of face paint.” Because it was believed that idealized traits like virtue and modesty were “to shine luminously through a woman’s eyes and paint a natural beauty upon her cheeks,” all women were expected to project this natural beauty which was achievable through a virtuous mind, not through theatrical illusion.<sup>118</sup> In a bid to allay her fears, Quicksands appeals to both the divine ordinance of all feminine loveliness and the sanctioning of Moorish disguise by contemporary court culture:

Why, thinckst thou, fearefull Beauty,  
Has Heauen noe part in Egipt? Pray tell me  
Is not an Ethiops face his workmanship  
As well as the fairst Ladyes?  
Illustrious Persons, nay euen Queenes themselves  
Haue, for the glory of a Nights presentment  
[...] suffered as much as this. (3.1.72-75, 80-82)

Perhaps to some extent, in Quicksands’ eyes, there is nothing to fear in Millicent’s disguise because she is already blackened; that is, “in playing the lewd, outspoken young wife, she appears to possess the characteristics attributed to black women,” as Hall suggests.<sup>119</sup> However, Quicksands himself points explicitly to the example set by noble English ladies: it is often asserted that Quicksands refers here to Queen Anne’s appearance as a Moor in Jonson’s *Masque of Blackness* (1605), and indeed Quicksands’ desires to control the revelation of his wife as the king would have revealed the whiteness of the disguised masquers. Quicksands means his allusion to the theatrical precedent set by English nobility to stand as a guarantee of sorts over both the permissibility and the success of his device. Millicent’s own protective transformation into a Moor is thus completed and, her painting finished, her clothes are exchanged for those of a serving maid until the moment of her reveal in Quicksands’ corrective masque (3.1.91).

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<sup>118</sup> Karim-Cooper, “Face-paint, Gender, and Race,” 142.

<sup>119</sup> Hall, *Things of Darkness*, 169.

However, Quicksands seems to have forgotten the charges frequently leveled against both Moorish women and female playing in Caroline England. On the one hand, popular stage plays such as John Webster's *The White Devil* (1612), Fletcher, Field, and Massinger's *The Knight of Malta* (1618), or John Fletcher's *The Island Princess* (1621), had helped to establish a theatrical precedent in which Moorish serving maids were recurringly and "negatively portrayed as unchaste, their blackness thought to invite rather than repel sexual attraction."<sup>120</sup> On the other hand, in light of Henrietta Maria's fondness for drama and the Roman Catholic culture so pervasive at court, charges of the sexual immorality of Moorish women tended to overlap with "the charge of sexual immorality that was often equate[d] with the queen's 'idolatry' or Catholicism."<sup>121</sup> In 1631, Nathaniel Richards not only condemned court "Masques" and "Musicke" as activities which "affright the blood of Chastitie" and "Turn Virgin Loue to hot Lust's Plurisie"—arguing that female participation in theatrical spectacle led to degradation and sinfulness—he registered an anxiety about the relationship between the dangers of a deceptive, feminine theatricalism and Roman Catholicism itself in his observation that "Neuer was any great Arch-mischief done / But by a Whore, or a Priest, first begun."<sup>122</sup> But in 1633, William Prynne connected Richards' concern for the immorality of female playing and Roman Catholic culture back around to the ever-

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<sup>120</sup> Stevens, "Masques of Blackness," 420.

<sup>121</sup> Veevers, *Love and Religion*, 2.

<sup>122</sup> Nathaniel Richards, "The Vicious Courtier" in *The celestiall publican A sacred poem* (London: 1631): sig. G8r, H1v cited in Veevers, *Love and Religion*, 2. The Elizabethan *Book of Homilies* largely established this rhetorical tradition, drawing a parallel as it did between Roman Catholic "idolatry" and lust for a sexually-licentious woman: "Wherefore as a for a man given to lust to sit down by a strumpet is to tempt God, so is it likewise to erect an idol [...] nothing but a tempting. [...] Doth not the word of God call idolatry spiritual fornication? Doth it not call a gilt or painted idol, or image, a strumpet with a painted face? [...] concerning the excessive decking of images and idols, with painting, gilding, adorning with precious vestures, [and] pearl, [...] what is it else but for the further provocation and enticement to spiritual fornication [so that] she [the Church], shining with the outward beauty and glory of them, may please the foolish fantasy of fond lovers and so entice them to fornication with her." "Peril of Idolatry," *Homilies*, 227, 237.

present fear of Moorish lasciviousness: the Roman Catholic penchant for theatricalism in the Caroline court only “enflame[d] the outrageous lusts of lewd spectators who are oftentimes ravished with these ribaldrous pleasing ditties,” beholders of such spectacle were “transported by them into a Mohametan paradise or ecstasy of uncleanness.”<sup>123</sup>

Quicksands remains unaware of these dangers. By Act 4, he is ready to enact his corrective drama. As part of the “unveiling” of his wife, he will stage a second masque that will nullify the effects of the first masque, finally completing the marriage ceremony, establishing his husbandly authority over Millicent, and ensuring her inaccessibility to the town gallants. Audience of “malicious enemies” assembled, Quicksands explains to his guests that in the evening’s “Reuells” the gallants “shall see how [he’ll] requite / The Masque they lent [him] on [his] wedding night”:

Your masque of hornes  
With all the private lieres & publique scornes  
You haue cast vpon me since. Now shall you see  
How I’ll restore them & re-married be. (4.1.36, 4.4.2-7)

The masque seems to proceed according to Quicksands’ design—an “Actor like a Moore” enters to give the Prologue with a woman “black & brauely deckt” followed by a “Daunce” of other Moors—but it is here, however, in the moment of what should be Quicksands’ triumph, that Brome plays upon the fearful concern of a disruptive and debauched theatricalism so pervasive in both Caroline-era religious and anti-theatrical discourse (s.d.).

