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Turning to Food: Religious Contact and Conversion in Early Modern Drama

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in English

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TURNING TO FOOD: RELIGIOUS CONTACT AND CONVERSION IN EARLY
MODERN DRAMA

(Thesis format: Monograph)

by

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Graduate Program in the Department of English

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
« Doctor of Philosophy »

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Abstract

In this dissertation, I am proposing a new way to explore Anglo-Judeo-Islamic relations in early modern drama: to focus on the way food, drink, and the humoral body materializes on stage as “conversion panic,” which is dramatized in a range of scenarios from overt xenophobia to more nuanced scenes of acceptance and tolerance. Because the early modern English believed that diet – eating with religious others and/or eating foods from other nations – could alter their humoral makeup to the extent that their internal, physiological bodies underwent a religious conversion, they were constantly and consciously aware of the looming possibility of conversion. The hydraulic premise of humoral physiology thus extended, I contend, to religious identity: just as humors were fluid, so too was religious identity.

Food, which is at once a central “non-natural” for the humoral body and an essentially theatrical element, provides an important point of convergence for investigating religious difference in early modern drama. To examine food’s role in the Anglo-Judeo-Islamic equation is to better understand how the early modern English simultaneously managed their fears, maintained their cultural and religious identities, and developed or nurtured economic and political ties with the other. To offer a more comprehensive picture of English interactions with religious others, I study early modern English histories, travel narratives, medical tracts, sermons, and other pamphlets, in addition to the English representation of religious others on stage. The plays I discuss span approximately forty-seven years, starting with Robert Wilson’s *The Three Ladies of London* (1584) and extending to the late Jacobean sequel to *The Fair Maid of the West* (c. 1631) by Thomas Heywood.

I conclude that examining interfaith relationships from the perspective of foodways widens the possibility that the early modern English did not always look to the Turk, Jew, or Catholic in contempt. Rather, studying these interfaith encounters in tandem with humoral theory and culinary practices establishes the fact that the early modern English were conscious of their sameness with others, and responded to this awareness with attitudes ranging from outright resistance to compassionate acceptance.

Keywords

Early Modern Drama, Anglo-Islamic Encounters, Interfaith Relationships, Food Studies, Religious Conversion, Cultural Encounters, Humoral Theory, Eating Practices, Diet, Shakespeare, Middleton, Heywood, *The Merchant of Venice*, *A Game at Chess*, William Percy, *Mahomet and His Heaven*, Jewish Dietary Laws, Hospitality, Islamic World, Turks, Jews, Galenic Medicine

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Introduction: Food, Humors, and the Judeo-Islamic Other in Early Modern Drama

RABSHAKE ...the newcome pirate is a reasonable handsome man of a Christian.

AGAR Why? Doth religion move anything in the shapes of men?

RABSHAKE Altogether! What's the reason else that the Turk and Jew is troubled (for the most part) with gouty legs and fiery nose? To express their heart-burning. Whereas the puritan is a man of upright calf and clean nostril.

VOADA Setting aside your nose, you should turn Christian. Then your calf swells upward mightily. (Robert Daborne, *A Christian Turned Turk* 6.7-15).

Rabshake, the Jewish servant to the Jewish-turned-Muslim Benwash, in Robert Daborne's *A Christian Turned Turk* (1612), explains that one's internal religious conviction is, "for the most part," manifested outwardly in physical terms. His explanation, in which the gouty legs and fiery nose of the Turk and Jew are set in opposition to the upright calf and clean nostril of the Puritan, demonstrates both the causal relationship between religious character and physical health, and the notion that Puritans, in Rabshake's opinion, possess an unbending rectitude that Turks and Jews lack. The physical afflictions of the Turk's and the Jew's bodies are a reflection of "heart-burning," which could either refer to the emotional state of jealousy and anger, since "heart-burning" is often associated with these ill-feelings in the period, or, it could refer to the physical ailment of the stomach, since "heart-burning" in early

modern medical treatises is a “paine of the stomacke ...that is caused by corrupt humors” (Bruele sig. li3r).¹

The emotional and physical properties of “heart-burning,” and its connection to gout, fiery nose, and Turks and Jews, demonstrates a close relationship between the internal and external humoral body, and faith. The gouty legs and fiery nose of the Turk and Jew render them to be angry, jealous men. This is further corroborated by the fact that Benwash is outrageously jealous and converts to Islam for the sole purpose of preventing Turks from lusting after his wife (6.76), and Daborne’s Mulli and Mufti Turk characters are stereotypically vengeful. The gouty legs and fiery nose, which reflect the corrupt physical humors that cause the stomach’s “heart-burning,” further indicate the Turk and Jew’s immoral, unchristian behaviour from the perspective of early modern humoral theory. The sixteenth-century physician Philip Barrough wrote that gout is “engendered of continuall crudities and drunckennes, and of immoderate using of lecherie” (sig. O4v). Another medical treatise (1582) explains that a deformed or inflamed nose, whose “nostrills be too thin, either too wide [would] then by great drawing in of aire... betoken fiercenesse of heart, and indignation of thought” (Bartholemaeus sig. H6v).²

¹ The emotional states of “heart-burning” is defined in the *OED* as “An angry and embittered state of mind” (n. 1a, earliest use c.1425) and “Feelings of jealousy, resentment, or bitterness” (n. 1b, earliest use 1533).

² See Peter Berek’s essay on “Looking Jewish,” in which he examines the Jews and the significance of the nose. Based on Leviticus 21:18 in the King James Bible and the gloss in the Geneva version, which both deal explicitly with deformity (including the nose), Berek concludes that “Facial deformity is apparently a sign of spiritual uncleanliness or inadequacy” (63).

Both of the physical diseases troubling the Turk and Jew are associated with spiritual affliction. In fact, in his chapter on the nose, Bartholomaeus Anglicus, the thirteenth-century scholar whose medical treatise was reprinted in 1582, states, “For by disposition of the members of the bodye, the affections and will of the soule are foreshewed & deemed” (sig. H6v). As I will elaborate in Chapter One, according to humoral theory, the state of the soul was reflected, in part, by the physical body, which was nurtured or afflicted by the kinds of food one ate. Certainly gouty legs, a fiery nose, and heart burn were not unique to Turks and Jews; but here, in Rabshake’s comparison, these physical afflictions rhetorically and visually contrast the Puritan’s “upright calf” and “clean nostril” so as to emphasize the Turk and Jew’s immorality and the Puritan’s virtue. The Puritan’s physical description simultaneously indicates his health as well as his virtue and undefiled sensibilities by way of the adjectives “upright” and “clean,” whose definitions include “morally just” (*OED* “upright,” 8a) and “pure, undefiled” (*OED* “clean,” 2a), respectively.

Voada’s response, which reduces Rabshake’s explanation to a bawdy joke (she would like to see the swelling in his calves relocated to his penis), nevertheless suggests the possibility of conversion on the basis of physical, bodily changes. The words “move” and “shapes” in Agar’s question, “Does religion move anything in the shapes of men?” – loaded terms which set up the ensuing bawdy joke – and Voada’s suggestion, which echoes “move” in “To set aside your nose,” all underscore the physicality of religious conversion. However, as Dennis Britton has pointed out, Rabshake’s statement contains a “paradoxical pairing” of “altogether” and “for the most part” which suggests that inner religious conviction does not always correspond with external markers of difference (71). Britton goes on to explain how “Turk plays” (plays that feature Muslim and sometimes Jewish characters) are preoccupied

with depicting a gap between religious conversion and inner faith; religious affiliation is often presented as “frighteningly alterable and potentially unknowable” (72). I depart here from Britton’s work, which explores the theatrical ways by which religious conversion and identity is staged, to focus, rather, on understanding *why* someone in this period might believe that “for the most part” inner faith can be detected outwardly.

The early moderns believed they could control and therefore alter their internal humoral physiology (which included perturbations of the mind and passions of the soul), and it is my contention that they also believed diet, a major “non-natural” that affected humoral balance, could play a significant role in causing an internal, physiological religious conversion. In other words, I argue that the early moderns believed diet – eating with religious others and/or eating foods from other nations – could alter their humoral makeup to the extent that their internal, physiological bodies underwent a religious conversion that could possibly result in external physical changes as well. As a result, early moderns were constantly and consciously aware of the looming possibility of conversion, which is one of the reasons why they were so preoccupied with maintaining a healthy humoral balance by “eating right.”³ The hydraulic premise of humoral physiology thus extended, I contend, to religious identity: just as humors were fluid, so too was religious, physical identity.

The instability of religious identity is captured in Rabshake’s concession, “for the most part”; that is, generally, religion is expressed outwardly but there are times – perhaps when a subject oscillates between cultures – when the body as a site of religious difference is

³ Ken Alcala’s *Eating Right in the Renaissance* emphasizes the maintenance of humoral health based on correct diet regimes.

called into question. Therefore, the Jew's fiery nose could be easily set aside, as Voada puts it, should he convert to Christianity. The Jew's fiery nose and the Turk's gouty legs, according to humoral theory, would have been direct manifestations of the subject's internal humoral composition. What altered and affected that composition were the six non-naturals, among which diet (what, how, and when food was consumed) played a major role.

Scholars studying religious conversion in early modern Anglo-Islamic relationships emphasize the *physicality* of the conversion. Either conversion is figured in racial terms, as Ania Loomba has demonstrated in *Shakespeare, Race and Colonialism*, or in sexual or economic terms as Daniel Vitkus, Jonathan Burton, and Jane Degenhardt, among others, have shown. Drawing on the physicality of religious conversion in the early modern imagination, and keeping in mind the complex dramatic representations of religious others in the period in the wake of global traffic, I am proposing a new way to explore Anglo-Judeo-Islamic relations in early modern drama: to focus on the way food, drink, and the humoral body materializes on stage as "conversion panic," which is dramatized in a range of scenarios from overt xenophobia to more nuanced scenes of acceptance and tolerance. The plays I discuss span over approximately forty-seven years, starting from the earliest, Robert Wilson's *The Three Ladies of London* (1584) to the late Jacobean sequel to *The Fair Maid of the West* (c. 1631) by Thomas Heywood.

Current studies on early modern English encounters with the Eastern world have now entered what Linda McJannet calls the "third wave" (3) of scholarship on Anglo-Islamic relations, which centres on models of exchange between East and West and focuses on hybridity and cultural permeability. The first wave, going back to the early twentieth century (1915-1937), is attributed to three main sources: Louis Wann's "The Oriental in Elizabethan

Drama” (1915), Warner Grenelle Rice’s unpublished dissertation, “Turk, Moore and Persian in English Literature” (1927), and Samuel C. Chew’s *The Crescent and the Rose* (1937).

These critics were concerned with historical accuracy and the literary merits of early modern literature on Islam. They saw the representation of Muslims as consisting largely of demonized stereotypes.

The second wave (1960s-70s) of scholarship is known predominantly for Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1978), whose unilateral model of East-West binary argued for the overwhelming power of European discourse to shape and dominate the East. Said’s theoretical application to the early modern period, however, has been widely challenged by critics who have stressed that “the assumption of cultural, military, and technological superiority at the root of Orientalism did not – and could not – apply to early modern England in relation to the Muslims of North Africa, the Levant, or India” (McJannet “A Critical History” 184.) The English were “belated players on the world stage” who necessarily approached Ottoman, Moroccan, Mughal, and other Islamic states with eyes of admiration and envy (184). However, some critics, as Matthew Dimmock has warned, were “so entangled in Said’s work that they often end[ed] up reasserting the basic divisions of his thesis in the process of denying them” (*New* 6). For example, despite Matar’s objections to Said’s thesis, he still maintains that early modern dramatic representations of Muslims were largely responsible for creating anti-Islamic stereotypes. According to Matar, “It was plays, masques, pageants, and other similar sources that developed in British culture the discourse about Muslim Otherness. . . . Eleazer and Othello bec[a]me the defining literary representation of the ‘Moor,’ and Bajazeth, Ithamore and Amureth of the ‘Turk’” (*Turks* 13). Matar’s argument notwithstanding, critics have since demonstrated that dramatic representations of

Muslims are far more nuanced and ambivalent, ranging from “others to brothers” as Burton so aptly put it (*Traffic* 12).

Current scholarship has now moved past Said’s unilateral model. In fact, Burton has recently pointed out that “by now it is an old saw to argue against Edward Said’s contention that Orientalism can be traced as far back as the European Renaissance” (22). As a result, critics have sought new ways of understanding early modern Anglo-Islamic encounters, both real and imagined, with a particular emphasis on cultural hybridity and permeability. Lisa Jardine, Jerry Brotton, MacLean, Matar, McJannet, and a collection of essays entitled *Global Traffic* (edited by Barbara Sebek and Stephen Deng), have focused on the dynamic of East-West exchange and the circulation of commodities and imperial iconography. By demonstrating the “powerful reach and influential purchase of Muslim thought and culture within Renaissance Britain,” these critics “not only dislodged the traditional Eurocentric perspective but also rendered it untenable” (MacLean 5).

Among this scholarship there has also been a particular focus on dramatic representations of religious others with an emphasis on Islam. Since an increase in cultural encounters produced heightened anxieties of religious conversion, “turning Turk” was a predominant issue in early modern plays that feature Christians confronting Muslims and/or Jews. It must be noted that the expression to “turn Turk” was not limited to the literal act of conversion to Islam. Acts of betrayal or transgression could be described as turning Turk, and so too could acts of imitating Turks. Even closeness to Turks or Moors, or interests in Turkish or Moorish culture, could be described as an act of turning Turk. Accordingly, Vitkus’s monograph, *Turning Turk: English Theatre and the Multicultural Mediterranean, 1570-1630* (2003), demonstrates how sexual transgressions in Turk plays and England’s

economic reliance on Mediterranean Muslims could count as acts of turning Turk. His study centres on the representations of the English encounter with exotic alterity, and how this helped form England's emergent national identity during a time when it was still seeking to be a great empire. Vitkus is concerned with the context of these Anglo-Muslim encounters, which is that England was still fantasizing about gaining imperial power. In his discussion of the drama, he turns to *Tamburlaine* to argue that there is no longer a binary opposition between Christian and Turk; Marlowe presents *Tamburlaine* as a "paradoxical model of what to be or do, and what not to be or do" (65). This argument (as does Burton's, to follow) runs counter to Matar's insistence on Muslim stereotypes in the drama.

Burton's *Traffic and Turning: Islam and Drama, 1579-1624* (2005) builds on Vitkus's work by exploring what he calls "experiential inventory, whereby Muslims themselves might affect the shape of English notions about Islam," and consequently demonstrating positive Muslim figures in the drama (22). Like Vitkus, he opposes Matar's view that the drama's representation of Islam is unequivocally demonized and stereotyped. Instead, Burton argues that the English representation of Islam is nuanced and mediated by economic, political, and cultural forces. The numerous images of Islam produced by English authors "ranged from censorious to the laudatory" (12). In his discussion of conversion, he says that to turn Turk was tantamount to an act of betrayal and subversion; to turn Turk was to turn from Christian virtue (16).

The trope of turning Turk has also been taken up by Dimmock (2005) and more recently by Jane Hwang Degenhardt (2011). Dimmock has argued that Christian essayists employed the trope of conversion to Islam to assail their enemies. By placing both their enemies and Muslims in the same category, writers aligned themselves with a universal

Christian brotherhood. According to Dimmock, England's struggle to find its identity especially in light of its opposition to Catholicism meant that the English emerged as the "new Turkes" who, like the Turks, were destroyers of idols. Degenhardt's monograph focuses on resistance to conversion. She argues that the physical nature of Islamic conversion meant that resistance to conversion also had to be physical (when staged) and is why resistance to Islam in the drama is from a Catholic (understood to be material/tangible) not Protestant (understood to be immaterial/ spiritual) point of view.

My thesis builds on current early modern Anglo-Islamic scholarship, which centres on the hybridity and cultural permeability of East-West relations, by demonstrating the religious and cultural permeability of Anglo-Judeo-Islamic relations from the point of view of food and psychophysiology. Food is crucial to the study of cultural history because it bears so many social implications; the way it is grown, imported and exported, prepared, served, and eaten can tell a story about the people it involves. Furthermore, food and eating practices can range from starvation to gluttony; food is at the heart of banquets and rituals; food appeals to all senses with its myriad characteristics; and food is vital to our existence. On stage, food and banquets were not merely props, but as Chris Meads and Catherine Richardson have argued, they could add substantial meaning to a scene: "the dramatic potential of such an occasion [banquets]...was not lost on playwrights...The audience was persistently confronted with banquet scenes wherein the food was to be understood as text in itself" (Meads 2). Therefore, food, which is at once a central "non-natural" for the humoral body and an essentially theatrical element, provides an important point of convergence for investigating religious difference in early modern drama.

During English interactions and cultural encounters with the other, food was constantly present: it was exchanged as gifts or offered at banquets between the monarch and ambassadors; it was imported from Eastern countries and sold in English markets; and it was a concerning and necessary part of travel. Food also carried with it national and religious values. Accordingly, early modern English interactions with religious others, which almost always involved food, meant that the English had to negotiate their national and religious identities (both individually and as a community) with their ever-increasing contact with religious others. Therefore, to examine food's role in the Anglo-Judeo-Islamic equation is to better understand how the early modern English simultaneously managed their fears, maintained their identities, and developed or nurtured economic and political ties with the other.

In Chapter One I lay the foundation of humoral theory and its relationship to subjectivity in the period. I discuss the early modern English notion of the porous body and its frightening susceptibility to be changed or converted by interacting with various influences, among which food is my focus. To demonstrate the notion that the English were averse to foreign food and foreigners, I analyse scene 6 from *Sir Thomas More* (c.1586-1605), which neatly illustrates the English desire to remain insular from outsiders. The remaining three chapters explore the implications of the deep-rooted connection between food and faith in plays that deal with religious others.

In Chapter Two, I examine how food is used to negotiate Anglo-Islamic relationships both real and staged, in England and in the Islamic world. With England's increasing participation in global traffic, the English necessarily met with Turks and Moors, and these encounters oftentimes included food during scenarios of hospitality. I am particularly

interested in the way both parties – host and guest – maintain their own religious identity on these hospitable occasions while simultaneously opening up to the other. Here I argue that anxieties of religious conversion born out of culinary interactions with others are circumvented when one feels in control and can therefore manage his or her degree of proximity to the other.

Chapter Three explores how the food trope, or the language of eating, articulates “conversion panic” as it manifests differently in Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice* (c. 1596) and Thomas Middleton’s *A Game at Chess* (1624). In *Merchant*, the conversion panic or threat of forced conversion is a consequence of business dealings with religious others, and this threat is expressed in terms of eating and Jewish dietary laws. I argue that Shylock sees the business opportunity with Antonio as an equal opportunity to forcibly convert him by attempting to slaughter Antonio according to *schechita*, the Jewish ritual of animal slaughter. In *A Game at Chess*, themes of religious dissimulation and insincere conversion highlight a common early modern anxiety about the discrepancy between outward piety and inward disbelief. Because of the visual and physical properties of food, Middleton uses metaphors of eating to highlight the victory of the Protestants and the hypocrisy of Catholics; food, in this play, is a reliable marker that exposes inner convictions.

My last chapter explores the theme of alcohol and drinking in William Percy’s *Mahomet and His Heaven* (c.1601) in order to demonstrate how Percy uses the trope of drinking to satirize Islam, Catholicism, and the contemporary legal system. Because alcohol is forbidden to Muslims and essential to Christian worship in the form of the consecrated wine, I examine how religious difference is understood through the discourse of drinking. In this play, Islam and Catholicism are curiously conflated, and alcohol is the primary means by

which Percy highlights the hypocrisy of both of these faiths. By levelling Catholicism with Islam, Percy demonstrates that there are more similarities than differences between these two faiths. Thus, while dietary practices have often been used to differentiate from self and other, Percy is an example of a dramatist who shows that these differences are often elusive.

The chapters that follow indicate the importance of studying interfaith relationships – specifically Anglo-Judeo-Islamic encounters – in the context of food and eating practices because food, faith, and religious difference, I argue, were understood to be inextricably linked to each other in the early modern English culture at large.

Chapter 1

Humoral Theory, Diet, and Subjectivity: Foreign Food and the English Constitution

“the accidents of the soule be often chaunged according to the accidents of the body as white wine, taketh the lykenesse and coulour of a redde glasse, that it is poured in”

(Anglicus Bartholomaeus, rpt. in 1582, sig. H6v)

It was a putative understanding in early modern England that the state of the soul responded to and reflected the state of the physical body. And the health of the physical body depended on a number of factors, among which diet was crucial. As I will explain in this chapter, the early modern English understood their bodies to be porous and susceptible to change; they were conscious of their environment, and especially wary of coming into contact with foreignness – both peoples and products. Below, I examine humoral theory, specifically the body’s physical reaction to diet, and how this understanding shaped the way the English perceived themselves in relation to religious others. By focusing on the humoral body, I demonstrate the extent to which the early modern English understood their commensurability; specifically, they knew that the other also perceived their sense of self in relation to the world according to humoral logic. Because all human beings possessed the same essential humors and therefore functioned in the same physiological way, their understanding of commensurability with the other was all the more real and frightening. As a result, efforts were taken, whether to deter travelers or to demonize other faiths, in order to prevent one from becoming – or converting into – the other.

According to humoral theory, the combination of the six non-naturals, which included air, exercise and rest, sleep and waking, food and drink, repletion and excretion, and passions

and emotions, were believed to affect an individual's health.⁴ Eating too much or exposing oneself to a putrid environment, for example, would manifest in the body as a disease or illness because irregular or uncontrolled levels of each of these non-naturals could disturb the body's humoral balance. Humoral theory held that an individual's bodily and mental health was determined by the balance of his or her own unique humoral composition. The four humors – blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile – were produced through the digestion process and then dispersed to the rest of the body by spirits, which were the mediators between body and soul (Schoenfeldt 2).⁵ The humors served two purposes: they were the source of nutrition for the body; and they determined an individual's complexion, or innate identifying characteristics. Each humor had its own balance of hot or cold and moist or dry properties: blood was hot and moist, phlegm was cold and moist, yellow bile was hot and dry, and black bile was cold and dry. The humors also corresponded to personality types so that a predominance of any one humor produced a certain personality: the hot-blooded individual was considered sanguine; the cold and moist individual, phlegmatic; the hot and dry, choleric; and the cold and dry, melancholic.

Digestion according to this conception is a three-step process, the first step of which occurs in the stomach where food is converted into a fluid called "chyle" which is then sent to the liver for the second phase. The liver converts chyle into blood, which is then distributed to the rest of the body through its venous system. At this point the blood contains

⁴ For detailed readings of Galen and humoral theory see Nancy Siraisi's *Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine* and Owsei Temkin's *Galenism: Rise and Decline of a Medical Philosophy*.

⁵ For more on humoral digestion see Michael Schoenfeldt's *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England*, 1- 39; and, Albala's *Eating Right*, 48-77.

unrefined humors, which, at the final stage, are received and refined by their respective organs: the gallbladder attracts choler, the brain makes phlegm, and the spleen makes melancholy. During this final phase, blood distributes nutrients to the rest of the body, including the heart.

Once blood reaches the heart it proceeds in two directions. Some blood cycles itself through the lungs where it meets with vapors waiting to be exhaled; this blood returns to the venous system and continues onward to be used again. More significantly is the second route where blood comes into contact with “spirits” that enters the body through inhalation. Understandably, the quality of air (one of the non-naturals) determines the quality of spirits. These spirits vitalize the blood which is then carried to the brain through the arteries. In the brain, further refinements produce “animal spirits” which flow through the nervous system enabling an individual to perform voluntary acts.

I call attention to this physiological process to point out that early moderns had a very materialist view of both the body and mind, at least while Galenic medicine was popular until the mid-seventeenth century (as I will explain below) and before Descartes’s theory of dualism gained popularity in the 1630s-40s and onward. Diet had a direct impact on an individual’s thoughts and actions. As food historian Ken Albala reminds us, “a fault in any stage of the digestive process will ultimately affect the quality of these spirits

Inappropriate foods or faulty digestion clouds the thoughts and obfuscates the intellect, drawing the unfortunate thinker into confusion and possibly sin” (*Eating* 63). Likewise, diet also had a direct causal relation with emotions. Gail Kern Paster’s seminal work on humoral theory explains how “emotions flood the body not metaphorically but literally, as the humors course through the bloodstream carrying choler, melancholy, blood, and phlegm” (*Humoring*

14). Since humors were the product of what one consumed, diet played a necessary and major role in emotional wellbeing. Through careful management and control, an individual could counter his or her own natural inclinations. However, a poor diet could lead to a “deranged mind and sin” because the poorly digested bad food would lead to a corruption of humors that would produce foul spirits, which would then disturb and pervert thoughts (Albala 138-39). Feelings, thoughts, even the “inclinations to perform virtuous acts are ultimately influenced, if not determined by, dietary habits” (138).

An example of the direct link between diet and humoral disposition is found in Thomas Middleton’s *A Game at Chess* (1624), in which the White Knight (Prince Charles) feigns concern that the Catholic faith would not be able to satisfy his desire for ambition. He says to the Black Knight (Gondomar), “But for the diet of my disposition / There comes a trouble; you will hardly find / Food to please that” (5.3.72-74). The food metaphor continues with the Black Knight’s response that there is no dish the “master cook of Christendom” cannot prepare (5.3.76) and proceeds to ask the White Knight to “name your nature’s diet” (5.3.77). The White Knight’s response confirms the humoral theory that informs this dialogue; he answers, “The first mess [course] / Is hot ambition” (5.3.78-79), where Gary Taylor has glossed “hot” in this context to refer to “the medical theory of humours, containing an excess of the element of fire” (1879). The food trope here operates on metaphorical and literal levels simultaneously: the White Knight seeks to figuratively consume a “dish” of ambition, but in seeking it, he (and his contemporaries) believe that the food he literally eats is causally linked to his humoral disposition to desire ambition. In other words, these lines demonstrate that personality (or humoral character disposition) is determined by diet as well.

Diet also ultimately influenced the soul. In Galen's *Quod Animi Mores* ("That the Faculties of the Soul Follow the Temperaments of the Body"), he argues that the behaviour of the soul depends on the body's physiological disposition (qtd. in Schoenfeldt 9): "Those who do not agree that the soul derives benefit and harm from the mixture of the body have no explanation whatsoever to give of differences in children, or of the benefits derived from regimen, or of those differences in character which make people spirited or otherwise, or intelligent or otherwise" (9). Other Galenists espouse similar views: Juan Huarte's "immensely popular" (Schoenfeldt 9) *The Examination of Men's Wits* (1594) includes national difference as well as the body's composition and the "conditions of the soule," all of which "springeth from the varietie of this temperature" (21-23). Robert Burton, in his *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1632), likewise describes the inextricable relationship between body and soul:

as the body works upon the mind by his bad humors, troubling the spirits, sending gross fumes into the brain, and so *per consequens* disturbing the soul, and all the faculties of it ...so, on the other side, the mind most effectually works upon the body producing by his passions and perturbations miraculous alterations, as melancholy, despair, cruel diseases, and sometimes death itself; insomuch as it is most true which Plato saith in his *Chamides*, ...all the mischiefs of the body proceed from the soul (250).

The diseases of the body negatively affect the soul. As William Vaughan explains in his *Naturall and Artificial Directions for Health* (1600), "vices cause disorders and diseases both in the bodie and soules so likewise they cause the one to destroy the other" (sig. E2r).

Thomas Walkington echoes the concept of the soul following the temperature of the body in *The Optick Glasse of Humors* (1631), but he concedes, as Schoenfeldt points out, that there exists an “altogether immaterial core self” thereby shunning some of the “more disturbing aspects of the psychology implied by Galenic physiology” (9). That the soul depends on the body’s physiological processes poses a challenge for early modern Christian, Muslim, and Jewish critics, as well as Christian Galenists such as Walkington, Timothy Bright, and Walter Raleigh, all of whom have to reconcile the materialist view of the body, mind, and soul with their own religious beliefs. As Schoenfeldt states, “if morals really are a function of physiology, then a particularly severe form of predestination is manifested in the body” (9). Christian Galenists respond to this challenge, as Douglas Trevor has found, in a way “altogether typical in the period: that is, contradictorily” (242). While on one hand these writers insist on understanding the body based on Galenic theory, on the other, they try to “make it clear that God’s dominion over the human soul is in no way abrogated by the influence of bodily fluids” (Trevor 243). The effort to call attention to God notwithstanding, Galenic theory clearly dominates early modern perceptions of the body and soul. In fact, historian Andrew Wear estimates that “between 1500 and 1600 there were published around 590 different editions of works of Galen” (*Knowledge* 253).

Diet’s role in determining the state of the soul has been made clear in Galen’s *De Sanitate Tuenda* (“Of Hygiene”): “The disposition of the soul is corrupted by unwholesome habits in food and drink, and in exercise ... He who pursues the art of hygiene ... must not think that it is for the philosopher alone to shape the disposition of the soul; it is for him to shape the health of the soul itself” (qtd. in Temkin, 39). In 1576 Levinus Lemnius, a Dutch physician whose medical texts were translated into English and saw numerous editions,

warns against the harmful effect on the soul of the way food is eaten: “Now, forsomuch as this faculty of the Soule is brittle, tender & delicate, there is nothing that woorketh more harme thereunto, then Cruditie, Ryot, Intemperaunce, Surphet and dronkennes” (sig. D3). Unsurprisingly, he ascribes physical properties in describing the soul (brittle, tender, delicate), which emphasize the soul’s susceptibility to be affected by material means such as food. The reference to food here is implicated with sin (gluttony or surfeit, drunkenness), which further testifies to food’s effect on faith (and the soul). Similarly, Burton devotes many pages to the significance of diet and its effect on melancholy. For Burton, as it is for many early modern medical writers, diet is closely aligned with medicine, and often bound up in religious and ethical discourse. Because diet is something humans can control, eating the right foods in the correct quantities becomes also a moral act.

Since diet influences humors, and humors influence the soul, it is no wonder many writers of the period connect diet to physiognomy, especially when writing about religious others. Henry Butts, in his *Dyets Dry Dinner* (1599), maintains that diet’s influence on the body’s humoral composition is consequently reflected in one’s outward appearance. For instance, since goose “fills the body with superfluous humors,” Butts contends, Jews, who are thought to be “great Goose-eaters” have a complexion that is “passing melancholious,” skin that is “swart” in colour, and they are sufferers of “diseases very perilous” (sig.K8r).⁶ The “moral depravity” of religious others is observed outwardly since, as Eva Holmberg has argued, “Sin and lack of moral judgment were in the early modern period still often thought

⁶ See also Albala for more on the connection between Jewish complexion, temperament and goose-eating (204).

to be reflected from the surface of the body” (136).⁷ In fact, the collection of primary sources put forth by Ania Loomba and Jonathan Burton in *Race in Early Modern England* attests to the tendency of early modern writers to express religious difference in somatic terms.

The relationship between diet, particularly digestion and indigestion, and spirituality is perhaps best argued in Schoenfeldt’s chapter on devotion and digestion in George Herbert’s poetry. Here, Schoenfeldt’s reading of Herbert’s poetry reveals how Herbert “makes taste the primary experience of community with God” (34). By tracing the course of food from the moment of consumption to the “internal labyrinths of digestion,” Herbert traces the “inner contours of the Christian devotional subject” (34). Ultimately, Schoenfeldt concludes that for Herbert, individuality is determined by self-control, and that the inner self is constructed by carefully regulating what goes in and comes out of the body. For Schoenfeldt, self-fashioning takes on a literal mode that focuses on the “moments of eating and excreting as urgent but quotidian occasions for demarcating the porous cusp between self and other, and between matter and spirit” (38). Thus, Schoenfeldt spends considerable time explaining the significance of diet and the role of the stomach, which is “at the center of an organic system demanding perpetual, anxious osmosis with the outside world” (13).

Grouping together Schoenfeldt’s work on humoral subjectivity, Katherine Maus’ argument that the body’s interior organs are involved in the production of the mental interior, and her own work on “interpretive literalism on locutions of bodily self-experience” (“Melancholy” 116), Paster pushes further this scholarship on humoral self-fashioning, pointing out that “none of us has described how consciousness in the humoral body might

⁷ See Eva Holmberg’s *Jews in the Early Modern English Imagination* for more on physiognomic theories pertaining to Jews.

actually function in relation to the analogously constructed universe or recognized how subjectivity in the humoral body is regularly breached and penetrated by its phenomenological environment” (116). Since the humors correspond with the elements of the natural world (fire, earth, air, water), the body’s humors “bring the natural world directly into the body and extend the body out to the natural world” (*Humoring* 133). As a result, emotions or passions maintain a reciprocal exchange with the environment. For example, Falstaff’s identifying his melancholy to that of a gib cat is not merely an anthropomorphic projection, but rather his simile serves to “introject the natural, God-given self-sameness of cat melancholy – expressed in flesh and fur and howling – into an emotionally justified, ethically naturalized, and humorally subjectified Falstaff” (“Melancholy” 121).

If humoral subjectivity is receptive to the environment then what happens, if anything, when the subject’s environment is not perceived as “natural”? In Paster’s study, the outside world seems to be the immediate environment surrounding the English. But how might the English construct their own individuality via humors when their interactions with the outside world extend beyond the scope of England or even Europe, to include the eastern lands of the Ottoman Empire or the Barbary Coast, whose climate was understood to be unfit for the Englishman’s geohumoral constitution?⁸ As I will discuss in further detail below, the climate and geographical nature of a place was known to have a direct effect on a subject’s humoral constitution. Thus, to an early modern Englishman or woman, the hot, dry climate of the East would be considered unnatural for his or her humoral disposition. Paster argues that

⁸ See David Mark Whitford’s *The Curse of Ham in the Early Modern Era* (110-115) on the early modern English conception that linked geography, body type, and humors. Citing William Vaughn (1612), for example, Whitford states that “Travel beyond one’s ‘usuall soyle’ could bring illness or disaster” (113).

in addition to the idea that the humoral body is semipermeable, we need also to consider humoral subjectivity “as a form of consciousness that is open, penetrable, fluid, and extended outwards to the higher animals with whom it shared affective workings” (116). Building on this idea, I suggest we also consider humoral subjectivity as a form of consciousness that is open and penetrable to those perceived as *outsiders*. How does the English humoral body respond in an Islamic environment and to what degree does this experience affect his or her faith?

While humoral theory frames my discussion on the body as a site of religious conversion based on its receiving and rejecting particular foodstuffs, I am also interested in how the Englishman received and/or rejected foreigners in their role as guests and hosts while in England and in the Islamic world. Just as the humoral body is susceptible to changes from consuming foreign foodstuffs, so too is the Englishman vulnerable to changes from accepting or hosting foreigners. The same vulnerability is felt also when the Englishman is a guest in the country and home of a religious other. The host-guest relationship, as progressive as it sometimes appears to be (such as the one described by Thomas Dallam during his visit to the Sultan’s palace in 1599 as I describe in Chapter Two), is nevertheless fraught with religious tension – at some point, somehow, questions of religious identity arise. As I will argue in Chapter Two, both host and guest are only willing to participate in hospitable scenarios when they feel in control and can therefore manage their closeness to the other. The conditions placed on these host-guest relationships, therefore, call into question the notion of true hospitality.

The idea that hospitality bears an underlying threat to either the host or guest has been described by Jacques Derrida as “hostipitality,” a word he coins to encompass the dual nature

of the *hostis*, the stranger, who is a guest or enemy, and who must oblige to the rules of the host. In the host-guest dynamic of hospitality, both host and guest are obligated to comply to certain rules, which means that hospitality is conditional. In Chapter Two, I am interested in how the English Christians and Muslims serve as hosts and guests in both England and the Islamic world; what are the rules they follow, and to what extent do they follow them? As David Goldstein has pointed out, “The stakes of hospitality are extremely high in early English culture” (*Eating* 137). My discussion on hospitality explores how the English and the Muslims negotiate their place in the host-guest relationship where religious identity is at stake.

Porous English Bodies: Fears of Apostasy, Conversion and Contamination

The early modern English body was known to be a porous vessel that was susceptible not only to an internal, psychophysiological change, but was prone to “absorb foreign vices indiscriminately” (Wilson 14). According to Mary Floyd-Wilson’s study of early modern geohumoralism, the most prominent characteristic defining Englishness was their impressibility (54).⁹ The English during this time perceived themselves to be “exceedingly pliant and vulnerable” and because they were a northern island nation, their geohumoral constitution not only made them “notoriously fickle and inconstant” but they were “ready to imitate and absorb alien customs” (55). The brain, in particular, was a site for absorption and fluctuation: the “braine-sick humors” of the English, William Slatyer wrote in 1621, causes them to run after “far-fetcht and new fangle-fashions” of foreign countries (sig. A2v). Due to

⁹ Wilson coins the term “geohumoralism” to describe the phenomenon that shared character traits emerge from a common geographical location, which includes topography, climate, and diet.