Instead of restoring order to Quicksands’ household, Quicksands’ device is remarkable for its utter ineffectiveness. Not only is Millicent not present as an actor in the masque at all, she has enacted her own bit of theatrical deception by giving her part to the young lady, Phillis. Phil-

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<sup>123</sup> Prynne, *Histriomastix*, 293.



lis enters the masque “with the sparkling of her Jewells shin[ing] / Flame like a midnight beacon,” but instead of the masque cooling the lust of the town’s gallants, Phillis’ Moorish beauty only inflames the lust of the rake, Nathaniel (4.3.96-97). Nathaniel joins the dancing masquers where he “daunces vily” and then “daunces her quite away” to “daunce / With her in private” (s.d., 4.4.168-169). In the chaos of the performance, Quicksands loses track of Millicent: “Where is my wife, my wife my wife? [...] Which way went my Moore?” he begs the milling crowd (4.4.164, 166). When it is explained to him that it appears as though Nathaniel has “Committed a deed of darknes with [his] Moore”—indeed, “They haue lyen together”—Quicksands is utterly “Vndone,” finally deciding that “noe art can keepe a woman honest” (4.4.190, 194-196). In Act 4, the disaster of Quicksands’ Moorish masque seems to underscore the idea that “sundry inventions” of dramatic spectacles only “infect the spirit and replenish it with unchaste, whorish, cozening, deceitful, wanton, and mischievous passions.”<sup>124</sup>

So insidious and immediate was the danger of the kind of wanton theatricalism on display in *The English Moor* that William Prynne would eventually “prove” in his monumental *Histriomastix* (1633) that stage plays were not only conducive to deception and vice but were, in fact, mortal sin.<sup>125</sup> The most familiar aspect of *Histriomastix* is likely Prynne’s condemnation of female actors as “notorious whores,” but what his outraged response to female playing did was accentuate “the basic conflict between those who thought the person behind the performer was paramount and those who thought the players insignificant.”<sup>126</sup> This issue, though, was really only a

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<sup>124</sup> John Greene, *A Refutation of the Apology for Actors* (1615) in *Shakespeare’s Theater: A Sourcebook*, ed. Tanya Pollard (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004): 261.

<sup>125</sup> Hugh Trevor-Roper, *Archbishop Laud, 1573-1645*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Phoenix Press, 2000): 161.

<sup>126</sup> Suzanne Gossett, “‘Man-maid, begone!’: Women in Masques” in *English Literary Renaissance* 18.1 (Winter 1988): 96-113, esp. 110. The knowledge that Henrietta Maria herself was going to take part in *The Shepherd’s Par-*

subset of a much wider problem for Prynne and others sympathetic to the further reformation of the Caroline social and religious scene. The questions raised by the controversy over female playing—questions about the relationship between actor and role, signifier and signified, and the possible effects of playing—were pressing ones because they were “related to such larger issues as the dispute between Puritans and Anglicans over the significance of ceremony and symbols.”<sup>127</sup> Prynne himself saw these disputes as deeply interconnected. Prynne is most remembered for his antitheatrical writings but, leading up to his *Histriomastix*, he produced no fewer than four books against Arminianism and the culture of the royal court between 1626 and 1629. After *Histriomastix*, Prynne once again took up the anti-Arminian cause cataloguing recent religious changes (or “recent innovations”) ushered in under the Caroline regime in 1636.<sup>128</sup> Indeed, Martin Butler has astutely pointed out that Prynne was condemned by his critics “less for having attacked the stage than for his scandalously extravagant and inflammatory language against virtually the entire social order,” one that was now deeply interested in the moral value of the visual and the power of spectacle to reform sinners and deter wrongdoers.<sup>129</sup> Ultimately, the Puritan-

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*adise* at Somerset House could suggest that some of Prynne’s shriller exhortations against women actors were directed at the queen specifically (Prynne would deny this charge). His text may, in fact, have been published prior to the January 1633 performance of the masque. William Prynne, *Histriomastix: The Players Scourge or Actors Traegædie* (London: 1633). See also Jane Milling and Peter Thomson, eds. *The Cambridge History of British Theatre*, vol. 1 (New York: Cambridge UP, 2004): esp. 379 and R. Malcolm Smuts, *Court Culture and the Origins of a Royalist Tradition in Early Stuart England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999): esp. 186.

<sup>127</sup> Gossett, “Women in Masques,” 111.

<sup>128</sup> Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*, 225-226, n.230. See also William Prynne, *The Perpetuitie* (1626), *A Brief Survey and Censure of Mr. Cozens his Couzening Devotions* (1628), *God no Imposter nor Deluder* (1629), and *The True Church of England’s Old Antithesis to New Arminianisme* (1629). The second and much-enlarged edition of this last volume, published in 1630, is titled simply *Anti-Arminianisme*.

<sup>129</sup> Martin Butler, *Theatre and Crisis, 1632-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984): 84-85.

Arminian debates over these issues “could not be resolved within the confines of the stage.”<sup>130</sup>

However, while these issues could not be resolved by the early modern theatre, they could certainly be interrogated there.

For increasingly vocal Puritan polemicists, these very overlapping theatrical and ecclesiastical disputes over the use of performance and its effects on participants and audiences ultimately highlighted the fear that the actor, fallen from the path of righteousness, could lure others into damnation with worldly spectacle. So far, despite Quicksands’ intent to preserve his wife’s virtue until the marriage ceremony can be properly completed by its consummation, *The English Moor* seems as though it will only confirm Puritan critiques of both the theatricality of ceremony and of the effects of playing. Quicksands’ theatrical device was intended “for Sinnes prevention,” to rectify the disruptive theatricalism of the gallants, but it quickly becomes clear that he is unable to control the effects of his own spectacle (3.1.79). Indeed, the masque that Quicksands hopes will confirm his authority in his household and restore social order among his neighbors does not function according to its author’s intentions and instead becomes “an occasion for misrecognition, failure, and theatrical ‘labor in vain.’”<sup>131</sup> In Brome’s England and in the England of *The English Moor*, it seems as though it is impossible for outward forms to inculcate virtue—Quicksands’ masque has only facilitated deception and sown vice. But could a dramatist allow such an assessment of the dismal effects of spectacle to have the last word? For the Caroline establishment, on the other hand, ceremony and drama both served a pedagogical function, using symbol and metaphor to educate its spectators, to inculcate morality, and to provide a vehicle for social reform.

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<sup>130</sup> Gossett, “Women in Masques,” 111.

<sup>131</sup> Stevens, “Masques of Blackness,” 424.