England's surrounding bodies of water, James Howell, in 1653, wrote that "the sea tumbleth perpetually about ...so their braines do fluctuat in their noddles, which makes [the British] so variable and unsteady" (*German Diet* 53-54). The air of this northern climate was also reason to believe that the English were susceptible to the "mutability of thought" making them, as Sir Thomas Baines remarked in 1676, "a changing fluctuating people by nature, increased by diet" (qtd. in Floyd-Wilson 54). Thus the early modern English body, including the brain (and therefore mind), as John Sutton has argued, "does not lend itself to stability and is notoriously unfit for the solid retention of moral matters in memory" (15). Because of this geohumoral constitution that made the English body vulnerable to the absorption of manners, customs, and different modes of thought belonging to other nations, warnings against foreign travel proliferated in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

In her chapter on the "morally corrupt traveller," Sara Warneke demonstrates how the most prominent image of the traveler in early modern England is the "dissolute Englishman corrupted by the pleasures and temptations freely available on the Continent" (191). The English traveler's body was frighteningly at risk from foreign infections. As David Baker has argued, English bodies were understood to be what Helkiah Crooke (1615) calls "*Trans-fluxible*" (qtd. in Baker 122) since when they travelled, they "opened that always already porous *corpus* to a host of external influences [which] was potentially transforming" (122). Since the environment, including air and diet (two Galenic non-naturals), could alter one's humoral physiology, "travel abroad could be seen as a kind of humoral bio-engineering" (122). The predominant concern for these anti-travel critics is the fact that Englishmen abroad are vulnerable to apostasize or convert to another religion, and should they return to England, they would come back having adopted foreign customs that would taint the purity

of English nationalism and culture.¹⁰ As Daniel Carey has argued, “The greatest fear instilled by Continental travel was raised by the threat to the religious identity of the traveler” (36). In Sir Robert Dallington’s *Method for Travell* (1598), for example, the primary concern is maintaining one’s faith upon travel:

Concerning the Traveliers [sic] religion, I teach not what it should be ...only my hopes are, he be of the religion here established: and my advice is he be therein well settled, and that howsoever his imagination shall be carried in the voluble Sphere of divers men’s discourses; yet his inmost thoughts like lines in a circle shall always concenter in this immoveable point, not to alter his first faith (sig. B2v).

In Howell’s travel conduct book (1642), he writes, “It is very requisit that hee who exposeth himself to the hazard of Forraine Travell, should be well grounded and settled in his Religion...and somewhat versed in the Controversies ’twixt us and Rome...” (*Instructions* 15). Similarly, in John Deacon’s tract, *Tobacco Tortured* (1616), he rails against the importation and sale of tobacco, stating that it threatens the Protestant church and the moral well-being of Englishmen (sig.C2v). In this tract, as Daniel Vitkus has pointed out, Deacon

10 See Jonathan Gil Harris’ *Foreign Bodies and the Body Politic* for more on the tropes of contamination by foreigners infiltrating the English body politic. See also Daniel Vitkus’s “Travel, Trade, and Conversion” in *Remapping the Mediterranean World in Early Modern English Writings*. Ed. Goran V. Stanivukovic: “The idea of renegades who had converted to Islam returning to England without telling anyone of their apostasy, and simply rejoining the Protestant church, was at the extreme end of a range of fears about returned travelers polluting the Anglo-Protestant homeland. The fear of contamination caused by travelers who returned to England registered through various discourses of exchange, including the ethnographic, commercial, doctrinal, and erotic” (53).

condemns corrupting foreign influences, beginning explicitly with religious influences.

Deacon worries that the English are corrupted by:

our careless entercourse of trafficking with the contagious corruptions, and customes of forreine nations ..from whence commeth it now to passe that so many of our English-mens minds are thus terrible Turkished with Mahometan trumperies; thus ruefully Romanized with superstitious relickes; thus treacherously Italianized with sundry antichristian toyes...(sig.C2v)

“The threat of conversion posed by Islamic and Roman Catholic powers” in this case is brought forth by imported commodities (Vitkus “Poisoned” 44). Therefore, in addition to travelling abroad, interactions with foreigners by way of commercial exchange within England is also cause for concern.

A significant reason why anti-travel books worry so much over English travelers in foreign lands is “precisely because they accepted the commensurability of human beings, and therefore the capacity of the English to become like those they observed and with whom they lived” (Carey 40). The increasing cultural exchanges between England and the Islamic East had so profound an effect on the formation of English identity that Barbara Fuchs argues, “it was not always easy to distinguish Islamic other from Christian self” (3). In the highly competitive market of global exchange, various cultures learned from and emulated each other, a process Fuchs calls “cultural mimesis.” Looking at these encounters on a material level of exchange, Carey points out that the resulting “circulation of customs and manners” betrays the notion that the English are incommensurable with the other. Their very fear of

assimilation and/or conversion demonstrates how similar they are to the peoples they vehemently oppose.

Since the early modern English were conscious of the fact that humoralism governed everyday living regardless of religious, national, or racial difference, travel conduct books also discussed the dangerous effects on the humoral body from ingesting foreign food. In *Treatise of Direction, How to travell safely, and profitably into Forraigne Countries* (1643), Thomas Neale criticizes the “braine-sick travellours” whose “over heated ... furious brain, doe skip in forraigne Countries, without method or discretion, from one place to another” (10). He warns against “the heedless devouring of outlandish foode”:

Infinite numbers of which summer Birds, that are onely like Swallowes or Cuckowes, good for the sack and smoke in the chimnies, doe so overheate themselves with hot exotique wines and fruit, perpetually gowstering [tasting] on the French or Italian delicates, that scarce one of 10 return home alive...the same fortune run many of our young lusty merchants and mariners in java, at Bantam, at the Moluccaes, Ambonia, Banda ...and finally in all those hot Countries of China and Japon, which doe overthrow your health with the hot fruits of those Countries, and by excessive drinking of a strong wine, Called Arecca, Common throughout the east, and with the contagious women, and almost as Contagious heat of the Country. (12)

That Neale five times brings up the notion of heat should not go unnoticed; recall that the humors bear hot, cold, moist, and dry properties, and that retaining and expelling heat alters the body's temperament, which includes, once again, the mind and soul. Here, “hot exotique wines” and “hot fruits” that “overheat” English brains and “overheat themselves” bear

humoral implications. As Wendy Wall has argued, “diet is understood in thermal terms, as cold air insulates the digestive ‘force’ within the English body and shapes its appetites” (128). Yoking humoral theory to foreign foodstuffs here implies once again that consuming the “wrong” foods – in this case foods associated with non-English, non-Christian others – means a corruption of an internal self.

Aversion to foreign foods is articulated also in Thomas Tryon’s *The Good Housewife Made a Doctor* (c.1685): “There is scarce any one thing so much destroys and hurts our Health, both of Body and Mind, as the eating and drinking *Forreign Ingredients* with and amongst our common Food” (90). Wall observes that Tyron seeks to “return” the humoral body to “fit” its native English soil thus “food, diet, and national constitution are, in these discourses, thoroughly intertwined” (128). Returning the humoral body to fit native England implies that diet and geography are also linked. In fact, in William Harrison’s *Description of England* (1577), he maintains that regional climate determines patterns of digestion:

The situation of our region, lying near unto the north, doth cause the heat of our stomachs to be of somewhat greater force; therefore our bodies do crave a little more ample nourishment than the inhabitants of the hotter regions are accustomed withal, whose digestive force is not altogether so vehement, because their internal heat is not so strong as ours, which is kept in by the coldness of air. (123-24)

The early modern English body was thus thought to be physiologically (and geohumorally) designed to receive and reject certain foods. The consequences of eating the wrong foods would occur, one would expect, on a physiological level (for example, vomiting or diarrhea). But early moderns believed that consuming the “wrong” foods would also affect

behaviour, state of mind, even faith, a belief that historian Trudy Eden explains in her study on early English colonizers in America.

Eden's study of early American settlers describes the same English fear of threatened national, religious, and social identities from consuming the "wrong" foods. Grounding her research on humoral theory as well, she argues that the first American settlers refused to eat what they called "savage trash" – maize acquired from local Native Indians – lest they undermined their identities by altering their humoral constitution (3). The particular nature or characteristic of foodstuffs was thought to have a direct influence on the body such that if someone ate coarse food, he or she would become a coarse person. This is because "Early modern Europeans believed that their identity depended on what they ate" (10).

That food altered behaviour – even converted the consumer into a religious other – is perhaps no more explicitly found than in England's reception to the "Mahometan berry": coffee. While coffee was certainly a welcome new drink to some in early modern England (the first coffee house opened in 1652), others denounced it.¹¹ In 1605, Francis Bacon warned that coffee can "disturb the mind" as it functions like opiates (272). Other writers believed coffee threatened English religious culture. As Matar has argued, "as far as they were concerned, coffee ... was a 'Mahometan gruel' drunk by potential renegades from Christianity...For many writers, coffee-drinking was dangerous because it prepared Englishmen for apostasy to Islam" (*Islam* 112). Furthermore, opponents worried that coffee might have "mysterious powers to seduce Christians from their faith" (112). Coffee was metonymically Islamic, and anyone who drank it threatened his or her own religious faith.

¹¹ See Nabil Matar on coffee in *Islam in Britain 1558 -1685*, 110-118 and Brian Cowan's *The Social Life of Coffee: The Emergence of the British Coffeehouse*.

One anonymous writer, in *A Broad-Side Against Coffee: or the Marriage of the Turk* (1672), uses coffee and water as a metaphor to convey the anxiety of miscegenation between the Turks and the English. To this writer, the marriage of coffee (Turk) and water (English) would yield a grotesque product because Turkish coffee is “cold and dry” while Christian-English water is “cold and moist” (58-60). The Turk and the Englishman are therefore not only humorally incompatible but their monstrous progeny would go on to reproduce and thereby pollute the purity of English-Christian lineage. Consequently, the Christian-Turk binary would collapse in this new “mixed” generation. That the writer links coffee and interfaith marriage to *humoral* properties suggests, furthermore, that racial and religious miscegenation bears physiological and dietary implications.

Coffee’s introduction into English society is associated with the introduction of an English translation of the Qur’an or “Alcoran.” Drawing on several sources opposing this “Mahometan berry,” Matar demonstrates how coffee was thought to be “as dangerous as ‘Alcoran’ because it threatened the fabric of England’s Christian society” (112). Moreover, “coffee conquered both the Christian soul and the Christian body” as it manifested itself in other physical ways: complexions become swarthy and “Moorish” and this blackness, as many scholars on early modern race have argued, implies a moral degeneration (Matar *Islam* 113).¹² What made coffee all the more frightening is that it was believed to have an involuntarily noxious effect on the body that essentially forces one to convert despite the drinker’s firm hold on his faith. Citing the anonymous writer in *A Cup of Coffee: or Coffee in its Colours* (1663), Matar notes that “Even if coffee-drinkers did not want to ‘turn Turk’

¹² A similar argument regarding tobacco’s power to convert and blacken the Christian’s internal body is made by Kristen Brookes, in her essay, “Inhaling the Alien: Race and Tobacco in Early Modern England” Brookes also briefly discusses early modern aversions to coffee.

[convert to Islam], the secret ingredients of coffee would overpower their Protestant faith and convert them to a Levantine religion: for coffee makes the drinker ‘faithless as a Jew or infidell’” (113). That the body would convert involuntarily attests to the fact that the humoral body, with its inextricable network of mind, body, and soul, was believed to react to certain foodstuffs in a way that would alter, in this case, the mind and soul so that the drinker would apostatize and convert.

Aversions to foreign consumables extend also to foodstuffs for medicinal purposes. Although exotic medicines in the period are popular, opponents feared the English constitution was at risk of contamination because they believed “alien remedies posed the threat of debilitating or altering the native constitution” (Carey 40). For example, in Timothy Bright’s treatise on English medicine (1580), Bright advocates native remedies over foreign medicines, which he argues will “greatly impair” health (7). He warns against imported medicines by questioning the reliability of foreign sources, and he points out the danger of Christians trusting “the courtesie of those Heathen and barbarous nations” (sig.B3v). Furthermore, for every foreign commodity, Bright identifies its native equivalent: “as Rosemarie matcheth Cinnamon: Basill, Cloues: Sage, the Nutmegge: Saffron, Ginger: Thime, Muske: Sauerie, the leafe called Malabathrum, but euen in pleasauntnes of tast expresse the same” (sig.F4v). That these foreign medical foodstuffs and coffee are perceived by some as a threat to both Christianity and Englishness indicates that the early modern English are actively thinking about the link between food/drink, religious faith, and nationhood. They are doubtless concerned by food’s potential noxious effects on morality and faith, and consequently represent these concerns in various ways, thereby alerting us to the significance of food’s role in religious encounters in early modern English culture.

Accordingly, we have reason to examine the ways dramatists explored this cultural significance in the plays featuring religious others in this period.

Aversion to Foreigners and Their Food in *Sir Thomas More*

A notable dramatic representation of the Englishman’s aversion to foreign foodstuffs and foreigners in general is *Sir Thomas More*. In this play, inhospitality toward strangers, specifically European immigrants residing in London, results in a riot that must be dealt with by Thomas More, a sheriff of London. Significant to my thesis is the beginning of scene 6 when Lincoln leads the citizens to revolt against these immigrants:

LINCOLN Our country is a great eating country; *argo* they eat more in our country than they do in their own.

CLOWN By a halfpenny loaf a day, troy weight. 6.10

LINCOLN They bring in strange roots, which is merely to the undoing of poor prentices. For what’s a sorry parsnip to a good heart?

CLOWN Trash, trash. They breed sore eyes, and ’tis enough to infect the City with the palsy.

LINCOLN Nay, it has infected it with the palsy, for these bastards of dung – as you know, they grow in dung – have infected us, and it is our infection will make the City shake. Which partly comes through the eating of 6.20
parsnips.

CLOWN True, and pumpkins together.

Joan Fitzpatrick’s article on food and foreignness in this play analyzes the food metaphor in this scene and how it is used to describe the aliens’ effect on the body politic. She reads the body’s consumption of the “infected vegetables” as a “powerful symbol” of the

detrimental effect the aliens have on the safety of London and its economy (*Food* 35). Just as the body has to purge itself of a disease, she analyzes, so too does London have to purge itself of foreigners, as the rioters believe, in order to “ensure the safety of the city” (35).¹³

Lloyd Kermode’s analysis of the same scene calls attention to the “confusion of alien with native” whereby the city’s absorption of aliens (the city is infected with aliens), and not the aliens alone, is what will cause the city to shake (82-83). He writes, “instead of shaking with a disease that allegedly hurts Londoners, the rioters will make the city shake with civil disturbance” (83). The city thus suffers from an “urban disease” caused by the “illegitimate filth” – the “bastards of dung” (Kermode suggests that the “bastards of dung,” which refer primarily to the parsnips, also refer to the aliens). Both Kermode’s and Fitzpatrick’s analyses focus on the figurative language operating in this scene since they interpret, and rightfully so, that the effect of these aliens (and their strange root vegetable) is felt on the body *politic*. John Jowett’s gloss in the Arden edition indicates much the same: “The effect of the foreigners’ diet on the body is correlated with the xenophobic idea that their presence infects the body politic” (181). Certainly the language lends itself to figurative interpretation but the literal meaning confirms the early modern notion that consuming foreign or “other” food triggers an internal physiological conversion that manifests outwardly.

¹³ Fitzpatrick’s analysis of the food trope extends also to the sexual appetites of foreigners; she argues that Londoners do not only have to protect themselves from alien infection but also from emasculation (foreigners raping English women emasculate English men). I am not concerned with the foreigners’ sexual appetite; rather I am interested in the literal consumption of foreign foods and why it was perceived as an infection that caused disease.

The strange root vegetable, when it is consumed, not only causes “sore eyes” and palsy, but also causes the “undoing of poor prentices” (6.12). Jowett’s gloss suggests that apprentices here “probably refer[s] to those indentured to the resident foreigners” (181) so the “undoing” seems to imply the destruction of their livelihood. But the line is preceded with, and followed by, food imagery—the alien effect on the city/economy has not yet been mentioned. The “undoing of poor prentices” is preceded with “They bring strange roots” (glossed by Jowett as, they “introduced into the diet ... foreign...root vegetables” [181]), which thus far indicates no more than the literal consumption of a strange foodstuff. The line is then followed by, “For what’s a sorry parsnip to a good heart?,” which Jowett notes is both a comparison of the foreign and English temperaments as well as an expression of disdain for the insufficient vegetable (181). The former implication, in my opinion, alludes to the humoral body: the sorry or “wretched” (Jowett 181) parsnip, when it is consumed, will disturb the humorally well-balanced system, which is here represented by a “good heart.” The question, “what’s a sorry parsnip to a good heart?” directly links a foodstuff with an internal organ in the same way that humoral theory maintains diet has a direct effect on the health of the body’s internal system. Once a “wrong” food has been consumed, the body’s humors are thrown off balance and the result manifests as physical ailments, an “undoing,” in this case of “sore eyes” and palsy.

Clown Betts’ line that “They” (referring to parsnips, but maybe also to aliens) are “enough to infect the City with the palsy” (6.15) certainly implies an infection of the body politic given the word “City.” Furthermore, Lincoln’s following line that the city is already infected and as a result “they will make the City shake” (6.18-19) has been interpreted to mean the rioters – the native English who have been infected by the alien presence – will

shake the city “with civil disturbance” (Kermode 83) or they will “catch the ‘disease’ of sedition, and turn the City into convulsions” (Jowett 182). But to make the city shake is more than simply causing civil disturbance because the word “shake,” uttered in this context, denotes the physical symptom of palsy. Early moderns are familiar with the common illness, “shaky palsy” and the condition is also used as an adjective, “palsy-shaking” (*OED* 3c), so the correlation between “shake” and palsy would likely have been made by an early modern audience.^{14,15}

Jowett offers an additional interpretation which is more in accordance with my own; the shaking of the city refers to “the palsy [that] will be so widespread that the City itself will seem to shake” (182). The city’s constituents are its people; if the people suffer from palsy, which is a kind of paralysis that inhibits voluntary movement, then the city will also suffer in a similar way. The city’s paralysis could be a faltering economy, overcrowding, poverty – “civil illnesses” that would be a result of a “shaken” city. Therefore, the word “shake” does not only imply a city shaken by an insurrection caused by rioters; it can also be a city shaken by its sick residents whose paralysis prevents the city from functioning successfully.

Lincoln’s closing line following his remark about making the city shake begins with “Which,” a relative clause that refers to the preceding line about the city that will shake. The relative clause is, “Which partly comes through the eating of parsnips” (6.19-20). Therefore, Lincoln argues that the city’s shaking will partially be a result of eating parsnips. If we are to

¹⁴ John Donne makes mention of it in his *Obsequies to the Lord Harrington*: “Doth each mismotion and distemper feele, / Whose hand gets shaking palsies,” (l. 132-133).

¹⁵ From the *OED*, palsy-shaking: J. Marston, *Hist. Antonio & Mellida* (1602): “As if you held the palsey shaking head / Of reeling chauce, vnder your fortunes belt” (*Induct.* sig. A3).

accept that the city's shaking is a symptom of palsy, and therefore this palsy is partly a result of eating parsnips, then the line can be understood as a reference to the physiological process of humoral digestion.

The issue of the foreigners' presence in early modern England is dealt with also in Robert Wilson's highly allegorical play *The Three Ladies of London* (c.1580s), in which the vice characters, significantly, are all immigrants. Kermode argues that the death of the character Hospitality indicates the destruction of London since Hospitality is an embodiment of Christian London (65).¹⁶ In fact, it is Usury (who is tellingly of Jewish descent) who murders Hospitality, and this murder implies that the destruction of London is caused by foreign economics infiltrating London. Furthermore, Hospitality's rejection of any strangers to dinner, Kermode argues, "strongly suggests the rejection of any aliens from the table" as well as it "suggests the rejection of *any* influence that may bring corruption to the hospitable house" (65). Hospitality, by its very nature, is an act that necessarily involves receiving or bringing in others (in order to eat, or find lodging). Here, I contend, Hospitality is like the humoral body and the uninvited strangers are like the foreign or foul food particles that, when ingested – or invited – would corrupt the hospitable body. It cannot be a coincidence that the threatened and eventual death of Hospitality – the conversion of a purely Christian (Protestant) London to a heterogeneous city – is figured in terms of food /eating. I will return to this play in more detail in my second chapter where I discuss notions of English hospitality and its complications when forced to deal with religious others.

¹⁶ See Daryl Palmer's *Hospitable Performances: Dramatic Genre and Cultural Practices in Early Modern England*, in which he states "Hospitality defined life in London" (32).

While in *Sir Thomas More* native Englishmen scoff at the idea of consuming a foreign vegetable, other plays demonstrate an English desire and pursuit of exotic goods, which Ben Jonson satirizes in *The Alchemist* and *Every Man Out of His Humor*, where, respectively, Sir Epicure Mammon fantasizes about the acquisition of foreign luxury products (2.2.71-87) and Puntarvolo intends to bring back a “Turk’s mustachio” (4.3.36). While the latter play does not mention foreign foodstuffs as a threat to the English constitution, it does suggest that the acquisition of foreign goods can destabilize one’s English identity, even threaten the consumer to “turn Turk,” as Justin Kolb has argued in his analysis of the effect of Anglo-Islamic traffic on the characters in *Every Man Out*. Kolb argues that the real threat of turning Turk in this play is not because of any actual interaction with Turks (since there are no Turk characters present); rather, it is a result of “the problem of maintaining one’s humor in a city where exotic commodities . . . are the real perils” (198). Puntarvolo, like the other characters, must attempt to preserve his “affected humor,” but the pressures of urban life – understood partly as a result of Anglo-Islamic traffic and the commodities imported to England as a result – cause him to lose control which is “akin to his turn[ing] Turk” (3.4.13). In other words, the prevalence of imported Turkish commodities threatens Puntarvolo’s humor (understood here as character) in a way that undoes his Englishness.

This exchange between England and the Islamic East has a profound effect on early modern England and what it means to be English. Imported commodities from Muslim countries were “shaping how people in Britain lived their lives” (Matar and MacLean 202). Whether they were ready or not, Anglo-Islamic traffic forced the English to question their insular attitudes toward their supposed enemy and manage their fears in the wake of ever-

increasing contact, whether through foreign products or persons coming into London.

Anglo-Islamic Traffic

Despite some moralists who railed against imported Islamic commodities, early modern England continued to seek economic power by increasing its contact with the Islamic East. Scholarship in this field – England’s place in “global traffic” in the early modern period – has now been well established with ground breaking work by Matar, Gerald MacLean, Jonathan Burton, Matthew Dimmock, Daniel Vitkus, Jerry Brotton, Lisa Jardine, Linda McJannet, and others. This is a time, during the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when England had not yet achieved imperial power. “To be successful players on the stage of global trade,” Vitkus writes, the English “would need to deal, from a position of humility and submission, with Muslim rulers and the heterogeneous mixture of Mediterranean (and later, Asian) maritime commerce” (31-32). In order to participate in global traffic, the English would have to embrace relations with Muslims at home, at sea, and in the Islamic world.

Developing and nurturing political and commercial ties with Muslims necessarily involved food, either as tokens of diplomacy or means of survival. As a result, all parties involved had to contend with their own notions of food and faith while simultaneously interacting with, even accepting and welcoming, the other. For the first time in England’s history, Muslim delegates were welcomed as visitors in London and such visits included shared meals and gifts of particular foodstuffs.¹⁷ In the Islamic world, English merchants, travelers, factors, consuls, and chaplains meet with Muslims and Jews, and here too, they had

¹⁷ According to Matar, the first Muslim delegates to ever arrive in London came in 1551. This visit included “two Moores, being noble men, whereof one was of the Kings blood” (qtd. in Matar *Turks* 33).

to adapt their complicated notions of food to surviving and earning a living in a foreign place. Chapter Two, on hospitality, explores in further detail how these interactions played out and the measures that were taken to maintain identities while managing fears.

Indeed, over the course of the seventeenth century, foreign imports became more and more accessible to Londoners in general. McJannet's essay on domesticating Eastern commodities focuses not on the reception of goods but rather on the "*availability* of imports that had previously been restricted to the aristocracy by law or by costliness" (219). Her work demonstrates the vast extent to which "exotic" spices were integrated into seventeenth-century London to the extent that certain spiced foods were identified with particular London neighbourhoods (220). In the six plays McJannet studies, she notes that "goods from the Islamic East are appropriated to domestic uses and integrated into the life of middle- and lower-class Londoners" (232). At the same time, however, religious critics railed against these "heathen" imports, and foreign commodities entering England were metaphorically described and perceived as diseases infiltrating and contaminating the health of the English body politic, as Jonathan Gil Harris has demonstrated in *Sick Economies*. Thus England paradoxically required and rejected contact with the Islamic East.

Of course Anglo-Islamic traffic extended well beyond acquiring foreign goods. Despite anti-travel warnings and fears of contamination, interactions with Turks and Moors proliferated during this period: "thousands of Turks and Moors visited and traded in English and Welsh ports; hundreds were captured on the high seas and brought to stand trial in English courts; scores of ambassadors and emissaries dazzled the London populace with their charm, cuisine and 'Araby' horses" (Matar *Turks* 5). Matar and MacLean's work on Anglo-Islamic relations goes on to explain in detail both real and imagined meetings that took place

between Muslims and the English. For example, they outline a series of the first Moroccan and Turkish ambassadors to ever visit England in the years 1551, 1579, 1580, 1583, 1589, 1595, 1600 and onward. The visit by the Moroccan Mohammad ‘Annouri (known as “Hamet Xarife”) in 1600 and the one by a Turkish “Chiause” in 1640 are of special interest for my thesis since records show that food played a significant role in these visits, which I analyse in detail in the next chapter.

The increase in cultural encounters between the English and religious and national others produced anxieties about the potential breakdown, or blurring, of religious and national boundaries, a breakdown that, many feared, could lead to religious conversion by English men and women turning Turk. This blurring echoes the breakdown of religious distinctions at the site of the humoral body, because of the body’s perceived permeability and fluidity in humoral theory. Because the early modern humoral body did not yet separate mind from soul from body, religious conversion necessarily involved all three; it was simultaneously physical and spiritual. The dual nature of conversion meant that anything that could alter or affect the internal, *physical* body – especially food – suddenly became charged with new, spiritual meaning. Thus, as the English increased their participation in global traffic, they became increasingly worried about the religious and national implications of foreign food becoming a part of daily life in England.

Yet fear of foreignness and religious conversion does not tell the whole story of this liminal point in time for England. As increasingly international commercial traffic shifted the cultural dynamics of England, and as the English were forced to confront more and more foreignness, both in peoples and in products, other changes in England heading into the middle of the seventeenth century were taking place as well, and beginning to shift attitudes

toward the “other.” It is beyond the scope of this thesis to survey all the shifts in politics, religion, and science, though it behooves me to acknowledge that such changes – the English Revolution (1640-1660), the admittance of Jews in 1655, the establishment of Gresham College (1640s-50s) and later the Royal Society (1660) – contributed in their own inadvertent ways to more tolerant, even accepting, attitudes toward others. The changes in scientific thought are particularly concerning for my argument here, since I would like to suggest that the eventual decline of Galenic medicine (including humoral theory) in some ways influenced English attitudes as they finally became more open toward religious and national others. If the premise that food could influence the soul (which is based essentially on humoral logic) was challenged, then the fear that eating with religious others or eating the “wrong” foods could threaten one’s faith no longer needed to exist.

The decline of humoral theory cannot be attributed to any single cause, and neither did it happen suddenly. Among the earliest works to depart from Galenism is Andreas Vesalius’ work, *On the Fabric of the Human Body* (1543), which greatly advanced studies of human anatomy by looking at human dissections, as opposed to Galenic anatomy which was based on animals. Although it would take a little over a century for scientific developments to seriously undermine Galenism, “Galen’s authority was shaken” as a result of Vesalius’ criticism (Temkin 141). William Harvey’s discovery of the circulation of blood in 1628 has also been cited as a cause for the decline of Galenism especially because the dietetic orientation of Galenic medicine could not explain why blood was present in the arteries. Other opponents of humoral theory and Galenic medicine in general were Paracelsus and his successor van Helmont, whose focuses rested on chemical principles (salt, sulphur, mercury, and water) rather than the four humors. In fact Paracelsian medicine “became popular with

reformers” in the Civil War period because of its medical theory and Christian ethic (Wear *Knowledge* 39). Another important figure in the years leading up to the establishment of the Royal Society in 1660 is Nicholas Culpeper, a “political and medical radical” who sided with the Parliamentarians in the Civil War, and whose opinions favoured chemical rather than humoral medicine (Wear 355). Culpeper was the “foremost populariser and translator of medical texts of the late 1640s and the 1650s,” and his “brand of medical radicalism had a wide readership,” although “it was not until the 1660s that there was a clear threat to Galenic medicine” (355-56). These are but a few brief examples of what is actually a complex trajectory of the rise and fall of medical philosophies in the period.

My aim here in what follows is to chronicle the anxieties around food and religious difference that shaped England during the late Elizabethan and Jacobean periods, to explain the importance of food, eating, and metaphors of culinary consumption to shifting English understandings of religious difference at this time, as well as to demonstrate that, as England expanded its global presence during the early seventeenth century, the country also experienced an expansion in thought that consequently, although slowly, changed the way England would ultimately perceive religious others. For instance, we can see a clear shift in the reception of the Moroccan ambassador, Xarife, who visited Queen Elizabeth I in 1600, and the Turkish chiaus who visited King Charles I in 1640. In Chapter Two, I describe in detail how the former visitor and his retinue were ostracized, in part, due to their eating practices, while the latter’s religious diet was accommodated and accepted. I am suggesting that the shift in reception over this forty-year gap could be accounted for by the changing attitudes of the English, emerging as they were, from a scientific and political revolution. However, to be clear, this reluctant change in attitude was certainly not universal. Certainly

some remained obstinate in their worldview, as evidenced by the late-seventeenth century treatises against coffee despite England's first coffee house being established in 1650, "by a Jew named Jacob" in Oxford, and coffee's growing popularity thereafter (Cowan 25).

By calling attention to the permeable English body, and especially to its susceptibility to "foreignness" via diet and ingestion, I am suggesting also that religious conversion could potentially happen in private – at one's dinner table, in one's own home –without the presence of religious others. The frightening possibility of religious conversion via humoral changes even in the homes of English Protestants indicates the commensurability of Protestants and religious others. At the level of humoral physiology, each individual – whether Christian or Muslim or Jew – is the same, each comprised of the same essential humors. Rabshake's comments in the opening epigraph of this thesis about a Turk's gouty legs or a Jew's fiery nose goes to show that both bodies are equally susceptible to physical change on the basis of their faith. More significantly, his comment reveals that the early modern English were aware of just how similar they really were to others – something initially terrifying, but perhaps ultimately manageable for the nation. When Rabshake states that inner faith can be detected outwardly, he speaks from the early modern putative understanding that faith is maintained on a psychophysiological level.

Chapter 2

Early Modern Hospitality: Controlling Religious Boundaries in England and the Islamic World

In the 1630s Caleb Dalechamp preached the ways hospitality ought to be practised by Englishmen; he emphasized that it was a Christian virtue to extend kindness to all, including non-Christian strangers:

Love and kindnesse we ow to all strangers which are come amongst us; and though we know not the purpose of their hearts, yet we must do good unto them for the proportion of their bodies A Jew, a Turk, a Pagan, or any other infidel, deserves to be respected and relieved in his necessities, though not for his manners, yet for his manhood, for his communion and fellowship in the same nature with us (sig. F)

Other religious tracts, commonplace books, and sermons also frequently endorsed hospitality to everyone, but despite these efforts, as Felicity Heal has shown, “there is little to suggest that the English were moved by powerful sentiments of fear, fascination, or hope of reciprocity, to be kind to ordinary outsiders” (*Hospitality* 222). Kindness to strangers “never seem[s] to accord very closely with English perceptions of the alien” (“Idea” 76). Thus Christian hospitality toward strangers seemed to exist only in principle.

Dalechamp’s sentiments are relevant to this chapter because I am interested in the way hospitality functions when it involves religious others in early modern England and the Islamic East. According to Dalechamp and his co-religionists who share similar views, hospitality seems simple enough: it warrants an openness to or acceptance of

eating and lodging with religious others. This simple notion of hospitality, however, overlooks the complexities that arise from fears of assimilation and religious conversion, political and economic urgency, travel etiquette, and the necessity to maintain diplomatic ties and adhere to religious tenets, all of which are consequences of the increasing cultural encounters between England and the Islamic East. In efforts to maintain political and commercial links to the powerful Islamic world, England necessarily became involved in the global marketplace. As a result of this diplomacy and trade, Muslims started to appear on English soil just as Englishmen travelled to Islamic lands; this was the first time Englishmen had to confront Muslims in their own country. The English thus faced a precarious challenge: to simultaneously maintain diplomatic ties with Muslims while managing fears and anxieties of threatened religious and national identities.¹⁸

Studying hospitality allows us to learn more about these intercultural relationships and the way they were managed because England, for the first time in its history, necessarily had to play the roles of hosts to Muslim visitors and guests to Muslim hosts. Not surprisingly, the English took to the dramatic stage to play out these various scenarios, which were partly influenced by what the playwrights knew and partly what the playwrights thought ought to happen. After all, there was no precedence of Muslims on English soil; how they were to be received was a matter of curiosity, speculation, and prejudice. That the real cultural encounters would influence dramatic ones and vice versa is a notion set out by performance studies theorists Richard Schechner and Victor Turner.

¹⁸ Muslims in this context refer to both Turks (from the Ottoman Empire) and Moors (from North Africa). Since early modern Britons called Muslims “Turks” I use the term interchangeably with Muslims unless to specify that the characters or individuals are from the northern region of Africa, in which case I use Moor.

I will draw on their work on rituals, in addition to Judith Butler's work on performativity, since, as we will see, hospitality is itself a kind of social performance whereby participants act in a prescribed way so as to make meaning: to develop an intercultural relationship while safeguarding religious and national identities.

Because the English feared religious and cultural assimilation (and/or conversion) upon increasing contact with Muslims, their eventual involvement in hospitality with Muslims was driven by a consciousness to control boundaries. Hospitality was therefore a marker of faith negotiation underscored by the looming threat of religious conversion. At the same time, hospitality was a necessary means to establish and maintain diplomacy, so it was also always a transaction – a giving and receiving on the parts of the hosts and guests to serve their own interests.¹⁹ In order to participate in shared meals (as a means for personal, economic, or political gain) while simultaneously managing one's fear of assimilation or religious conversion, I argue that early moderns sought to be in control of the shared meal. That is, the willingness to eat with religious others depends on the consumer's *control* of the meal; one is far likelier to eat with religious other(s) if he knows with certainty the nature of particular variables that govern that meal: the time or

¹⁹ This exchange between host and guest is what Derrida would call conditional hospitality, which is “circumscribed with law and duty” where there is a limitation on hospitality (*Of Hospitality* 135). The opposite he calls unconditional or absolute hospitality, which “dispenses law, duty, or even politics” (135). Absolute hospitality requires the host to give up all they have without asking for anything in return and without imposing any restrictions on the guest. In this sense absolute hospitality is “inconceivable and incomprehensible” (*Acts* 362).

day of the meal (Lent or Ramadan, for instance); the actual foodstuffs (will they serve pork or beef?); and the social and economic status of the other partakers of the meal.

Moreover, food is a convenient trope for playwrights to articulate the loss or gain of control because food is absolutely necessary to survive. The absence of food (starvation) renders one completely desperate and vulnerable, causing him to succumb to the one who has food and who is therefore inevitably in control (I will return to the idea of starvation in my discussion of *Tamburlaine* and *Selimus*). In this case, having control of a situation that involves religious others and food not only confirms one's own sense of security but also gives the one in control the power to threaten or influence the other. This is true even when the other is not starving but is nonetheless at the mercy of his or her host, such as when the Jewish guests described in Holinshed's *Chronicles* (1587) discovered they had been fooled by their Christian host and ate pork instead of fish (as I describe in Chapter Three). In this example, the Jewish guests, in an attempt to gain control of the situation, went running home and induced themselves to vomit so as to physically remove the impermissible meat from their digestive systems.

In the first half of this chapter I look at examples of Muslims arriving in England as well as the presence of Englishmen in Islamic lands, where hospitality brings Muslims and Christians together, often, but not always, to serve each party's own political, economic, and religious agenda. In these accounts meals are more often willingly shared (particularly in the Islamic world) although precautions are taken to ensure that religious and cultural boundaries remain intact by exerting some control while yet avoiding offense to religious others.

In the second half I discuss dramatic representations of hospitality where we seldom see characters of differing faiths willingly eat together for the sake of conviviality. In the plays I study here, shared meals between religious others (or references to them), even when they are done in a more positive and inclusive manner, are almost always shadowed by the possibility of transgressing religious boundaries in a way that gestures toward apostasy or conversion. This does not mean the plays unequivocally disparage the idea of eating with religious others since some plays portray more positive and accommodating scenes engaging religious others around food. Instead, the range of scenes – from overtly cruel and sinister to inclusive and accommodating – serves as a kind of caution: participating in meals with religious others must be done at one’s own risk since eating together may lead to conversion.

Anna Suranyi’s work on early modern travel writing argues that English national identity emerged partly as a result of travel literature written by Englishmen who wrote about the manners, customs, and beliefs of other countries. These travel writers contributed to England’s sense of being distinct from other nations. Suranyi’s research into numerous travel accounts demonstrates how frequently these writers discussed food (diet, food customs, its preparation, ways of consumption, etc.). Sir Thomas Palmer, for example, instructed travelers to observe diet (in addition to exercise, apparel, and conversation) because observing the diet of others allowed one to ascertain key features of the inner nature of a foreign people (Suranyi 85).

Building on the work of other cultural historians and anthropologists, Suranyi argues that for early modern travelers, “foodways” were a “convenient measure of difference because many encounters with foreigners revolved around purchasing or

consuming (by necessity) food” (86). These writers tended to describe foreign foodways as though they accurately represented an entire nation; their description of foodways was used to characterize people despite existing variations (86). Robert Launay’s essay on food and early European travel narratives argues in much the same vein: by the seventeenth century, Europeans judged other nations based on their food habits as a way to critique others and to articulate their own sense of difference. Looking at the way William Dampier, a Restoration explorer and writer describes the food habits of the Tonkinese (in Vietnam), Launay writes that for Dampier, “Food ... is not only a measure of the difference between Europeans and other peoples, but also a means of evaluating them with respect to one another” (41).