**“the effects of this our quaint complot”: Stage, Spectacle, and Social Reform**

We have already examined the idea that the Caroline religious establishment placed such a stress on the ceremonial and liturgical aspects of the beauty of holiness, first, because God’s presence in the church demanded the utmost reverence from those who would approach that presence and so that reverence had to take a directly physical form—God must be worshipped with both body and soul. “Only those rapt with the Manichean fury,” claimed Eleazor Duncon in 1633, were prepared to “deny [their] bodies to God.”<sup>132</sup> Second, what Fulke Robarts would call in 1639 the “correspondency and sympathy between the soul and the body” ensured both that outward ceremony was a perfect vehicle for the expression of inner reverence and awe before the divine presence and that the mere repetition of the outward forms of reverence and holiness was a sure way to inculcate those very virtues or attributes into the souls of church-going Christians.<sup>133</sup> However, interest in this correspondence extended beyond the bounds of the church and was distinctively mirrored in the culture of the Caroline court, as well, such that the beauty and order to be discerned in outward forms was given expression in not only the secular entertainments of King Charles’ court, but also in the dramas of Queen Henrietta Maria’s circles.

The Caroline Church’s emphasis on “the sensible and outward face of religion” as useful for cultivating virtue and the social goals of public orderliness which the king associated with the power of theatrical spectacle (as examined in an earlier section) coincided well with the connection that Henrietta Maria drew between the religious interests of Devout Humanism (with its emphasis on the relationship between an idealized Beauty and Love, its combining of piety and

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<sup>132</sup> Eleazor Duncon, *Of worshipping towards the altar* (London: 1660): 4-5, see also 9-13. The 1660 printing is an English translation of a lecture originally given in Latin in 1633. Lake, “Laudian Style,” 165-166.

<sup>133</sup> Fulke Robarts, *God’s holy house and service* (London: 1639): sig. 3r as cited in Lake, “Laudian Style,” 165-166.

pleasure, its insistence upon decorous behavior) and the usefulness of the court stage for the inculcation of personal and social reform.<sup>134</sup> Among the Roman Catholic European courts, Henrietta Maria's interest in theatre had certainly not been deemed "improper, nor was it inimical to devout feminine behavior" as it was in the eyes of her English critics. Rather, her patronage of the Arts and promotion of female playing sought to install women "as central to the nation's peace and prosperity" through the artistic representations of feminine virtue "as essential to the balanced governance of the realm."<sup>135</sup> Even in her new English home where the reception of female playing could be met with approbation, the queen's Devout Humanism had "a real effect on the social and cultural life of Charles' court," as well, in a way that had "political and religious implications."<sup>136</sup> Indeed, the English masques of Henrietta Maria's court also privileged women's playing as socially beneficial and functioned as "a means of promoting women as the instigators of social harmony."<sup>137</sup> Given the premium Henrietta Maria placed upon the feminine exemplification of feminine virtue, it is actually the queen consort's production of *The Shepherd's Paradise* that here provides a useful point of comparison with *The English Moor*, complicating criticism's perennial reliance on Jonson's *Masque of Blackness* as an access point to the thematic operation of Moorishness and the effects of spectacle at work in Brome's drama.

*The Shepherd's Paradise*, commissioned by the queen consort from the courtier Walter Montagu and designed by Inigo Jones, was acted by Queen Henrietta Maria and her ladies in waiting before King Charles at Somerset House in London on 9 January 1633. Despite the anxie-

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<sup>134</sup> Scott, *England's troubles*, 128.

<sup>135</sup> Britland, *Queen Henrietta Maria*, 3-4.

<sup>136</sup> Veevers, *Love and Religion*, 7.

<sup>137</sup> Britland, *Queen Henrietta Maria*, 110.

ties about female playing evidenced in puritanical circles and the extent to which Roman Catholic culture had long been subject to wildly inaccurate comparisons with Islam in English polemic, *The Shepherd's Paradise* courted controversy by featuring not only women in men's clothing (out of a total of fourteen roles in the play, ten were for male characters), but the virtuous heroine Fidamira (played by Lady Sophia Carew) spent much of the play disguised as the Moor, Gamella.<sup>138</sup> Karen Britland argues that Gamella is, in part, "a continuation of, or a response to, the ideas put forward in the *Masque of Blackness*, incarnating a spiritual virtue that makes a woman's body beautiful whatever its color."<sup>139</sup> However, *The Shepherd's Paradise* expands upon this earlier idea of virtue-as-beauty when—like *Artenice* (1626) and *Tempe Restored* (1632) before it—the plot of *The Shepherd's Paradise* pushed at the boundaries of female performance, proposing "a new sort of social relationship based upon a woman's ability to govern her own chastity."<sup>140</sup> In fact, the role of Fidamira/Gamella in *The Shepherd's Paradise* engages with questions of "marriage, government, and masculine constancy, interrogating notions of personal identity and promoting a role for women as the cornerstones of a virtuous society" through its repurposing of tropes that had traditionally been read as symbolic of theatrical spectacle's power to corrupt both player and audience.<sup>141</sup>

Unlike the early modern English religious and anti-theatrical traditions examined in the previous section, traditions that read both (real and pretend) Moorish conversion and (female) playing as evidence of a dangerous and deceptive destabilizing of Christian virtue, Fidamira and

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 113.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., 113.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 113.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., 114.

her Moorish disguise are the virtuous lodestone at the heart of the masque, and together they provide a clear example of feminine self-knowledge capable of turning the conventions of performance to socially beneficial ends.<sup>142</sup> At the start of the play, Fidamira is commended into the care of the king of Castile by Prince Basilino, her former lover. However, fearing courtly corruption, she begs to be allowed to remain at home, arguing that it would be “a retreat out of [her]self to remain anywhere but in [her] father’s house” (1.7.625-626).<sup>143</sup> Fidamira derives her sense of self and her sense of honor from her ability to police her own chastity, and she resists the king’s will by presenting herself as a modest daughter in order to delay having to obey as a subject—her duty is to her own virtue, and Fidamira ensures both its preservation and her safety when she flees her father’s house and travels abroad in Moorish disguise.<sup>144</sup> Much like in *The English Moor* (and unlike in the *Masque of Blackness*) the conversion at the heart of the spectacle is reclaimed as a vehicle for feminine virtue by women (whereas, in the *Masque of Blackness*, evidence of virtue rests upon the masculine banishment of both Moorishness and feminine disguise).

When considering the implications of Millicent’s Moorish disguise in Brome’s play, though, Karim-Cooper argues that *The English Moor* “emphatically privilege[es] female chastity over sexual promiscuity” because the play “engages primarily with the cultural discourse of cosmetics and its primary function: to manage the sexual behavior and appearance of women.”<sup>145</sup> For Karim-Cooper, this “management” is bound up with the reach of patriarchal authority exemplified by Quicksands’ imposition of the disguise upon his almost-wife. Certainly, the ends to

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<sup>142</sup> Britland, *Queen Henrietta Maria*, 114.

<sup>143</sup> Walter Montagu, *The Shepherd’s Paradise: A Comedy Privately Acted before the Late king Charles by the Queen consort’s Majesty, and Ladies of Honour* (London: 1659) cited in Britland, *Queen Henrietta Maria*, 114.

<sup>144</sup> Britland, *Queen Henrietta Maria*, 114.

<sup>145</sup> Karim-Cooper, “Face-paint, Gender, and Race,” 148.

which *Quicksands* deploys the disguise plot function largely in the manner Karim-Cooper indicates, hinging as it does upon Quicksands' appropriation of the conventions of Jonson's *Masque of Blackness* in his desire to orchestrate the revelation of his chaste wife. However, her reading both ignores the fact that Millicent ultimately turns the enactment of her conversion to her own purposes and implicitly disallows the extent to which a woman could want to preserve her own chastity in the fashion of *The Shepherd's Paradise* (Henrietta Maria would not have considered feminine virtue and feminine agency mutually-exclusive ideas, after all).

Even before Quicksands conceives of the disguise plot, Millicent unambiguously reveals the value she places upon the governance of her own morality as early as Act 2. If Quicksands believes that a ribald antimasque could “destroy vertue” and turn her adulteress—“Hundreds that envy me haue tane their oaths / To make thee false & me a horned Monster,” he rails—Millicent vehemently denies that such a thing were possible: “My honor is mine owne” is her retort (2.2.33). Indeed, in the face of Quicksands' doubt (and the incomplete marriage), she will “take chardge of [her] selfe”:

I am noe more  
Yors yet (on whome mine Vncle has bestowed me)  
Then all the worlds (the Ceremony off)  
And will remaine soe, free from them and you,  
That by the false light of their wild fire flashes  
Have slighted & depraue'd me & yor bride-bed,  
Till you recant yor willful Ignorance,  
And they their petulant follies. (2.2.43-52)

Here, Millicent refers directly to the vow of chastity she will make “for a Month” because Quicksands “slighted” her on their wedding night, but Brome uses his heroine's emphatic assertion of her own moral agency in this moment to foreshadow Millicent's response to Quicksands' later plan, as well (2.2.75, 71). Veevers reminds us that in plays influenced by the queen con-



sort's fashions, "the rights and dignity of women, as well as their virtue, are continually defended [by women] against the abuses of men."<sup>146</sup> Millicent's defense of her own virtue here will track into the application of the Moorish disguise and Millicent's eventual turning of Quicksands' plot to her own purposes in the tradition of the court entertainments of Queen Henrietta Maria.

Despite Millicent's initial hesitancy to approach Quicksands' box of paint, she is quick to turn her Moorish disguise into an opportunity to effect the retention of her honor and, ultimately, to restore the honor of Phillis, as well. In the pursuit of maintaining her chastity for a hoped-for marriage to her beloved, Theophilus, Millicent places such a premium upon her virtue she argues that "If Honor fall (which is the Soule of Life) / Tis like the damned, it nere lifts the head / Vp to the light agen (2.2.62-64). In Millicent's moral taxonomy—in which honor and light, on the one hand, and dishonor and darkness, on other, are held in tension—it would seem as though Quicksand's "queint devise," playing as it does on her own apparent correlation of damnation, darkness, and blackness, would be inimical to Millicent's sense of moral selfhood. However, Millicent turns her literal blackening into an opportunity to retain her honor, turning her physical blackness toward the metaphorical light. Certainly, "Millicent, instead of being controlled—or even advertised as the obedient wife—subverts the masque and escapes her husband," as Hall says.<sup>147</sup> More specifically, though, Millicent "subverts" the masque by justly subverting Quicksands' control over its effects. Millicent "will venter / Peace, honor, Life, all that [she has]" rather remain within reach of the "sinnefull lust" of Quicksands who—far from actually concerning himself with the inculcation of virtue and domestic order—has made advances toward Phillis under the cover of Millicent's absence (4.3.36-39).

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<sup>146</sup> Veevers, *Love and Religion*, 4.

<sup>147</sup> Hall, *Things of Darkness*, 174.

In *The English Moor*, as Brome's heroine assumes control over her own role in Quicksands' plot, themes of conversion and playing that heretofore bore the derogatory connotations of impiety and sexual licentiousness are used not only to effect her escape from her unwanted marriage and preserve her virtue but to restore the social order, as well. In fact, this effect is most aptly demonstrated when Phillis assumes Millicent's place in Quicksands' masque. "I haue heard thy story often; and with pittie / As often thought vpont," Millicent confesses to Phillis, referring to the story of "the sad ouerthrow / Of [Phillis'] poore fathers fortune" by which her father was forced to leave "His natiue country to seeke forraine means," deterring her love Nathaniel from marrying her and restoring honor lost through their fornication (4.3.7-8, 10). In fact, Phillis believes her own honor "(If a poore wench may speake soe) is soe crackt / Within the Ring as 'twill be hardly soldered / By any art" (4.3.22-24). It was said that a woman who lost her moral reputation had had her honor "blackened," and so Phillis' assumption of Millicent's disguise is an uncomfortably appropriate one. However, the art which Millicent will employ will prove strong enough to effect the repair of Phillis' honor and procure a wedding ring in the process.

When Phillis enters Quicksands' masque in Millicent's place, Nathaniel demonstrates the expected cultural association of Moorishness with sexual lasciviousness examined in the previous section: certainly, Nathaniel is eager to "daunce to a Couch or a bedside" with the disguised Phillis, addicted as he is to Phillis' blackness because, "according to early modern chromatic symbolism, it means that she is sexually promiscuous, [...] at once desirable and sexually barbarous" (4.4.71).<sup>148</sup> Karim-Cooper argues that it is here that *The English Moor* dramatizes most

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<sup>148</sup> Karim-Cooper, "Face-paint, Gender, and Race," 147.