English interpretations of foreign diets, according to Suranyi, were highly subjective as they were influenced by their preconceived judgements of those groups. For example, by comparing English observations of Irish and Ottoman diets, Suranyi notices how the descriptions of Irish diet depict the Irish as barbaric, slovenly, and filthy, while descriptions of Ottoman diet depict the Turks as austere and simple even though both groups share common dietetic features. For instance, both the Irish and Ottomans consumed “cakes” rather than bread and both sat on the ground to eat rather than at tables, but the English perceived each group differently. What Suranyi suggests, therefore, is that foodstuffs do not have any particular value “intrinsic to themselves” such as “tasty” or “disgusting”; rather, the English interpreted the diet of others based on how they already perceived them (87). Since the Ottomans were perceived as militant, mighty, and disciplined, descriptions of their diet were arranged to support such judgments (87).

Indeed the early modern English believed that the moral character of a person correlated with his diet. In Thomas Sprat's *Observations on Monsieur De Sorbier* (1665), he compares English food to French, but in his comparison he makes a direct connection between diet and character: "I cannot but say to the advantage of boil'd beef and roast, that the English have the same sincerity in their diet, which they have in their manners: and as they have less mixture in their dishes, so they have less sophisticate [deceptive] compositions in their hearts, than the people of some other nations" (qtd. in Suranyi 89). By contrasting English cultural practices to those of other nations, "travel writers sought to delineate/demarcate the boundaries of a still contested and unstable model of English identity" (105). That identity, I contend, is constantly called into question when two or more parties cross cultural boundaries in the practice of hospitality. If the English articulated national and religious difference through their observations of other diets (and, as I discussed in Chapter One, diet was a key marker of national and religious identity), then what were the stakes in participating in a host-guest relationship when the other party belonged to a different nation and religion?

Hospitality in England

My assessment of English hospitality toward Muslims in early modernity depends on groundbreaking research by Nabil Matar and Gerald MacLean, who have collaborated to publish *Britain and the Islamic World* (2011), the most comprehensive study of Anglo-Islamic relations between 1558 and 1713 to date. Matar's earlier monograph, *Turks, Moors & Englishmen in the Age of Discovery*, also contributes greatly toward understanding the presence of Muslims in early modern England, and it is his chapter on

“Turks and Moors in England” which provides us with the first step toward discussing hospitality between the English and Muslims during this period.

Housing for Muslims in England during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries varied from outright rejection to grand, ceremonial treatment. Hospitality, when it was offered, depended on the circumstance and social position of the Muslim foreigner. Matar has neatly categorized the presence of Muslims in early modern England into three groups: a) freed slaves (refugees) and merchants; b) ambassadors; and c) prisoners/captives. In the case of the first group, Matar states that there is no information for how they lived in England or how they were supported (*Turks* 21). In an effort to maintain good relations with both Moors and Turks, Queen Elizabeth ensured that Muslim slaves were released from captured Spanish galleys. Some of these slaves returned to their home countries by the help of English fleet commanders who offered them, according to Hakluyt, “apparel,” “money,” “and all other necessaries” including “a barke, and a Pilot” in order “to see them freely and safely conveyed [sic] into Barbary” (516). For those who chose to remain in England, some enlisted in the military while others converted to Anglicanism, although conversions were made “only by a handful” since Queen Elizabeth preferred to return Muslim captives in order to maintain amicable relations with both Ottoman and Moroccan rulers (*Turks* 21).

Among this first category of Muslims were also merchants, although Matar has noted that distinguishing between freed slave and merchant is not always possible due to the brevity of allusions to them (21). Nevertheless, Matar lists several examples of Turks (who were not prisoners) that passed through England in the first half of the seventeenth century. Queen Elizabeth’s openness toward Muslims, of course, was a result of her

desire to advance Britain's economic and military pursuits; thus the "English accommodation of Muslims was invariably conducted with an eye to trade" (23). Here, hospitality towards Muslims – insofar as England cooperated openly with Muslims – functioned on a national level only because England expected something in return (as did the Ottomans and North African regencies).

Hospitality on the national level is no better exemplified than through England's accommodation of foreign ambassadors. This second category of Muslims that England encountered was unlike the freed slaves, pirates, prisoners, and visiting merchants the English encountered elsewhere because Muslim ambassadors "arrived in pomp and enjoyed the protection of the monarch, and therefore could and did practice their religious observances openly, abide by their dietary rules, and appear in their national dress with its conspicuous turban" (32). Unlike the other two categories of Muslims who were ostracized, jailed, rejected, or struggled while living in England (and therefore could not openly practise their faith), these Muslim delegations, wealthy and powerful as they were, received royal treatment: in 1589, a retinue of Barbary Company members, "well mounted all on horseback" escorted Ahmed Belkassem, a Moroccan ambassador, into London (qtd. in *Turks* 33). Six years later, another ambassador, al-Caid Ahmed ben Adel, was accompanied by "twenty five or thirtye persons" (qtd. *Turks* 33). Records also show that in 1618, a "chiaus" or Turkish messenger was received by the king at the Banqueting House which "was purposely hung for him with rich hangings" (qtd. *Turks* 34). Similarly, in 1640, a chiaus accompanied by several Turkish followers visited London and was received at the Banqueting House, which was also "purposely" decorated for him (qtd. *Turks* 37).

Each time a Muslim ambassador visited England he brought with him something valuable for the English monarch: the Turkish envoy in 1579 conveyed a letter from the Ottoman sultan addressed to the queen, which offered “unrestricted commerce in his country to Englishmen” (*Calendar* 2:699). Others brought exotic animals (lions, tigers, horses) to be given as gifts. And perhaps the most welcomed of all were the 366 British captives that were brought with the Moroccan ambassador, Alkaid Jaurar bin Abdella, in 1637. Matar describes this particular visit as one that was unprecedented by any other Muslim ambassador as it caused “such commotion...that soon after his arrival the London populace was able to read about the official welcome for the ambassador in a publication” (36). When he arrived at Tower Hill, “over a hundred aldermen and citizens of the city were there to welcome him, dressed in their ‘scarlet gowns’ and ‘chaynes of gold,’ in a spectacle that was ‘attended by Thousands, and ten Thousands of Spectators’” (36). He was the head of a procession that paraded his wealth and authority and was thus the “first visit of a Muslim given detailed coverage in the London press” (35). Matar suggests that one of the reasons why Alkaid’s visit made such a commotion is because he brought hundreds of British captives who were able to return to their families.

Superficially, it seems that hospitality took place during these ambassadorial visits since Muslim guests, who were generous to bring expensive gifts, were received by Christian hosts who welcomed them ceremoniously. However, the exchange existed only to further advance both parties economically. These exchanges between Muslim guests and Christian hosts indicate the extent to which hospitality functioned as a transaction; it was a means through which to maintain diplomacy, gain leverage for negotiation purposes, and display wealth and power. The political nature of such visits, therefore,

places a heavy condition on hospitality. Would the British monarch welcome Muslim delegates if they had nothing to gain? Even King James I, who was notoriously anti-Muslim, had hosted Turkish messengers at the Banqueting House.

In fact records show evidence of problems (even hostility) arising from such visits, which indicates that despite hospitality on the national level (the English monarch hosting Muslim delegates for the benefit of England as a nation), the English looked toward these Muslim visitors with caution, intimidation, fear, and scorn. The Moroccan ambassador, “Hamet Xarife,” visited England in 1600 with fifteen other Moroccans who stayed at the Royal Exchange for six months.²⁰ They practised their faith for the length of their visit; for six months, therefore, Britons saw Xarife and his retinue in their strange attire, heard them speak their strange language, and watched them practise their strange customs. Matar’s research shows that one of the problems these Moroccans faced concerned their diet. Since according to Islamic law they could eat only *halal* (religiously permissible) meat, they had to slaughter animals themselves. As one Londoner observed: “They kild all their owne meate within their house, as sheepe, lambes, poultrie and such like, and they turn their faces eastward when they kill any thing” (qtd. in *Turks* 34). Their racial, national, and religious difference was constantly realized. Unsurprisingly, they “alienated the Elizabethan community” (34) such that when it was time to leave, John Chamberlain said “the merchants nor mariners will...carrie them into Turkie, because they thincke yt a matter odious and scandalous to the world to be too friendly or familiar with infidels” (*Chamberlain* 1:108). Although Xarife and his fellow Muslim companions

²⁰ Hamet Xarife is his Anglicanized name; his birth name is ‘Abd al-Wahid bin Mas’ood bin Mohammad ‘Annouri.

attended royal celebrations and travelled around the city, the English perception of these visitors (such as Chamberlain's or the Londoner's observation of their butchering practices) indicate that these Muslims hardly assimilated into London culture at all.

Over the next forty years and onward, England underwent many social and political changes including three different monarchs, increasing contact with the rest of the world including America, and as I discussed in Chapter One, changes in science and medicine. These major shifts in the seventeenth century forced the English to rethink their insular attitudes toward outsiders since competing in the global marketplace and surviving at home became a matter of managing perceptions of difference. Thus in 1640, some forty years after Xarife's visit, one "Chiause" who visited the court of King Charles I received a far more hospitable and accepting welcome; this event demonstrated a more progressive, interactive, and integrated relationship between the English and the Muslim visitor. More information is known about this visit since it was documented by John Finet, the Master of Ceremonies (1628-1641). Finet had sent the Chiause some sweetmeats and received "dishes of meat dressed a la Turkeska" in return (*Ceremonies* 294). In describing this exchange of food, Finet provides a significant detail: "I would not hazard the sending of flesh to him for the doubt I was told the Turks have of being deceyved, either of malice or ignorance, when Christians in that manner present them" (294). The Turks' suspicion of meat from the hands of Christians indicates the potential early modern use of food to further wedge a difference between the two groups. However, if the meat was presented out of ignorance of Islamic dietary laws, then the gesture could nonetheless be regarded as hospitable and kind. In Finet's case, his caution not to send meat is a hospitable and considerate act, and so too was the dinner invitation

he coordinated with the Chiause on behalf of the Lord Marshall and Lord Chamberlaine shortly before he was to depart for home:

the lord marshall and the lord chamberlin, having understood from me and others the different and savorous manner of dressing his diet by his own servants a la Turkeska, bespake, and had, a diner at his house (bringing thither 7 or 8 other great lords) in so plentyful and so unusuall a mesure and manner, both Turkish and English (the Chiaus himself being seated upper most at the tables end) as the merchants, at whose charge it was prepared, observing theyre content of appetite, and doubting what charge from the prayse they gave it other lords might per adventure follow it, made haste to set him going and finally dimisst him hence (295)

Here, both Christians and Muslims willingly sat at the same table and enjoyed together the same meal. The Christians were guests at the Chiause's residence but they were simultaneously hosts since they initiated the dinner invitation, paid for the expenses, and arranged for the Turkish servants to prepare the meal. In this uniquely recorded instance, both Christians and Muslims were hospitable toward each other. Matar glosses this scenario with the note that food "played a major part in bringing the Christians and the Muslims together" (*Turks* 38), which is certainly the case, but there is more: in a leap toward religious toleration, the Christians acknowledged and accommodated their guests' difference by ensuring that the food served at dinner was prepared by Turkish servants, so that no doubt was raised as to whether or not the meat was permissible. But the significance of this meal does not primarily have to do with the fact that Turkish cuisine was served. The series of acts leading up to and including the meal – the exchange of

foods as gifts, securing a dinner invitation, ensuring that Turkish servants prepare the meal, covering the expenses of the meal, and seating the Chiause at the head of the table – are all performative acts that contribute to a particular meaning. In this case, the meal not only signifies that the Christians and Muslims ate together at the same table, but more importantly it demonstrates that both Christians and Muslims recognized their differences, overcame them (at least in this instance), and then enjoyed the meal that ensued.

At this meal, developing or nurturing positive relations, maintaining one's own religious and national identity, and negotiating difference, are all at stake. Therefore everything involved in its production – all the performative acts – are intended to achieve these goals. That performative acts contribute to a particular meaning is nothing new. Judith Butler applied the theory in relation to gender, which she argued is constructed through a performance of various acts over time that signify, culturally, a particular gender. These acts are not unique to themselves but can be understood as a “ritualized production, a ritual reiterated under and through constraint, under and through the force of prohibition and taboo, with the threat of ostracism and even death controlling and compelling the shape of the production” (95). Butler's use of the words “ritualized” and “ritual” here is important because it connects with the concept of rituals found elsewhere in performance theory (studies by Victor Turner and Richard Schechner in particular) where rituals consist of a series of acts that produce some kind of change. We can read the dinner with the Chiause as a kind of ritual, which plays a critical role in the larger “social drama” (Turner) in which the English meet the Turks in order to form a positive relationship without compromising each individual group's religious or cultural identity.

Schechner explains that we incorporate rituals in our day-to-day lives such as our “waking-up rituals, mealtime rituals, greeting rituals, parting rituals ...in order to smooth out and moderate most of our ongoing social life. Understanding how these rituals operate gives us an insight into basic human interactions” (87). Because the Turkish presence in England was relatively new even in 1640, studying the performative acts that comprise the ritual of banquets and shared meals between these religious others is a useful method by which to learn more about these social dramas or interfaith interactions. Studying social dramas is also useful for the purpose of this chapter because it directly affects theatrical performances or what Schechner calls “aesthetic dramas.” According to Schechner, there is a fluid relationship between social drama and aesthetic drama whereby each affects the other: “the visible actions of any given social drama are informed, shaped, and guided by aesthetic principles and performance/rhetorical devices. Reciprocally, a culture’s visible aesthetic practices are informed, shaped, and guided by the processes of social interaction” (76). According to this theory, the dinner accommodation for the Chiause is quite possibly influenced by *A Christian Turned Turk* (1612), in which Benwash, a Jewish man married to a Muslim, explicitly announces that he and his wife would put aside any interfering religious or customary observances in order to accommodate Ward, the Christian pirate, at dinner. And conversely, plays such as *Tamburlaine* in which characters are averse to anything that brings them in close proximity to the manners of Turks might influence the way Londoners looked in disdain (as they learned from the drama) to Hamet Xarife and his retinue during their visit in 1600.

Even though the English accommodated the Chiause's diet and the occasion was a hospitable one, there was still a condition on the hospitality. As we know, Muslim delegates were suspicious of accepting meat from Christians lest they consumed *haram* (religiously impermissible) food. Would the Chiause have participated in the feast if the Christians had prepared the meal? Since early modern Muslims and Jews adhered to strict dietary laws, many were likely willing to eat with others only when they were in control (such as being hosts) of the meal, or when they knew with certainty the religious permissibility of the food that would be served. The Chiause's willingness to eat with the Christians was based on his knowing with certainty that the food would be *halal*; why this event is so unique and exciting is that the English used their control to accommodate rather than reject the Muslims' dietary restrictions.

The third group of Muslims encountered by the English at home were prisoners who, needless to say, received no hospitable welcome. Just as the English monarch and the rulers of the Islamic empires were developing and maintaining commercial and diplomatic ties, piracy between the English and Muslim nations was happening concurrently; captured Muslims were brought to England as prisoners. If they were not put to death, these Muslim captives were sent to English jails. Matar notes one Francis Bassett, sheriff and vice admiral of Cornwall, who wrote in a letter dated June 1626 that he desired to rid himself of the Muslim prisoners he had in custody. They were either too sick or too old to be put to any use, and "they were totally ostracized by the populace" (26). In other instances, former prisoners ended up wandering the streets of London as beggars, while others escaped or were released.

One record from the British State Papers shows that in 1627 forty Turks were employed as tailors, shoemakers, menders, button makers, and one was a solicitor (30). It is not known from where or why these Muslims ended up in England, but “if they actually settled in London,” Matar points out, “they would correspond to the artisans, skilled workers, small merchants, and other European immigrants who had settled in England during this period, and who did so for purposes of commercial gain” (30). No further information exists about this group of Muslims however, Matar speculates that these Muslims might be the group to whom the anonymous writer in 1641 is referring when he describes how there are “29 sects here in London” which includes “Mahometans” (sig. A3v).

The contrast between Muslim prisoners and the Turkish and Moroccan ambassadors indicates the degree to which hospitality depended on commercial and political gain. With the power of wealth and nobility, the English monarch and noblemen could afford to participate in an exchange with Muslim ambassadors (by offering gifts, hosting banquets, hiring entertainment); they were in a position of control that enabled them to welcome these Muslims, like the Lord Marshall and Lord Chamberlain who used their power and wealth to accommodate the Chiause. But English commoners, on the other hand, who were themselves struggling to survive (they struggled with food shortages and overcrowding, for example) had nothing to gain from Muslim prisoners. As for the employed Muslims such as the “forty” living in London in 1627, we simply do not yet know enough about the extent to which they received hospitality (if they received any at all). But if we recall Felicity Heal’s assertion that kindness to strangers “never seem[s] to accord very closely with English perceptions of the alien” (“Idea” 76), then we can

speculate that these Muslims likely never received the kind of hospitality that preachers such as Caleb Dalechamp or George Wheler urged his countrymen to practice. I will return to this topic of English hospitality and immigrants in my discussion of *The Three Ladies of London*, a play in which English-Christian hospitality is directly threatened by a merchant whose parents are, significantly, Jews.

Since the Ottomans were an increasingly expanding empire and the North African pirates threatened British navigation, Muslims from both regions were perceived as a powerful and menacing threat that intimidated the English at home. In John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* (1563), to which he added "The History of the Turks," he offered a prayer invoking God to destroy the Turkish empire (122). According to Matar and MacLean, Foxe's *Acts* was "the most popular sixteenth-century tome, after the Bible" (26), and with "every re-publication of the book, the anti-Christian violence and danger of the Muslims was further consolidated in the minds and hearts of Anglican congregations" (27). But even with these anti-Muslim sentiments it should be made clear that attitudes toward the Ottoman Empire in early modernity, as MacLean stresses in his *The Rise of Oriental Travel*, "were not uniformly hostile or as fearful as have often been led to believe by followers of the school of Richard Knolles, who, in 1603, declared the Ottomans to be 'the present terror of the world'" (sig. Br).

There was much that the English greatly admired about the Ottomans, not least of which was their immense wealth and military power. Both MacLean and Matar emphasize that "life within the Islamic Mediterranean offered an enormously attractive alternative to life in the British Isles" (xiv). The more positive opinions, however, are largely from those Englishmen who actually travelled to the Islamic world than the ones

who remained in England and generally learned of Muslims only through the works of playwrights and preachers.

The English aversion to intermingling with foreigners in England may be understood as a need to preserve “Englishness,” but what did these Britons do when they travelled to the Islamic East or other parts of the European continent where they met with non-Protestant others such as Jewish and Catholic communities? Despite resounding caution in anti-travel literature that specifically warned against religious conversion or apostasy, Britons for various reasons nevertheless chose to travel eastward. During their travels, the need to find food meant they inevitably came face-to-face with religious others in capacities that often involved eating with those others. How did these Britons negotiate their national and religious identities upon contact with religious others? What kind of hospitality was offered to them in the Islamic East and how did they respond?