“fiercely a cultural misogyny that is linked ever with beauty and sexuality.”<sup>149</sup> However, her reading ignores the socially-restorative direction in which the plot moves, specifically the fact that Phillis’ assumption of the Moorish disguise will actually facilitate the reclamation of her honor, rather than merely underscore its tarnishing. After the masque, it is revealed that Nathaniel has been deceived by Phillis’ cosmeticized face—he, of course, never managed to bed a Moorish woman as he assumed—but the trick orchestrated by Millicent has caused him to bed the woman he was supposed to marry in the first place. Upon the revelation of Phillis as the Moorish masquer, Nathaniel is initially put-out that he will held accountable for his debauchery during Quicksands’ spectacle: “The devil looks ten times worse with a white face, / Give it me black again” (5.3.100-101). Reverting back to the play’s pervasive use of a white/black binary in a moral sense, especially in its association with female chastity, Nathaniel deploys this rhetoric as a slight against Phillis’ lost honor, to be sure. However, to correct Nathaniel’s reluctance to marry the disgraced and impoverished Phillis, the return of her father with finances restored facilitates the play’s comic resolution (5.3). Nathaniel is now the “gentleman” who shall “Maintayne her blood, as worthy as [his] owne / Till [he] defild it” (5.3.210-2120). Their marriage shall “purify’t again” (5.3.212). Their marriage, effected by the theatrical donning of physical blackness makes Phillis metaphorically white by removing the taint of fornication.

When considered in light of Queen Henrietta Maria’s court entertainments, it may be seen that *The English Moor*’s initial act of Moorish conversion ultimately enacts an entire string of conversions that bring about not depravity and damnation but, rather, that turn performativity and disguise to the restoration of honor. A hornmasque is presented by gallants ruined by the old moneylender Quicksands so as to threaten him with cuckoldry and a later Moorish masque is

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 147.

mounted by Quicksands to disclose his chaste wife's protective disguise, but these masques within the play then give way to further play acting as they provide opportunities for characters to manipulate roles so as to effect the heroine's escape and perpetuate a reclaiming bed trick.<sup>150</sup> Even Quicksands' masque ultimately empowers the women of the play to enforce a reformed and virtuous communal scene, allowing Millicent to first escape an incomplete and corrupt marriage and then to become the agent of proper marriage. Millicent herself is restored to her original suitor, and she uses her disguise to force the rake Nathaniel to marry the fallen Phillis. Very much in the fashion of the oft-criticized court entertainments of the queen, the performance of a theatrical, Moorish conversion in *The English Moor* can be seen as one that serves to stabilize, rather than disrupt, a moral social order.

**“But who knows what he knows, sees, feels or hears?”: Conclusion**

Caroline England's relationship with the Islamic world was, in many ways, a conflicted one. Despite King Charles' interest in securing productive diplomatic and trade relations with Morocco and the other Islamic states of North Africa, continuing English antagonism with the Barbary corsairs forced foreign affairs to dominate domestic policies. “By seizing on English or Welsh, Irish or Scottish merchants and travelers,” says Matar, “the Moors and the Turks produced an image of a dangerous ‘Mahumetan’ world in the minds of the British reading, traveling, trading, and sailing public.”<sup>151</sup> Although the captives were a continent away, they precipitated a serious domestic crisis that kept the threat of Christian conversion at the hands of the Moors in such a prominent place in the English imagination. Perhaps it was because Britons were not far-

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<sup>150</sup> Clark, *Professional Playwrights*, 175.

<sup>151</sup> Matar, *Britain and Barbary*, 74.

ing well in the Mediterranean and “the ideals of empire were being replaced by the traumas of captivity” that the theatre stepped in “with its panacea of entertainment.”<sup>152</sup> In an effort to ally English anxieties over the fearful apostasy of kinsmen abroad—a dangerous transformation that brought with it the destabilizing connotations of deception and fraud—Jonathan Burton argues that early modern conversion plays often appropriated conversion’s association with theatricalism in the interest of the theatre.” Thus, “in staging acts of apostasy, they tend to emphasize the ‘staging’ of apostasy” in order to “call attention to the artificiality of transformation in repeated scenes of false conversion,” deflating the fear associated with the actual staging of conversion in real North African settings.<sup>153</sup>

But as Jane Hwang Degenhardt and Elizabeth Williamson remind us, the stage “both draws upon and profoundly reconfigures existing religious signifiers.”<sup>154</sup> In early modern England, the presentation of Moorish conversion onstage was never purely a response to Islam. Rather, “the theatre’s own practices of meaning-making were conditioned by an extraordinary diversity of religious practice and by the wide variety of signifiers operating in the theatre itself” by virtue of the theatre’s relationship to religious experiences(s) in the materiality of performance and to its relationship to questions about the play of religious ideologies operating outside the theatre.<sup>155</sup> In Caroline England, the collision between Puritan and Laudian religious and so-

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<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>153</sup> Burton, *Traffic and Turning*, 30.

<sup>154</sup> Jane Hwang Degenhardt and Elizabeth Williamson, “Introduction,” in *Religion and Drama in Early Modern England: The Performance of Religion on the Renaissance Stage*, ed. Jane Hwang Degenhardt and Elizabeth Williamson (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011): 2.

<sup>155</sup> Degenhardt and Williamson, *Religion and Drama*, 4. As in the discussion of *The English Moore* in this chapter, by “materiality” Degenhardt and Williamson mean “not just the physical properties of the bodies and objects that

cial ideologies—a conflict further conditioned by the visibility of the queen consort’s Roman Catholicism—necessarily colored theatrical explorations of Moorishness as it related to pressing questions about the relationship between interior and exterior, the place of ceremonial or theatrical performance in a moral society, and the proper articulation of individual and social order. In this way, the very physical, theatrical conversion at the heart of *The English Moor* can stand as a prime example of the ways in which the early modern stage frequently “combined disparate religious references or layered them on top of one another,” reflecting the fluidity with which the early modern imagination appropriated and reconfigured a whole host of religious signifiers to explore and make sense of contemporary religious conflict.<sup>156</sup>

For his part, Ira Clark has suggested that while “there is plenty of evidence for what Brome took to be political and social problems in his era, there is little agreement in ours as to what attitudes he held.”<sup>157</sup> To some degree, the vision of the theatre’s assimilative processes of meaning-making as posited by Degenhardt and Williams must help to account for the conflicting interpretations of Moorish conversion on display across much of *The English Moor*’s action. But if “no consistent platform is discernible” across Brome’s dramatic writings, as Clark suggests, perhaps what Brome was more interested in than using his drama to advocate for a coherent and consistent set of personal attitudes toward contemporary political and social problems was using the theatre as a medium for exploring the possibilities for personal and communal change that

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appeared onstage, but also the ways in which aspects of the theatrical presentation were shaped by various social relations.”

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>157</sup> Clark, *Professional Playwrights*, 158. Almost nothing is known about Brome’s private life at all, let alone any explicit or self-disclosed information about what exactly his political and/or religious orientation was. The extant records on Richard Brome come primarily from legal documents pertaining to his recurring debt problem and from the records of his affiliation with different playing companies. We do know that he was a member of the Queen Henrietta’s Men, though, and that *The English Moor* was played by this company.

such problems bring with them, pairing his interest in examining Caroline debates with an unwillingness to offer clear solutions.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 158.

## CONCLUSION

“’Tis in worldly accidents  
As in the world it selfe, where things most distant  
Meet one another: Thus the East and West  
Upon the Globe, a Mathematicke point  
Onely divides...”<sup>1</sup>

— John Denham, *The Sophy*

Work by Alexandra Walsham and others on the resonances of the pre-Reformation Church in England has recently underlined the importance of acknowledging the unevenness of the long period of the English Reformation. Rather than taking for granted narratives of the triumphing of Calvinist sensibilities within the English Church (to say nothing of the degree to which non-conforming Protestant sects also challenged a supposed Calvinist interpretive consensus), Walsham urges critics to pay attention to “cycles of desacralization and resacralization, disenchantment and re-enchantment” at work in the long period of the Protestant Reformation, emphasizing the ways in which reform in England sometimes intensified rather than diminished “the assumptions that underpinned the late medieval sacramental universe.”<sup>2</sup> Indeed, “there was probably no other single aspect of the Reformation in England which touched more directly and

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<sup>1</sup> John Denham, *The Sophy* (London: 1642): 26.

<sup>2</sup> Alexandra Walsham, “The Reformation and the ‘Disenchantment of the World’ Reassessed” in *Historical Journal* 51 (2008): 497-528, esp. 527, 500. See also Alexandra Walsham, *The Reformation of the Landscape: Religion, Identity, and Memory in Early Modern Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2011).



fundamentally the religious consciousness of [...] clergy and laity, than did the reform of rituals and liturgy” that the Church of England had only recently inherited from the medieval Church.<sup>3</sup> As in the pre-Reformation Church, liturgy was an expression of a community’s beliefs, as well as a shaper of them, a relationship that was always a dynamic and interdependent one, and one in which it was not always possible to distinguish between cause and effect.<sup>4</sup> The liturgy of the Church and its accompanying sacraments and ceremonies not only reflected a godly community, it helped to foster such community in the wake of widespread and prolonged cultural change. It was largely through debates over the proper construction and articulation of English community centered on liturgical practice, then, that England reimagined the shape of its national character in the long period of the English Reformation. Moreover, the degree to which continuities between England’s pre-Reformation, Roman Catholic past were emphasized or denied to different degrees and by different factions at any particular moment could help early modern Englishmen speak to contemporary anxieties about other issues, as well.

As I have shown, following England’s official break with Rome—at the same time that the Church in England was forced to renegotiate its membership requirements, structures of governance, the content of its doctrine, and the form of its rituals—there was another prominent presence for which the English Church and state had to account: that of the Muslims of the Levant and North Africa with whom Christian Englishmen were in increasing contact. By Elizabeth I’s reign, the Ottoman Turks and the Moors of North Africa had come to occupy at least an ambivalent, but often even amicable and productive, position in relation to the Protestant English:

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<sup>3</sup> Judith Maltby, *Prayer Book and People in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1998): 4.

<sup>4</sup> Maltby, *Prayer Book and People*, 4.

theologically they shared a natural enemy in Roman Catholic Europe, while politically they sanctioned trade agreements and exchanged lavish ambassadorial visits until Elizabeth's death in 1603. During the reign of James I, though, English interactions with the Islamic world took on a different tenor as peace with Roman Catholic powers on the Continent was now made a priority instead, increasing the dangers of English maritime traffic in the Mediterranean and precipitating a crisis of conversion and captivity that would plague even the renewed amicability between England and both the Ottoman Empire and the independent North African states during the reign of Charles I.

Where, to be sure, varying ideas about assimilation, exclusion, or ambivalent tolerance existed (sometimes uncomfortably together) in English interactions with Muslims and the Islamic world across the early modern period regardless of the sitting monarch, straightforward representations of a demonic Eastern "other" inherited from a medieval crusader tradition no longer seemed useful in a religio-political moment defined by an increase in the frequency and scale of cross-cultural encounter outside of England, certainly, but also within England itself. In many cases, actually, it was the "identification and assimilation of alterity" that now proved "necessary to confirm the national identity and integrity of the English commonwealth."<sup>5</sup>

Indeed, the development of English commercial and diplomatic ties with the Levant and North Africa and the polarization of religious rivalries within Christian England across the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries engendered what Matthew Birchwood has called a "double-ness" in English comprehension of the Islamic peoples that only deepened as the ideological stakes for making sense of religious difference were raised by the long, often recursive, process-

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<sup>5</sup> Tim Donovan, "Community, Assimilation, and the Unfamiliar" in *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 35.3 (2002): 244-265, 246.

es of reform in England.<sup>6</sup> Certainly, the English dramas examined in this study offer just a sampling of the many ways that the movements of ritually-structured conversion between Christianity and Islam were engaged in navigating the consequences of English reform in light of the many ways that the English also encountered the Islamic world. However, through our analysis of these representative texts, we can see that a preoccupation with Islam permeated religious, political, diplomatic, and commercial discourses to an astonishing degree: in theological and political debate, the Turk or Moor and his religion could be requisitioned in any number of ways. The overall picture was frequently a contradictory one but, crucially, as Birchwood puts it, “always carefully tailored to suit the ideological exigencies of the moment,” rather than uniformly marginalizing, condemnatory, or “othering.”<sup>7</sup>

But how did this navigation of identities continue to change over time, especially across the latter half of the seventeenth century? In her reading of English foreign relations during the English Civil War, for example, Barbra Donagan remarks that the English, like other nations, “were chauvinist at best and xenophobic at worst, and they enjoyed a range of satisfying stereotypes of citizens of other countries, as of non-English speaking residents of Britain, that confirmed their own moral and social superiority.”<sup>8</sup> But while she takes care to allow that English interactions with the Dutch, the French, and the Spanish both forced the English to think about “international conventions of conduct” and to consider the shape of (an again evolving) English national character in light of civil unrest, Donagan argues that the Turks, by comparison, simply

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<sup>6</sup> Matthew Birchwood, *Staging Islam in England: Drama and Culture, 1640-1685* (Rochester, NY: D.S. Brewer, 2007): 12.