Hospitality in the Islamic World

The number of Britons who came into contact with Muslims in Northern Africa and the Ottoman Empire far exceeded the number of Muslims who entered Britain in the same period. Whereas Muslim visitors to Britain were limited to ambassadors, captives, and merchants, in the Islamic world Britons came as artisans, chaplains, traders, travellers, seamen, soldiers, as well as captives, ambassadors and royal emissaries. Some left England involuntarily (as captives) but many left voluntarily for various reasons, such as “to conduct business, to seek employment, to visit for weeks, or to settle for years” (Matar *Turks* 43). As one might expect, the range of experiences from ambassadors to slaves produced diverse and complex perspectives of encounters with religious others,

which therefore render a comprehensive assessment of hospitality in the Islamic world difficult. What follows is an attempt to offer a range of examples – from the sultan’s seraglio to the soup kitchens – of when and why hospitality was offered to Britons (among other Europeans) and how it was received.

In his multi-volume *Itinerary* published in 1617, Fynes Moryson described his travels through the continent and the Islamic Mediterranean, observing that “it is well knowne, that the great Turke gives libertie to all Religions” (book 3, 237). Anyone who visited the Islamic East in the early modern period would have seen diverse communities of religious others living together in harmony, something the English and other Europeans found remarkable. “The Turkes compel no man to the denial of his religion” wrote Sebastian Munster in 1572; he described how “diverse sects of people [were] found amongst the Turkes, al whiche do reverence and honour God after their peculiar rites and customes” (41). The English marveled at the fact that Islamic law protects the rights of Christians and Jews to live and practise their faiths freely, and they were impressed to know that Muslims also gave “Almes, not only to Turkes, but also to Christians” (Botero 557). For these Englishmen, it must have been surprising to witness such liberty offered to various religious groups when their own country expelled Jews in 1290 and prohibited business dealings with them. Since “There were no parliamentary debates to change English law so that situations of toleration which obtained among the Ottomans could obtain in the United Kingdom” until the nineteenth century (Matar and MacLean 167), the early modern Englishmen who travelled to the Ottoman Empire seemed impressed with the thriving communities of religious diversity.

In fact the liberty enjoyed by Christian and Jewish communities under Ottoman rule was sanctioned by the Qur'an and *hadith* (prophetic traditions that supplement the Qur'an). And just as the Bible instructs Christians to be kind and charitable to brothers, neighbours, and strangers, so too does the Qur'an, which emphasizes two distinct ways of offering charitable acts: *zakat* and *sadaqa*. Put very simply, the former is obligatory almsgiving, and the latter, which is what this chapter is concerned with, is the voluntary act of giving for the sake of God ("zakat"). But *sadaqa* is not limited to monetary donations. *Sadaqa*, which comes from the Arabic root word, *sadq*, means truth. For a Muslim, the act of *sadaqa* confirms the truth of what he or she proclaims; that is, if he or she claims to believe in God, His messengers, and the Day of Judgement, then he or she must confirm this belief through actions. These actions – doing good deeds, abstaining from evil, taking care of family, being kind and generous to neighbours and strangers, planting a tree, removing something harmful from a road, feeding people – among a list of others, all register as acts of *sadaqa*. In one *hadith* documented by Muhammad al-Bukhari, a ninth-century jurist known to have compiled a canonical collection of authentic *hadith*, *sadaqa* is defined as all acts of goodness: "Jabir (May God be pleased with him) reported that he heard the Messenger of God (may the peace and blessings be upon him) saying, 'Every good deed is *sadaqa*'" (8:73, 50). Therefore *sadaqa* is not merely donating money to charity as is often understood because it is sometimes used synonymously with *zakat*, but rather it governs the way a Muslim interacts with the world – the way he or she conducts him or herself toward God, to his or her family, neighbours, and to the society at large.²¹

²¹ Amy Singer defines *sadaqa* as either "charity," "philanthropy," or "beneficence" and uses these terms

Because *sadaqa* often includes charitable acts of giving along with kindness and generosity toward others, it is often understood to intersect with hospitality. In fact Islamic law includes *al-Diyafah* (the law of hospitality), which stipulates that Muslims must treat their guests cordially (Zaman 54). A *hadith* specifies the terms of hospitable treatment: “He who believes in God and the last day must honour his guest for one day and one night as well as granting him hospitality for three days. More than this is considered *sadaqa*. A guest, then, should not stay longer in order that he might not embarrass his host” (al-Bukhari, 8:73, 48). This *hadith* admits that there is a certain burden on the host when he offers hospitality (after some time), so calling the act *sadaqa* after three days is a means to encourage the host to remain hospitable because engaging in any *sadaqa*, Muslims believe, will be rewarded by God. The point on which to be clear is that hospitality was a virtuous or religious act promoted by Islamic law and it overlapped with *sadaqa*.

Amy Singer also draws the connection between *sadaqa* and hospitality, but she adds “patronage” to this equation especially because of the evident overlap of the three in her study of unique Islamic charitable endowments called *awqaf* (or in the singular, *waqf*). A *waqf*, which is considered a form of *sadaqa*, is an inalienable endowment of property whose purpose is to serve its beneficiaries. It can take many forms such as

interchangeably in her monograph, *Charity in Islamic Societies* (20). Her discussion on *sadaqa*, however, focuses more on “charity” and “philanthropy” and less on the beneficence of doing good deeds that are not usually defined as acts of charity such as offering a kind word to someone or removing something harmful from a road. Singer, therefore, does not discuss *sadaqa* as a general way of living and conducting oneself within society.

establishments of mosques, schools, hospitals, fountains, bridges – any avenue through which to benefit a specified group or groups of people as declared by the founder in a legal document registered by a judge.²²

Common establishments founded as *waqf* in the Ottoman Empire were soup kitchens widely known as *imarets*. These *imarets* provided food, free of charge, to specified groups of people including scholars and teachers, students, dervishes, travellers, serving staff, and the poor. Each group was served in a particular order (high-ranking guests such as the descendants of the Prophet were served first, whereas the poor were often served last) and the quantity of food sometimes differed slightly depending upon the hierarchy of beneficiaries. The kinds of food served and the size and nature of these *imarets* varied depending on the founder's wealth, the geographical location, and the capabilities of the managers and staff (Singer "Soup" 312). For example, Hurrem Sultan (also known as Roxelana), wife of Sultan Suleiman I, established an *imaret* in Jerusalem that was to feed 450 people twice daily, fifty of whom were staff and the rest from the poor and needy. In this case, everyone ate the same soup and bread, although larger servings were reserved for staff and travellers (Singer 311). These large-scale *imarets* that fed hundreds of people were organized and orderly since the *waqf* deed stipulated exactly the mechanisms of such a system – the menu, how much food was to be distributed and to whom, in what order, and where (312).²³

²² For an in depth analysis of *awqaf* see Singer's *Charity in Islamic Societies*, 90-113.

²³ For more on Hurrem Sultan's imaret in Jerusalem see Singer's "Constructing Ottoman Beneficence: An Imperial Soup Kitchen in Jerusalem."

Imarets were not just imperial institutions, for they could also refer to household kitchens. In his multi-volume travel narrative, Evliya Çelebi, the seventeenth-century Ottoman Turk who travelled throughout the Ottoman Empire and surrounding countries, discussed various institutions that fell under the term *imaret* such as dervish lodges, imperial palaces, kitchens attached to mosques, and kitchens in large households. One such household was that of Mehmet Aga, the seventeenth-century imperial Ottoman architect who was appointed by Ahmet I. Aga describes his house as “becoming ‘a public kitchen [imaret] for travellers, free and slave, and equally for the great and the humble and for all neighbours and strangers” (qtd. in Singer, “Soup” 323). These various forms of public kitchens, Singer notes, point to an overlap between generous, wealthy hosts and the distribution of food by endowed *imarets*. Thus Singer makes an important suggestion that we understand the term *imaret* as the *function* of certain buildings rather than the buildings themselves since “the word *imaret* was also used to describe an attitude of generosity” (“Soup” 322). Significantly, and to which Mehmet Aga’s description attests, this generosity of feeding was extended to all, including non-Muslims.

Ottoman generosity and the inclusive nature of its hospitality are mentioned at least twice by Samuel Purchas in *Purchas His Pilgrimage* (1613). In the chapter, “Of the religious places amongst the Turkes,” Purchas describes “Their Hospitals [which] they call Imarets They found them for the reliefe of the poore, and of Travellers, where they have foode allowed them They are open for the most part to all men of all religions” (252). The openness to all men is noted again when he describes other “temples” or “houses . . . for their Doctors and Priests, and for all strangers and pilgrims of any Nation or religion, where they may refresh themselves, their servants, and horses

for three daies, with meate and lodging at free cost” (251). Purchas’ mention of “three daies” is reminiscent of the *hadith* regarding the duration a host ought to offer hospitality, further evidence that the Ottoman Muslims practiced religious tenets on hospitality. Another English traveller, Thomas Herbert, marvelled at the fact that *imarets*, “buildings erected by well-minded Mahometans as works of charity,” welcomed travellers to “rest sweetly and securely gratis” for they were “set apart for public use” (124). Later in the seventeenth century, George Wheler travelled to the Ottoman Empire and wrote about the “Royal Mosque” and nearby college where “any poor man may come, and eat at any time; and on Fridays, be feasted with Rice” (sig. Ee4v). Heath Lowry’s article on the early Ottoman *imarets* offers more evidence to confirm that “Ottoman charity was available to all, regardless of religion” (74). The “clearest testimony” (74) of this universality, Lowry states, is a chronicle written by Theodore Spandugino, an early sixteenth-century Italian who describes the imperial foundation endowed by Sultan Mehmed II as follows:

Among the churches [mosques] and hospitals [imarets] in Europe is that of Mehmed in Constantinople, a superb building, with his tomb nearby. The hospital is open to all, Christians, Jews and Turks; and its doctors give free treatment and food three times a day These Turks, large and small, are constantly engaged on such pious and charitable works—far more so than we Christians. (trans. and ed. Nicol ix-x, 3, qtd. in Lowry, 75)

Lowry’s evidence of Muslim hospitality toward Christians includes one of the earliest *imarets* established soon after the Muslim conquest of Iznik. According to the fifteenth-century Ottoman historian Asikpasazade, the new Muslim ruler Orhan Gazi

opened a soup kitchen and personally fed the people of this conquered city, who were mainly Christian at the time (Lowry 71). “Good will and accommodation” toward the conquered Christians was a “leitmotif permeating the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century conquest narratives” (71). This generosity played a factor in the conversion of many Christians to Islam. Asikpasazade relates how the Christians of Iznik, upon surrendering to Orhan, noted his generosity and goodwill: “As a result they declared that this generosity represented the best kind of conquest. And this generosity had the effect of making many of them accept Islam” (qtd. in Lowry 70). Thus Asikpasazade “highlights the causal linkage between accommodation and conversion” (72). In addition to feeding the people, Orhan Gazi also addressed the problem of widowed Nicaean Christians by facilitating their marriages to his own troops and offering them houses as wedding gifts; this policy highlighted an important Ottoman practice of “assimilation, rather than subjugation” (72). In this case the link between hospitality and conversion is based on the positive impression left on Christians by Orhan and his fellow co-religionists. Here, both Muslims and Christians came together, and it is through the act of feeding and demonstrating hospitality that many Christians converted to Islam.²⁴

One final note on the inclusivity of Ottoman charity and hospitality is the fact that Jews and Christians were also permitted to found *awqaf* in the Ottoman Empire, so long as they did not include synagogues and churches, which were not considered legitimate beneficiaries. Rather, their endowments could include “many other personal and

²⁴ On religious conversion in the Ottoman Empire, Gerald MacLean states that “Pressure to convert to Islam was by no means a policy of the Ottoman authorities and far less common than the sometime lurid accounts of travellers would have their readers believe” (*Looking East* 71).

communal goals” of Jews and Christians. For example, the Moroccan Jewish woman, Bannita bint Barakat, in 1458 endowed her house to her son, who was named her beneficiary (Singer *Charities* 99). Based on the permissibility of Jewish and Christian endowments, Singer points out how flexible the *waqf* was and “how inclusive it could be of populations within any state or even across political boundaries” (99).

Despite the freedom afforded to Jewish and Christian communities in Muslim lands to live and practise their faiths freely, the English were extremely wary of compromising their identity by travelling to foreign places. Moryson’s travel narrative devotes an entire chapter to limiting those he deems fit to travel, placing an emphasis on the mental preparedness of the traveller:

But we must giue eare to Parents, Friends, and as well priuate as publike Common-wealths-men, who not unjustly seeme to feare, lest young men by this course should be peruerted from true Religion, and by this feare, dissuade passing into forraigne parts, as the chiefe cause of this mischiefe. Surely if the vessell be new that taketh an ill sauour, it will sticke much faster thereunto, but I haue already professed, that I would haue a Traueller of ripe yeeres, hauing first laid good grounds of all Arts, and most especially of Religion. (Book 1, Chapter 1, page 7).

These guidelines not only indicate the common concern that young men, whose minds were considered still impressionable, were likely to be swayed from their religion, but it also indicates a causal link between travelling into foreign countries and falling into apostasy or conversion. For Moryson, it takes a strong-minded, older gentleman who is

tenacious in his beliefs to be fit for travel so that he does not question his own faith. What Moryson is essentially prescribing is that the English traveller must put himself in a situation of complete self-control. This traveller must wait until he is of “ripe age” and has “laid good grounds of all Arts, and most especially of Religion” so that he is in control of himself in the face of religious others who might make him question his own faith, or worse, tempt him to convert.

Some English travellers were relieved to find their own countrymen during their travels in the Islamic world. This was particularly evident when English travellers arrived at the “English house,” a residence and place of business for the English consul and factors (traders, business agents). The Englishman and captain, Robert Coverte, was quite relieved to have stayed at the English house during his visit to Aleppo in the early seventeenth century:

And being come to the great and worthy City of Aleppo, we went to the English house, where I found Master Paul Pinder to be Consul, a very worthy gentleman, and well deserving a place of so great credit and esteeme, at whose hands we found very courteous and kind entertainment; for at my comming to him I was destitute both of mony and cloaths, and so was my companion Richard Martin. But he releevd us, first with meat, drinke, and lodging during our abode there, being some 12 daies, also he furnisht us with apparrell, and at our departure with money for our journey. (sig.I3v)

In this example, as in others by various English travellers and writers about the Ottoman Empire, the English house offered a welcoming and familiar place of relief for fellow compatriots. In fact the term “English house,” as Matar and MacLean observe, “appears

frequently in the correspondence from Algiers to Basra, to Surat and Bengal, signifying the residence of factors as well as their operational base” (81). Thus when later English travellers such as Captain Robert Coverte arrived, they found established communities of expatriates who were already living and working in the Islamic world.

Matar and MacLean describe one such thriving neighbourhood, “across the Golden Horn from imperial Istanbul,” which was a walled enclave where “non-Muslim communities of Italians, Greeks, Jews, and Armenians were as conspicuous as the cramped warehouses where European merchants stockpiled merchandise” (90). By the beginning of the seventeenth century, European diplomats (including the English) “built their lodgings and enjoyed exemptions from Ottoman laws regulating clothing and the consumption of wine” (90). In 1717, the French botanist, Joseph Pitton de Tournefort, who had travelled to the Levant, described Izmir as a “Christendom” where “they sing publicly in the Churches...and perform Divine Service ...without any trouble” and where they “have not sufficient Regard to the Mahometans [Muslims], for the Taverns are open all Hours, Day and Night” (qtd. in MacLean and Matar 91). These descriptions of expatriate communities indicate a kind of hospitality offered by the Sultan and native Ottomans to allow such communities to live and practise their faiths freely (albeit their presence served to benefit the Sultan both economically and politically), while also suggesting that many Englishmen were wont to remain insular and preferred not to mingle with Muslims if they could help it. After all, “The danger of assimilation, whether

by conversion or employment, was paramount in the minds of factors and consuls in all parts of the Islamic world” (110).²⁵

The aversion to anything Islamic, or non-Protestant for that matter, is loud and clear in William Biddulph’s account of his eight-year visit (1600 - 1608) to the Islamic East. Biddulph was commissioned by East India Company officials to serve as chaplain for the English expatriates living and working in Aleppo. His job was both in the “instruction ... in knowledge of Religion and in reproving and rebuking whatsoever” deserved “reproof or admonition” (letter to Biddulph from Sir Thomas Smith, qtd. in Stevens 276). Biddulph was close-minded and prejudiced in his views as he came to the East already in contempt of Muslims, Jews, and Catholics. His travel writing did not rely on facts or first-hand experiences but tended to repeat polemical tracts against Islam. MacLean’s analysis of Biddulph’s *Travels* notes that he often cited Thomas Washington’s 1585 translation of Nicolas de Nicolay’s *Navigations* verbatim (*Rise* 73). Furthermore, some of the reasons why Biddulph chose to publish his writing, as MacLean has pointed out, are “to refute and ridicule Islam, Catholicism and Judaism, to correct the errors of others and prove what he already doubtless believed before he even set out, that life in England was better than many who had never left believed it to be” (113). Needless to say, Biddulph’s perspective of Anglo-Islamic encounters is heavily

²⁵ The multicultural cities described here were unlike Morocco and the Ottoman regencies of North Africa where the “earliest factors and consuls ... were obliged to stay on board ship until accommodation could be secured” until much later into the seventeenth century when English consuls “moved into large residences with spectacular views” (MacLean and Matar 93). For more details on the living and working conditions of Britons in the Islamic world see MacLean and Matar, 90-112.

biased. He chooses to paint Muslims as inhospitable. For instance, he makes the generalized claim that “the *Turkes* giue liberty of conscience vnto all that come thither; but they giue not entertainment vnto any Christians in their houses” (119). And yet other travel accounts such as Henry Blount’s or Thomas Dallam’s, on the contrary, describe several occasions when Muslims invited them to share meals (both of which I will describe below).

In fact Biddulph was so averse to assimilating with Muslims that he insisted on paying for food instead of accepting Muslim hospitality. In recounting the “faire upper rooms for great men in their travels,” Biddulph describes how “The founder hereof also ordained that all Travellers that way should have their entertainment there of his cost. He alloweth them Bread, Pilaw and Mutton which our Jenesaries accepted off; *but we scorning reliefe from Turkes without money*, sent unto the village, where (besides our owne provision which wee brought with us) wee had also other good things for money” (88-89, my emphasis). MacLean notes how Biddulph’s refusal to eat the food provided by the Muslim owner is an indication of his “refusal to become too closely assimilated into the local Islamic culture and customs” (103) and that for Biddulph, paying for food signified a way to “keep a needful distance between themselves and the Ottoman system” (103).

Paying for food put Biddulph in a position of agency that enabled him to feel in control of the situation. The need to be in control is also apparent in the preparations for this journey since Biddulph and his fellow travellers, en route to Damascus, had with them their own cook and servants who bought their meat and “dressed it themselues, as they did also all the rest of the way” (sig. P2v). He goes on, “To this end we tooke a

Cooke with vs, and other seruants from Aleppo, to dresse our meat, and to looke to our horses” (sig. P2v). The “trepidation and distrust” of eating with others in a Muslim land was clearly planned for in advance (MacLean *Rise* 103). Putting themselves in a position of control in a situation that involved food and religious others was their way of safeguarding themselves from transgressing cultural and religious boundaries.