<sup>7</sup> Birchwood, *Staging Islam*, 12.

<sup>8</sup> Barbra Donagan, *War in England, 1642-1649* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008): 196.

served “as a benchmark of ‘otherness’” who, “despite the intermittent appeals for funds for the relief of captives in Algiers that continued to mark Interregnum parliaments [...] did not impinge strongly on national consciousness, and the English did not have to think seriously about how they should behave in response to their evil actions.” Donegan swiftly reduces English conceptions of the Turks to “a paradigmatic evil ‘other,’” a people “condemned for their pride, cruelty, and injustice, for their practice of slavery, and for their religion, which was worse than that of the Jews.”<sup>9</sup> But how far really were the Turks, or the wider Islamic world for that matter, from the minds of the English public—and to what extent does Donegan’s image of the “paradigmatic evil ‘other’” hold up—in a century that continued to be marked by religious conflict and political upheaval?

In light of Donagan’s argument, it is interesting to note that in the run-up to the English Civil War, the first university chair of Arabic was founded at Cambridge in 1632 with Oxford following suit in 1634. In fact, the Oxford chair was personally endowed by none other than Archbishop William Laud, who was then chancellor of Oxford University and a prolific collector of Arabic manuscripts in his own right.<sup>10</sup> This particular example illuminates a much wider picture of the ways in which the Islamic world continued to influence English affairs, though. First, the establishment of chairs in Arabic at the major English universities was directly in line with Charles I’s highly amicable diplomatic and mercantile relations with the Ottomans and the state of Morocco in the 1630s, as I discussed in Chapter 4. Moreover,

[t]he king has also considered that there is a great deal of learning fit to be known written in Arabic, and great scarcity of Arabic and Persian books in this country, wherefore he requires that every ship of that company at every voyage shall bring

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<sup>9</sup> Donagan, *War in England*, 196-197.

<sup>10</sup> Birchwood, *Staging Islam*, 29.

home one Arabic or Persian manuscript book, to be delivered to the master of the company, and by him to the Archbishop of Canterbury, who shall dispose of them as the King shall see fit, provided that the books so to be brought be any other than Alkorans, because there is a great deal of them here already.<sup>11</sup>

The king's directions highlight the direct role that English trade networks themselves had to play in supporting the king's policies of amicability: the activities of the Levant Company were "crucial in the propagation of texts required to feed [England's] new intellectual industry," championed in large part by the same Archbishop who, just a few years later in 1637, would invest his interest in the Islamic world in the composition of the only official rite for the reconversion of renegades to be produced by the Church of England, as examined in Chapter 3.<sup>12</sup> While some English preachers thundered out the dangers of a caricatured Islam from their pulpits, others saw a world worth understanding and one which had to be taken seriously in its own right and for its power to influence English national stability and the coherence of its reformed Christian character. By the 1640s, though, the state of the English nation had radically altered and, with it, the future of Arabic studies in England. Just as the study of Arabic was beginning to establish itself as an entire academic discipline beyond the private interests of the king and his archbishop, it looked to be "uprooted by the maelstrom of civil war."<sup>13</sup>

By 1644 Archbishop Laud had been executed, Oxford itself fell to Parliamentary troops in 1647, and Charles I was executed in 1649. Nevertheless, during the early years of the Protectorate, the scholarly energies of Oxford and Cambridge that Laud had helped to spark were devoted to two of the great theological projects of mid-century England: the first English transla-

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<sup>11</sup> *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, Charles I: 1633-34*, ed. Mary Anne Everett Green (London: HMSO, 1878): 476-477 as cited in Birchwood, *Staging Islam*, 29.

<sup>12</sup> Birchwood, *Staging Islam*, 29.

<sup>13</sup> Birchwood, *Staging Islam*, 30.

tion of the Qur'an (entitled *The Alcoran of Mahomet*, it appeared in 1649) and Brian Walton's Polyglot Bible which featured the biblical texts in nine languages and included an introduction and guide to each (Hebrew, Chaldee, Samaritan, Syriac, Arabic, Persian, Aethiopic, Armenian, and Coptic). The first volume of the *Biblia Sacra Polyglotta* was printed in 1654 with a dedication to Oliver Cromwell and not only constituted a landmark in English studies of the Orient, it exemplified the chief motivation for Arabic studies in the period: "Whilst the prestige of Arabic texts, particularly in the fields of medicine and astronomy, had been maintained throughout the Renaissance," Birchwood reminds us, by the period of the Interregnum "the *language* that had been traditionally credited with the preservation of knowledge of ancient writers, both Eastern and Western, was deemed to be increasingly obsolete. The real fuel for this resurgence of interest in the Arabic language in the seventeenth century was religious controversy."<sup>14</sup> In this case, Civil War and Protectorate England provided fertile ground. In the name of biblical exegesis, Arabic was studied during the Interregnum for the service of Christian theological argument: it was commonly believed among biblical scholars of the period that all of the so-called semitic languages sprang from a single root, and so the study of Arabic, for example, could contribute to a more accurate translation of the Scriptures into English—a development necessary for the formulation of accurate and persuasive confessional polemic in the mid-century (re)negotiation of Englishness being played out between Parliamentarians and Royalists, Puritans and High Churchmen.<sup>15</sup>

As the political and religious order on which old convictions had been built crumbled, imaginative engagement with the East was once again reinvigorated. But while the English Civil

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 32-33.

War itself is certainly one example of the sort of large-scale conflict that forced uncomfortable reassessments of the interconnection of English religion and politics to center stage in the continued English project of national self-imagining, an exclusive focus on even this event misses both the continued presence of the Islamic world in English culture during the Restoration and the other large-scale events of the century that raised the stakes for English identity and national cohesion even higher. On the Continent, the Hundred Years' War (1382-1453) between the Hapsburg monarchy and the Ottoman Empire and the second siege of Vienna in 1683 by the Ottoman Turks, for example, could not have been far from the minds of Englishmen already anxious about (re)asserting both England's religio-political identity and its place in a developing international scene.

For evidence of the continuance, rather than the absence, of England's perennial fascination with the Islamic world in moments of national change or international instability, it is again worthwhile to look to the work of the playhouses. As in the first half of the seventeenth century, so too in the second half of the century does English drama prove to offer a valuable glimpse into the currents of popular interest and evidence of the extent to which politics and religion continued to impinge upon dramatic discourse and *vice versa*, a discourse that drama shows us extended beyond the upper echelons of state and ecclesiastical power. Here, England's long-standing fascination with both the Islamic world and its own construction(s) of the Islamic world continued to become "dislocated, fragmented, and rechanneled" under the pressures of English discord.<sup>16</sup>

The English public theatres were closed in September 1642 by an act of Parliament, but when the theatres reopened in 1660 after the Restoration of Charles II, English audiences quickly

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 12.

saw the return of the Islamic world to the English stage. In fact, even before the playhouses were officially reopened, William Davenant mounted his *The Siege of Rhodes*—considered to be the first English opera—in a small, private theatre constructed at his home, Rutland House, in 1656.<sup>17</sup> Its plot was based on the 1522 siege of Rhodes, when the island was besieged by the Ottoman fleet of Suleiman the Magnificent. On 11 October 1660, Samuel Pepys saw William Shakespeare's *Othello* at the newly re-opened Cockpit Theatre. Soon after, on 8 December 1660, Thomas Killigrew's new King's Company acted *Othello* at their Vere Street theatre, with Margaret Hughes as Desdemona—probably the first time a professional actress appeared on a public stage in England.<sup>18</sup> 1662 then saw the revival of Philip Massinger's *The Renegado* by the King's Men who mounted a production at Lincoln's Inn Fields.<sup>19</sup> Like many of John Fletcher's plays, *The Island Princess* (1621)—a story of Christian-Muslim romance and Portuguese mercantile exploits in the Spice Islands—was revived in the Restoration era in several adapted forms. The play was adapted four times, by an anonymous author, by Nahum Tate, by Thomas d'Urfey, and again by Peter Anthony Motteux. The anonymous version, *The Island Princess, or The Generous Portugal*, was staged before royalty on 6 November 1668; Samuel Pepys saw the production three times in the following year, on 7 January, 9 February, and 23 April 1669 at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. Motteux's version, replete with songs, dances, and special effects, was popu-

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<sup>17</sup> Special permission had to be obtained from the Puritan government of Oliver Cromwell, though, as dramatic performances were outlawed and all public theatres closed. Davenant managed to obtain permission by calling the production "recitative music," as music was still permissible within the law. Roger Parker, *The Oxford Illustrated History of Opera* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1994): 39-40.

<sup>18</sup> In fact, *Othello* was one of the very few Shakespearean plays that was never adapted and changed during the Restoration. F. E. Halliday, *A Shakespeare Companion, 1564–1964* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1964): 346–347.

<sup>19</sup> Michael Neill, "Introduction" to Philip Massinger, *The Renegado: Or, The Gentleman of Venice*, ed. Michael Neill (London: Methuen Drama, 2010): 61.



lar and frequently performed until 1708.<sup>20</sup> All four adaptations were printed.<sup>21</sup> In 1665, Roger Boyle penned *Mustapha*, a tragedy about the son of Suleiman. In 1670 and 1671, John Dryden and the King's Company mounted productions of his new play *The Conquest of Granada, Parts 1 and 2*, a tragedy that dealt with the Spanish conquest of Granada in 1492 and the fall of Muhammad XII, the last Islamic ruler on the Iberian Peninsula. Featuring Charles II's mistress, Nell Gwyn, as the romantic heroine Alimahide, the play was famous in its day, and Dryden's *Granada* set was also later revived in the 1690s. 1667 saw Elkanah Settle's *Cambyzes King of Persia*, 1673 the *Empress of Morocco* performed at Whitehall and, in 1676, his *Ibrahim, the Illustrious Bassa*, was acted at the Duke's Theatre.<sup>22</sup>

With such a plethora of un- or under-examined texts on the table, what is needed next in the continued study of the complex multiplicity of ways that the Islamic world impinged upon English national self-imagining across the seventeenth century is, first, sustained engagement with England's evolving fascination with Islam between the Civil War and up through the Glorious Revolution of 1688. Such studies should shed light on the elasticity of English dramatic representations of Islam, a quality that was not lost with the drama of the English Renaissance and the closing of the theatres. What did change, however, was both the face of English religion and the shape of English drama after the re-opening opening of the theatres at the Restoration. So, second, readings of these plays should also operate with attention to the significance of those changes. Indeed, the drama of the English Restoration and Glorious Revolution is a particularly

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<sup>20</sup> Arthur Colby Sprague, *Beaumont and Fletcher on the Restoration Stage* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1926): esp. 49, 74, 82-86, 123.

<sup>21</sup> The anonymous text in 1669, d'Urfey's in 1682, Tate's in 1687, and Motteux's in 1699 and 1701.

<sup>22</sup> Of all the post-Caroline titles mentioned, Birchwood offers significant engagement with only John Denham's *The Sophy* (technically a pre-Interregnum drama performed in 1641) and *The Siege of Rhodes* (1656). There is much room for further investigation of the Islamic-world dramas of the Restoration and Glorious Revolution.

good place to investigate the shifting significance of Islam in the English imaginary partly because of its own mutable qualities in this period. Following the closing and eventual re-opening of the theatres, dramatic expression was not only “intensely politicized,” its major forms were comparatively indeterminate, merging with those of other developing performance traditions (English opera, ballet, and the heroic drama of the Restoration stage, for example).<sup>23</sup> And running simultaneous with such a burst of interest in the Islamic world and those changes in dramatic form was, once again, the re-sacralizing of the English Church in the wake of the collapse of the Puritan Protectorate.

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<sup>23</sup> Birchwood argues that, “in questions of natural religion, free will, divine revelation, ecclesiastical sovereignty, liberty of conscience, tyranny and toleration, Islam was repeatedly treated” and, in the 1640s and 1650s at least, the “form and function” of drama merged with “printed pamphlets and newsbooks. Poised somewhere between the currency of political propaganda and the legacy of theatrical tradition, drama of the 1640s and 1650s is ideally placed to contain and respond to the multiplicity of Islamic representations fashioned by war and revolution.” Birchwood, *Staging Islam*, 12.

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