However, there is evidence from early modern English travel accounts of Britons accepting Muslim hospitality. Unlike Biddulph, who journeyed to Aleppo with presuppositions that Islam was a “monstrous and most devilish religion” (sig. J2v), Henry Blount was far more open-minded. In his introduction to *A Voyage into the Levant* (1636), he explains that the best way to be informed of the “Turkish nation” is not to study the subject by reading about it in a book but rather, to “receive it with my own eye, not dazzled with any affection, prejudicacy [sic] or mist of education, which preoccupate the mind, and delude it with partial ideas” (sig. A3v). He thus embarks on this journey to discover whether the “Turkish way appeare absolutely barbarous, as we are given to understand, or rather another kind of civility, different from ours, but no lesse pretending [no less important to consider for our acceptance²⁶]” (sig. A2v).

Blount’s open-mindedness meant that he was not unwilling to eat and lodge with Muslims (or anyone else for that matter) when the opportunity was offered to him, such as during his encounter with the armed Ottoman horsemen, or *timariots* (98), while he travelled with the Ottoman army (13), or when he stayed at the majestic palace of an

²⁶ Blount’s use of the verb “pretending” is now obsolete; in the *OED* the verb is “To offer, present, or put forward for consideration, acceptance, action” (v.2a).

unidentified “lord” in Cairo. In his description of the latter, notice the detail of the hospitality he received at this palace:

But that which to mee seemed more Magnificent then all this, was my entertainment: entring one of these Roomes, I saw at the upper end, amongst others sitting crosse-legg’d the Lord of the Palace, who beckoning me to come, I first put off my Shooes as the rest had done; then bowing often, with my hand upon my breast, came neere, where he making me sit downe, there attended ten or twelve handsome young Pages all clad in Scarlet, with crooked Daggers, and Scymitars; richly gilt: foure of them came with a sheete of Taffity, and covered me; another held a golden Incense with rich perfume, wherewith being a little smoked they tooke all away; next came two with sweet water and besprinkled mee; after that, one brought a Porcelane dish of Cauphe [coffee], which when I had dranke, another served up a draught of excellent Sherbert: then began discourse, which passed by interpreter by reason of my ignorance in the Arabick there spoken. (42)

In this description, the ceremonious way that he is received in the palace (the ritual of welcoming an outside guest), is comprised of a series of performative acts. Removing shoes, bowing down, being draped by a sheet, being sprayed with perfume, being sprinkled with water – all of these acts confirm the lord’s superior status and control of the encounter. Blount never converted to Islam but his experience in the East certainly had an effect on him for the remainder of his life upon returning to England. For example, his fondness of Turkish “cauphe” led him to encourage merchants “to open analogous institutions [coffee houses], to begin to turn London into a new Cairo”

(Livesey 38), and he was credited for “popularizing coffee in the country” (Matar “Blount, Sir Henry”).²⁷

Blount’s amazement with the grandeur of the palace and the hospitality he enjoyed therein is not unlike Thomas Dallam’s description of his time spent in the Sultan’s seraglio. Since Dallam was a skilled musician and organ builder, he was commissioned by Queen Elizabeth I in 1599 “to make and deliver a mechanical organ and clock to the sultan of Turkey in Constantinople,” Sultan Mehmed III, as a gift on her behalf (Kent “Thomas Dallam”). As a result of the impression Dallam made on the Sultan, he was invited to dine in the seraglio for a month where he delighted in the food and service offered to him: “as I satt at diner, I se them gather grapes upon the vines, and theye brought them to me to eat....and we had everie day grapes after our meate” (62, 64). In all his excitement, he makes a curious statement: “I dinede Thare almost everie Daye for the space of a monthe; *which no Christian ever did in there memorie that wente awaye a Christian*” (64, my emphasis). Apparently it is a wonder that Dallam left such fine Ottoman dining without having turned Turk.

Thus from the intimate seraglio of the Sultan’s palace to the public service of *imarets*, hospitality to all, regardless of social, national, or religious status, was a major part of life in the Ottoman and North African regions that made up the Islamic world. Here, I must acknowledge that in considering “Muslim hospitality” I am including the fact that the Sultans permitted non-Muslims and non-natives to live, work, and practise

²⁷ See also Sabine Schulting’s chapter, “Strategic Improvisation: Henry Blount in the Ottoman Empire” in *Early Modern Encounters with the Islamic East* (2012), in which she argues that Blount improvised speech and actions thereby performing an identity while travelling in the East.

their faiths freely. In comparison to early modern England, where such inclusivity was unimaginable, the presence of expatriates and their freedom to worship in their own churches and synagogues in an Islamic state should count, in my opinion, as hospitality. However, it is a hospitality that is at least in part self-serving: allowing non-Muslims to live and work amongst them benefited the Empire. As Matar notes, according to an agreement between Sultan Murad and Queen Elizabeth, the Sultan was “eager” to have the English live and trade in his empire and was “willing to make the necessary concessions” for them to do so (*Turks* 65-66).

Comparing English and Ottoman/North African hospitality toward strangers might (initially) indicate that Muslims were far more willing to eat with the English than the other way around. After all, wealthy household kitchens like Aga Mehmet’s, countless *imarets*, and the general obedience to Qur’anic and prophetic guidelines on inclusive hospitality all point toward a willingness, even enthusiasm, to share a meal with strangers. But while *al-Diyafah* (the law of hospitality) is an important aspect of Islamic culture in the Islamic world, the willingness to eat with strangers nonetheless depends on a condition I mentioned earlier: the Muslim, whether host or guest, must be in control or know with certainty the Islamic permissibility of the food that is to be shared. Thus, it is easy to find examples of Muslim hospitality toward strangers in the Islamic world because there *halal* or permissible meat would be the only choice available. That is why, when Muslims are guests in England, where *halal* meat is non-existent, they either alarm their hosts by slaughtering their own animals at home, as the ambassador Hamet Xarife did, or they agree to a meal that is hosted by Christians but prepared by Turkish servants to ensure its permissibility, as the Chause did in 1640. Therefore, for Muslims (and

Jews), hospitality threatens one's faith only when there is a lack of control in the variables of the meal (foodstuffs, time of day, etc.). Meanwhile, although English Protestants do not have to adhere to such strict dietary restrictions as Muslims and Jews, they do have to contend with the fear that close associations with religious others (including sharing meals or consuming foreign foodstuffs) will facilitate their turning Turk. In all cases, then, for Muslims, Jews, and Christians, the act of hospitality, in some form or other, is understood as a channel through which religious identity is threatened.

Hospitality on the English Stage

Robert Wilson's allegorical play, *The Three Ladies of London* (1584) speaks to the tensions rising in London between native Englishmen and non-English immigrants. The play begins with Lady Love and Lady Conscience bemoaning the current state of London, which is ruled by Lady Lucre; Lady Love complains that for the sake of lucre, men from all over the world forsake their families and their religion. Meanwhile, four vice characters – Fraud, Simony, Dissimulation, and Usury – and an impoverished and naïve miller, Simplicity, hope to find employment by one of the three ladies. Only Lucre agrees to employ the four villains, who we learn are all London residents but of alien heritage. To compete for survival, other characters must fall to corrupt ways, so Artifex, who is out of work because the foreigners have taken all the jobs, cheats his customers with fake goods; Sir Peter Pleaseman adopts either Protestant or Catholic doctrine to suit his circumstance; Sir Nicholas Nemo offers hospitality but disappears before providing it; and even Love and Conscience are eventually driven to shame as Love marries

Dissimulation and consequently grows a second face, and Conscience runs a bawdy house for Lucre.

The subplot, whose setting occasionally takes place in Turkey, involves an Italian merchant, Mercadore, who works with Lucre to export valuable English goods and foodstuffs and import useless foreign trinkets. Mercadore has been borrowing money from a generous Jew, Gerontus, who is now fed up with Mercadore's late payments; he has him arrested and Mercadore escapes payment by threatening to turn Turk since converting to Islam would nullify his debts as per Turkish law. Gerontus, fearing that he will be blamed for the Christian's apostasy, forgives Mercadore and the Italian is set free from converting and paying off his debt.

Amidst all the characters who are inherently vices and those who eventually fall to corruption, there is one, as Lloyd Kermode describes, who "stands against them all, representing English Christian tradition and stability of the realm," and that is Hospitality (59). Hospitality opposes Usury; whereas Hospitality offers Conscience a place to stay, Usury threatens to evict her and then quadruples the rent. And where Usury inflicts "financial hardship and bodily pain," Hospitality is the "direct antidote to poverty and bodily discomfort" (65-66). For his efforts, Hospitality is eventually murdered by Usury and the implication, as critics see it, is that "the practice of usury directly eliminates hospitality" (66).²⁸

²⁸ David Hawkes's study, *The Culture of Usury in Renaissance England* devotes a chapter on "The Death of Hospitality" in which he studies Wilson's play (among others) to demonstrate that in Renaissance England, the practice of usury was the negation of hospitality (96).

Since Usury is a second-generation English resident (his parents, we learn from Wilson's sequel, were Jewish), he represents a "foreign" practice that has become very much a normal and necessary part of London's economy. Kermode describes Usury as an "international money-man" and "an allegory of human behaviour and the contemporary economic state of the nation [who] draws the gallimaufry of foreign bodies into circulation in England" (70). These bodies are "mutable identities" that end up "forsak[ing] the body within which they are accommodated" (70). For Wilson, immigrants who practice usury and other corrupt means to acquire wealth either influence or force natives to do the same, which ultimately results in the demise of English hospitality. Thus, the alien immigrants and their effect on London's economy, which was thought to include, among other things, overcrowding and the importation of useless foreign goods, account for the general decline of English hospitality.²⁹

While I agree with Kermode's interpretation that sees Wilson putting blame on the corrupt economy, my own analysis centers on one crucial detail that adds an additional layer to the Usury-Hospitality relationship: Usury murders Hospitality by slitting his throat in the same way I suggest Shylock intends to sacrifice/murder Antonio

²⁹ Kermode offers a useful overview of the general demographic of Londoners in the late sixteenth century: an alien population of about 8,000, or an alien population percentage of between 5 and 10 percent in a city of about 200,000 in 1600. These immigrants comprised of Dutch, French, Italians and others from the Mediterranean (61).

in Chapter Three.³⁰ This is important because if we can look at the characters of Usury and Hospitality as precursors to Shylock and Antonio then we can read Usury as an allegorical figure of a Jew and Hospitality as an allegorical figure of a Christian.

Kermode cites Caleb Dalechamp, a seventeenth-century English minister who wrote a religious tract on hospitality called *Christian Hospitality* (1632), to point out that the title of this work is telling—“hospitality is simply *Christian*” (68). “Hospitality,” Kermode explains, “is the social and physical provision of Christian teaching” (*Three* 37).

Although Dalechamp’s tract appears almost fifty years after Wilson’s play, the sentiment that hospitality is characteristic of Christianity, especially since the Bible, on numerous occasions, instructs hospitable behavior to all, would have resonated with Wilson’s audience. Building on Kermode’s analysis in light of Dalechamp’s tract, I am suggesting that Wilson’s Hospitality is to be understood by the play’s characters and the audience as the quintessential English Christian practice. Usury, on the other hand, was deeply associated with Judaism in early modern England. As David Hawkes explains, “the association between usury and Judaism had sunk deep roots within the Christian mind” and the “conceptual fusion between Judaism and usury was . . . deeply rooted in Christian biblical hermeneutics” (Hawkes 65, 68). Therefore, if we can accept that Usury and Hospitality are allegorical figures of a Jew and Christian, respectively, then Usury’s murderous act – slitting the throat reminiscent of Jewish ritual slaughter otherwise known as *schechita* – can be read as a threat to Hospitality’s faith. This would mean that

³⁰ In Chapter Three, I discuss the details of the Jewish ritual slaughter, also known as *schechita*, which stipulates, among other rules, that the animal must be slaughtered at the neck so as to sever the jugular and carotid arteries.

Hospitality is vulnerable when interacting with religious others because his faith is threatened. In other words, hospitality is a dangerous practice when it involves religious others because it threatens the religious and/or national identity of the host or guest.

The idea of hospitality in Wilson's play operates on two levels, which Caleb Dalechamp categorizes as *private hospitality* and *public hospitality* in his *Christian Hospitality* (1632). The former refers to welcoming guests (either neighbours or strangers) into one's home while the latter refers to accepting immigrants into the country and to "giv[ing] them leave to exercise their lawfull calling" (sig. D2). Public hospitality accounts for the presence of immigrants in the play while private hospitality is represented by Hospitality. Private hospitality is particularly evident when we hear Hospitality's reply to Conscience's question about inviting strangers to dinner; he says "No, sure; none but Lady Love, and three or four honest neighbours" (4.66). Kermode points to Hospitality's "emphatic negative" response here to point out that this is a typical English answer that "strongly suggests the rejection of any aliens from the table" as well as "the rejection of *any* influence that may bring corruption to the hospitable house" (65). But even when Hospitality takes precautions and puts himself in control as best he can by exclusively inviting honest neighbours, he still finds himself victim to an "outsider." Thus the play suggests that foreign immigrants have become so rooted in the fabric of London (as a result of public hospitality) that it is becoming too late to control and preserve a Protestant English identity.

In the opening scene of *Three Ladies*, the character Fame consoles Love and Conscience by assuring them that Lucre and all the men (vices) who run after her will be "plagued with painful punishment for such their cruelty" (1.23), but by the end of the

play, most of the vice characters get away scot-free while Love, Conscience, and Lucre are arrested and condemned. The alien immigrants are not punished; in fact, they continue onward, to varying degrees, in the sequel, *The Three Lords of London*. To this end, Wilson's play does not present the fantasy of the subjugated or condemned "other" that is so common in Elizabethan drama.

The Elizabethan audience would see the defeated and condemned Turk a few years later in Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* plays. Since these plays were written when Islamic expansion under Ottoman rule threatened and elicited fear in Christian Europe, the audience might have applauded Tamburlaine's conquest and subjugation of Islamic potentates, which is highlighted in the infamous banquet scene when the Emperor of the Turks, Bajazeth, is completely stripped of all agency. Here, the stage directions involve a banquet which Tamburlaine, Zenocrate and others attend. As the scene plays out, we learn that Bajazeth is confined to a cage, which is drawn by two Moors, followed by his wife, Zabina (4.4). For everyone present except Bajazeth and Zabina the banquet is a celebration of Tamburlaine's victory over Damascus. Food is used in this scene to celebrate the Turks' defeat at the hands of Tamburlaine and to underscore their utter loss of control to Tamburlaine and his followers.

Although Tamburlaine's religious identity is constantly shifting over the course of two plays, prompting critics to find him morally ambiguous, in *Part One* Tamburlaine is decidedly anti-Muslim. He is sympathetic toward the Christian captives who are kept as slaves by the Turks (3.3.45-60), and he and his men are referred to by Bajazeth as "the Christian miscreants" (3.3.234), to which Burton points as evidence of "*Part One's* conflation of Tamburlaine and European Christendom" ("Anglo-Ottoman" 142). But it is

the banquet scene that confirms Tamburlaine's opposition to, and triumph over, the Turkish-Islamic power that is represented by Bajazeth, who "enters the play an ardent confirmation of Europe's anti-Turkish, anti-Islamic fears and stereotypes" (141). The treatment of Bajazeth – defeating him, confining him to a cage, giving him scraps of meat to eat – indicates the defeat of the greatest threat to European Christendom: Ottoman expansionism by military conquest.

The cage physically contains Bajazeth while placing ultimate control in the hands of Tamburlaine. Physically, Bajazeth is forced into submission where his actions are severely limited. The caged Bajazeth marks a glaring contrast between his current situation, confined to an excruciatingly limited space, and his former position as the proud emperor of an ever-expanding dominion. At the beginning of the scene he grasps at what little agency he might still have by using his voice to insult Tamburlaine (4.4.16-22) and by using his feet to stamp on the scraps of meat he is offered. Bajazeth rejects the food and water as a way to reject his current reality and as an attempt to deny Tamburlaine ultimate victory. But as the scene ends and he loses energy from refusing to eat, we see him slowly recede. The leader of the most powerful and menacing empire is reduced to physical weakness, both in terms of his debility and his lack of agency. At his lowest point in this scene, he succumbs to Tamburlaine out of sheer desperation due to starvation: his "veins are pale," his "sinews hard and dry," and his "joints benumbed" (4.4. 100-101). When he eventually agrees to eat, Tamburlaine denies him food. Although Tamburlaine was already in control of Bajazeth at the beginning of this scene, it is the denial of food that simultaneously emphasizes Bajazeth's weakness and Tamburlaine's power to determine Bajazeth's fate.

Critics have noted how the *Tamburlaine* plays influenced Robert Greene's *Selimus* (1594), both in terms of language and plot.³¹ *Selimus* is based on the historical emperor of Turkey, Selim I (1467-1520), who was known to have murdered his own brothers, nephews, and all but one son in order to secure his sovereignty. The dramatic version has Selimus overthrow and poison his father, Bajazet, and murder his older brothers, Acomat and Corcut. Selimus, like Tamburlaine, is a ruthless tyrant who defies all moral and religious grounds in order to achieve absolute power. He is a "self-declared atheist" and "Like Tamburlaine, Selimus is never defeated or punished for his 'unnatural' actions or bold blasphemies" (Vitkus 19). For the purpose of my argument, I am not interested in how Greene imitated Marlowe in terms of characterization and language. Rather, I am interested in the way both playwrights use starvation and the request for food at a pivotal point in a character's life to underscore a loss of control that consequently affects that character's fate.

By leaving Bajazeth to starve in a cage, *Tamburlaine* highlights the fact that Bajazeth's fate is hopeless; either Bajazeth will starve to death or hasten his death, but he will certainly not find relief. In *Selimus*, on the other hand, the famished prince in hiding, Corcut, finds relief when he encounters the Christian shepherd and country fool, Bullithrumble. Corcut's first appearance in the play explains his situation: under Selimus' orders, Corcut was to be taken as prisoner but he escaped in disguise, along with his page, and the two are now in hiding. He concludes his opening soliloquy by describing

³¹ My discussion on *Selimus* is based on Vitkus' edition in which he acknowledges that "the play's attribution to Greene will always be, in some sense, 'doubtful'" but goes on to assume, based on strong evidence, that Greene is "at least the main author of the play" (17).

their current state of starvation. Having been hiding in the cave for the past two days, “Eating such herbs as the ground did afford,” they are “constrained” by hunger, and “Like fearful snakes...creep out step by step” in search of food (19.56-58). At this moment he sees Bullithrubble who is “Spreading a hungry dinner on the grass” (19.61) and Bullithrubble, who “spies them and puts up his meat,” assumes them to be “some felonians” who will rob him (19.62).

A scared and insecure Bullithrubble calms down only when he hears Corcut’s request for food. Until this point he is nervous and aggravated, assuming Corcut to be “some cozening, cony-catching crossbiter” (19.68). Once he realizes Corcut’s desperation for food, he immediately assumes authority and gains control, admitting in an aside, with relief and new-found confidence, “Oh, these are, as a man should say, beggars! Now will I be as stately to them as if I were Master Pigwiggen our constable” (19.87-89). From Bullithrubble’s perspective, power has shifted from the “cony-catching crossbiter” to himself. Because Corcut is famished, he realizes that Corcut is at his mercy. As a result, Bullithrubble takes advantage of Corcut’s impoverished state and emphasizes his authority by calling himself “Master Bullithrubble” (19.96) and adopting a more “stately” persona. The imbalance of power or control is key here because it puts Corcut in a vulnerable position where he has little to no choice; Corcut must succumb to the Christian shepherd.

Bullithrubble then agrees to feed them “a hog’s cheek” and “a dish of tripes” (19.98-99) if they pledge to “keep [his] sheep truly and honestly” (19.93-94). Because Corcut is at the mercy of Bullithrubble, he must accept Bullithrubble’s commands, even if he would ordinarily disagree with them. When Corcut accepts Bullithrubble’s offer to

eat “a hog’s cheek” he takes his first step toward crossing an Islamic boundary since it was frequently reported in polemical tracts against Turks that Muslims and Jews were prohibited from eating pork. The scene closes with Bullithrubble making a joke and then promising Corcut and his page that “If you dwell with me long, sirs, I shall make you as eloquent as our parson himself” (19.101-102). Though spoken in jest, this line is retrospectively charged with meaning since it suggests a change in character will be the result of living and speaking with the shepherd. This is exactly what happens; Corcut converts to Christianity after having “conversed with Christians / And learned of them the way to save [his] soul” (22.50-51). Although Corcut ascribes his conversion to time spent conversing and dwelling with Christians, it is actually through Christian hospitality that his religious conversion takes place. And it is the encounter with Bullithrubble, centered as it is on food, which signals Corcut’s ensuing turn to Christianity.

Banquets involving religious others do not necessarily have to result in a conversion to convey that eating together can be dangerous or surrounded by the spectre of religious transgression. George Peele’s *The Battle of Alcazar* (1594) presents us with a sinister banquet that visually represents the larger themes of greed, war, and death in the play. *Alcazar* is based on the historical battle fought at Alcazar in 1578; in the play the opposing armies are led by the rightful king of Morocco, Abdelmelec, and his usurping and villainous nephew, Muly Mahamet. Muly Mahamet enlists the support of Sebastian (of Portugal) and the English adventurer, Captain Thomas Stukeley, all of whom are seated at a “bloody banquet” (4.prol.6), presented in dumb show, and where the stage directions call for “dead men’s heads in dishes” and “another with dead men’s bones” (4.prol.sd).

According to Chris Mead, this stylized banquet has two functions: it “aids the narration of a convoluted and confusing play” (81) and it creates tension by contrasting “social decorum” (where Muly Mahamet sits across the table from Sebastian) with the “metaphorical bloody banquet of warfare” (81). I would add, also, that the banquet confirms the partnership between Muly Mahamet and the other men since they willingly sit together to share a meal. Sebastian and Stukeley’s presence at the dinner table represents transgressed boundaries, both literally (they travelled to Morocco from Portugal and England respectively) and metaphorically (they cross moral boundaries with their complicity in ambitious and bloody warfare).

The banquet scenes in *Tamburlaine* and *The Battle of Alcazar* are on the extreme end of sinister or perverse meals shared between religious others. While there are instances in the drama when religious others eat together without expressing much worry over religious difference (such as when Portia invites the Moor to banquet or when the Christian visitors eat at the king’s palace in *The Fair Maid of the West I* – to which I will return shortly), frequently enough, Turk plays that involve eating or references to food shared among religious others exhibit some degree of anxiety over assimilation or conversion. At the very least, Jewish, Muslim and Christian characters all exhibit an awareness of religious difference that is articulated through the idea of eating. The opening scene of Philip Massinger’s *The Renegado* (1630) summarizes this situation perfectly:

VITELLI	I wonder, sirrah,
	What’s your religion?
GAZET	Troth, to answer truly,

I would not be of one that should command me 25
 To feed upon poor-john when I see pheasants
 And partridges on the table; nor do I like
 The other that allows us to eat flesh
 In the Lent, though it be rotten, rather than be
 Thought superstitious, as your zealous cobbler 30
 And learned botcher preach at Amsterdam
 Over a hotchpotch. I would not be confined
 In my belief: when all your sects and sectaries
 Are grown of one opinion, if I like it
 I will profess myself; in the meantime, 35
 Live I in England, Spain, France, Rome, Geneva,
 I am of that country's faith. (1.1.23-37)

Without Gazet explicitly naming Protestantism or Catholicism, the audience and readers immediately recognize that he is referring to both faiths, indicating that religion is perceived and understood by food or eating practices. Gazet's response situates both Catholicism and Protestantism on the same plane by characterizing each with its approach to eating practices during Lent; in doing so, and by stating, "when all your sects and sectaries/ Are grown of one opinion," he criticizes religious schism and therefore casts doubt on the "truth" of religion. Thus even though his response generally indicates a superficial understanding of faith through the trope of food/eating, he is able to make a much more serious and poignant point, albeit brief, that would have resonated with an

early modern English audience that was consciously aware of religious schism as a result of the Reformation.

Of course the distaste for “poor-john” (salted hake) and for “rotten meat,” coupled with the statement, “if I like it / I will profess myself,” brings us back to Gazet’s superficial perception of faith. He links choice of faith with ease and desire/consumption. This connection means faith, here, is perceived as fickle, especially when Gazet mentions that it can change depending on his geographical location. His understanding of faith in physical terms is further confirmed when he expresses fear of castration (or circumcision) should he convert to Islam. That is, his immediate response to Vitelli’s question, “And what in Tunis? / Will you turn Turk here?” (1.1.37-8) is one that suggests Gazet’s rejection of Islam is based primarily on physical consequences rather than for any doctrinal reasons.

Indeed Gazet is a clown character whose function, Burton has argued, offers comedic relief; specifically, clown characters in “Turk plays” are meant “to mediate what was arguably the most disturbing aspect of Anglo-Islamic relations, the threat of ‘turning Turk’” (52). Therefore, Gazet’s exclaimed “No!” followed by a fear of losing “A collop of that part” which is dear to his girlfriend Doll (1.1.38-9) is meant to lighten the possible threat of converting to Islam. But the seriousness of the threat is immediately brought back to our attention when Vitelli rebukes Gazet and warns him: “It is no time to fool now. / Remember where you are, too: though this mart time / We are allowed free trading and with safety, / Temper your tongue and meddle not with the Turk, / Their manners nor religion” (1.1.44-48). Besides the obvious warning to watch one’s speech around Turks,

“Temper your tongue,” in light of Gazet’s recent gustatory perception of faith, Vitelli’s words are also a warning to be judicious with what one eats.

“Temper” (the verb) in early modernity could refer to humoral theory; in this context the *OED* defines temper as: “To restore the proper ‘temper’ or ‘temperament’ ; to bring into a good or desirable state of body or health; to cure, heal, refresh” (5).³² Recall that restoring one’s temperament in Galenic medicine is all about regulating or controlling the six-non naturals in order to achieve a balance of humors. Temper also means “to regulate, control” or “restrain within due limits” (*OED* II. 7, 8a), the same actions used to describe the process of achieving humoral balance. As a result of these three related definitions, I argue that Vitelli’s line is more than just advice to watch one’s speech. For my interpretation, I read “tongue” as a synecdoche for palate and by extension, diet. Vitelli is thus warning Gazet to be careful or to regulate his taste for food/diet because its link to religion can be detrimental to one’s faith.

Vitelli’s warning does not explicitly single out diet, but it can easily be understood as such if we look into the word “manners” (and we consider that the warning comes shortly after Gazet’s focus on religious food practices). Neither the Arden edition nor Vitkus’s glosses this line, but the *OED* offers multiple definitions. Here, I presume that manners can mean “A person’s habitual behaviour or conduct; morals” (“manners” *OED* 4a), or, “The prevailing mode of life, the conditions of society” (*OED* 4b), or, “A

³² The *OED* dates the last usage of this meaning to 1613 (by Samuel Purchas) but I am inclined to believe the word also bears this definition here (in addition to its commonly known meaning). Since “temper” is a homonym, audience members hearing the word could easily make the connection to humoral temperament especially having just heard Gazet pontificate about food.

person's social behaviour or habits, judged according to the degree of politeness or the degree of conformity to accepted standards of behaviour or propriety" (6a). Therefore manners necessarily include the rules governing diet since eating practices – how, with whom, when – fall under “conduct,” “prevailing mode of life” and “social habits.”

In Vitelli's acknowledgement of the looming threat of conversion, he does not address this danger with a simple warning to stay away from the Turks' religion. Instead Vitelli warns Gazet to stay away also from their manners; his warning suggests that manners and religion are inextricable and that any interaction with a Turk can threaten one's faith. Furthermore, the Arden edition glosses the “meddle” line by offering a quotation from Biddulph, whose *Travels* has been noted as a source for Massinger's play (Neill 54). Biddulph advises travellers not to meddle with Turkish law, women, and slaves (Neill 92). Recall that Biddulph was the narrow-minded, prejudiced chaplain who insisted on paying for otherwise free food lest he assimilate with Turks. Perhaps Vitelli's warning is inspired by Biddulph's approach to living and working in an Islamic state.

Near the end of the play, in front of the other Turk characters (Asembeg, Mustapha, and the janissaries), Vitelli rather confidently invites Francisco to a wedding feast where the food will be pleasing to the palate, unlike forgettable “course cates” (5.3.62). The invitation, spoken out of excitement and joy, contrasts the darkness of the scene: the stage instructions just fifteen lines prior indicate “A dreadful music” (5.3.sd). At this point, Vitelli is still in Tunis under Asembeg's rule and is therefore ostensibly under the viceroy's control. That he can speak so boldly in the face of his opponents indicates his increasing sense of control; he is able to do so because the looming threat of turning Turk that underscored the Christians' presence in Tunis is now over, and is thus

marked by the Christians' victory: the former Muslim princess has converted to Christianity. Once the threat of converting to Islam is over, the power or control shifts to Vitelli and his fellow Christians, and this shift in control is highlighted by the invitation to a celebratory feast.

Some plays feature a more willing attitude toward shared meals among religious others, such as *The Merchant of Venice*, *A Christian Turned Turk*, *The Fair Maid of the West I & II*, and *The Island Princess*, but even here the idea of eating together is either accompanied by some curious statement acknowledging religious difference, or tinged with the notion of transgressing religious boundaries. *A Christian Turned Turk* is perhaps the most explicit in acknowledging and accommodating religious difference at a banquet (although the invitation is declined). The Jewish-turned-Muslim merchant Benwash (he converts to Islam but is nevertheless characterised and called a Jew throughout the play) extends a dinner invitation to the English pirate Ward, but the invitation is preceded with some reassurance: "Noble captain, to express how much you are welcome, my wife and sister, laying all rites aside, and customary observes, come to invite you to a mean banquet, sir" (6.382-384). That Benwash calls attention to "rites" and "customary observes" immediately before inviting Ward to dinner is a clear indication that food or eating practices are closely associated with faith and culture, and that these rites and customary observances are such a regular part of Benwash and Agar's meals that offering to lay all rites aside would be an exception. Benwash recognizes that religious difference – characterized by rites and customs of eating practices – is a common enough deterrent for people of differing faiths and nationalities (or perhaps specifically Englishmen) to eat together, that this case warrants some reassurance.

Ward politely declines the dinner invitation but the reason he offers is telling: “I am already feasted in this bounteous dish, sir” (6.385-386), referring to the beautiful Turkish woman, Voada. Here (and elsewhere in the play), Daborne uses gustatory metaphors for sexual temptations. Vitkus has called attention to these allusions in other Turk plays as well to demonstrate that “Conversion to Islam (or to Roman Catholicism) was considered a kind of sexual transgression or spiritual whoredom” (*Turning* 78). Since polemical tracts often linked Islam and promiscuity, “it is not surprising that the English expression ‘to turn Turk’ carried a sexual connotation” (88). Because sexual attraction is directly linked to converting to Islam, the food imagery used here to articulate Ward’s physical attraction to Voada foreshadows his conversion two scenes later.

The emphasis on the physical (sex, wealth, bodies) during the process of turning Turk comes up again in *The Fair Maid of the West I & II* where Clem’s inadvertent conversion (based on his desire to gain personal wealth) is confirmed by his castration. Vitkus compares Clem’s conversion at the end of *Part I* with Joffer’s conversion to Christianity at the end of *Part II*. He notes how Joffer is a “convertible” character, for he possesses Christian qualities such as honour, courtesy, and virtue (140). Joffer’s conversion is important because it contrasts with Clem’s conversion, which is based purely on physical terms and made all the more overt with his undergoing castration; Clem’s affinity toward Moorish culture also accounts for his turning Turk. Recall in Chapter One, I noted that the early modern phrase to “turn Turk” was not limited to the literal or sincere act of conversion; rather, to turn Turk could also include having interests in Turkish culture or imitating Muslims in general. Clem’s “conversion” is obviously not based on any sincere religious conviction, and in *Part II* we see him escape with the other

Englishmen and Bess, so as to suggest he remains Christian. However, even when he is in Florence with his fellow compatriots he twice introduces himself as the “Bashaw of Barbary” (4.4.52, 5.4.133)³³ and twice calls himself a eunuch (2.1.51, 4.5.99-100)³⁴, indicating at least to an early modern audience that he has turned Turk.

In *Part 1*, the English privateer Bess and her companions are invited to the court by Mullisheg, the king of Fez, because he is taken by Bess’s beauty. Although Mullisheg is portrayed as a stereotypical lustful and vengeful Muslim ruler, he nevertheless extends hospitality toward the English sailors. One would expect that here, inside the Moroccan palace, Mullisheg is the host with utmost control. However, upon their first encounter, Bess sets out clear terms by which Mullisheg must abide or else she threatens to leave. When Mullisheg beckons her for “one friendly touch” (5.1.45) she responds assertively, “Keep off” and proceeds to make a deal with him: “for till thou swear’st to my demands, / I will have no commerce with Mullisheg, / But leave thee as I came” (5.1.46-48). Five demands are read off a piece of paper, all of which are meant to ensure the wellbeing and safety of her crew while in Morocco. In fact, the first two demands, “liberty for her and hers to leave the land at her pleasure” (5.1.51) and “safe conduct to and from her ship at her own discretion” (53) would afford her agency thereby giving her some control.

Mullisheg accepts the conditions and the scene proceeds with introductions among the

³³ Bashaw is the earlier form of the Turkish title Pasha (*OED*).

³⁴ Burton, Vitkus, and Shapiro discuss the early modern conflation of castration and circumcision with regard to Muslims and Jews, respectively: “The idea of adult circumcision was conflated and confused with the idea of castration. In this way, turning Turk was associated with becoming a eunuch” (Vitkus, *Three*, 5). Compare, also, to Shakespeare’s *All’s Well That Ends Well* (1623) where Lafeu says “An they were sons of mine / I’d have them whipped, or I would send them to / th’ Turk to make eunuchs of (2.3.85-87).

host and guests. This initial encounter thus balances the power or control between both parties, and the audience can be assured that Bess and her crewmen do not intend to stay long and will not therefore assimilate into Moroccan culture.

In this first encounter between the Moors and the English, one crewman is notably missing: Clem. Significantly, only after Mullisheg and Bess agree to the conditions of their meeting and exit the scene does Clem make his first appearance in the Moroccan palace, and he does so, as the stage directions indicate, “as a fantastic Moor” (sd, 5.1) Clem’s initial entrance, dressed as he is in Moroccan attire, sets him apart from his English crew, visually as well as socially. Certainly he is a clown character, which makes him inherently subordinate, but he is also more closely associated with the Moors than his fellow crewmen. Soon after his entrance, two Moors, Alcade and Joffer, enter, and they invite the two present Englishmen, Clem and Goodlack, to banquet. Only Clem responds, quite emphatically, and as we will learn later in *Part II*, Clem seems to have spent the most time eating and learning from the Moors. It is almost as if his absence during Bess and Mullisheg’s agreement indicates his exclusion from having any control. Even as he tells Goodlack, “Nay, for mine own part, I hold myself as good a Christian in these clothes as the proudest infidel of them all” (5.1.118-119), it is hard to take him seriously, especially since a few lines later, he will walk toward the banquet with gusto and utter a curious statement about eating and assimilating: “I will make bold to march in towards your banquet and there comfit myself, and cast all caraways down my throat, ...And for you Moors, thus much I mean to say, / I’ll see if Moor I eat, the Moor I may” (5.1.125-26, 130-31).

Clem's final two lines here draw on an early modern proverb: "the more one drinks (eats) the more one may" (Dent 532). The proverb is listed in *Proverbial Language in English Drama Exclusive of Shakespeare, 1495-1616* where Francis Beaumont's *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (1607) and *The Fair Maid of the West, Part I* are cited as two plays in which the proverb is found, in addition to Erasmus's *Adagia* from which the Latin version is derived (*quo plus biberint, eo plus sitire*). The Latin essentially translates as "the more one drinks, the thirstier one gets," which suggests that the more one consumes something or participates in some activity, the more one wishes or needs to continue engaging in that action. This meaning is very similar to a related proverb, "The more a man has, the more he desires" (Dent 532). When Clem utters this proverb his play on words ("more" and "Moor") indicates an interest in becoming like Moors.

Recall that when Clem says these lines he is dressed like a Moor. And having just expressed zealous excitement for the imminent banquet, Clem is already demonstrating his affinity toward Moorish culture, or at the very least, his interest in it. This is further corroborated by preceding the proverb with "I'll see if," which indicates his openness to what will follow. If he were averse to the Moors there would be no question, no ifs; someone with preconceived judgements about others already has his opinion made up and need not "see" whether something is true or not, especially if that something has to do with proximity to a despised other. In his rendering of the proverb, the first "Moor" is to be interpreted figuratively since Clem is presumably not referring to cannibalism ("Moor I eat"). Therefore "Moor" in this first instance figuratively implies a consumption of Moorish food, and by extension, Moorish culture. The second "Moor" in the proverb

(“the Moor I may”) is all things Moorish. In other words, Clem is saying that the more he consumes Moorish things (food, culture), the more he may continue consuming Moorish things. The implication is that the more he immerses himself in all things Moorish, the closer he becomes to being like Moors (or to an early modern audience, to turning Turk).

Although Bess and her crew presumably attend Mullisheg’s banquet, the idea of eating with the Moors is noted only by Clem. In fact, Clem seems quite fond of eating with the Moors as he notes his attendance at the banquet at 5.1.125 and again some thirty lines later at 5.2.155. In *Part II* he reveals the extent to which he has dined with Moors, more so than his fellow crewmen. When Spencer asks him what stories he will tell his friends upon their return to England, he prompts Clem, “Let’s hear some of your novelties” (2.1.16) and this prompt suggests that what Clem is about to narrate is unique to Clem, and that even though they were altogether visitors in Morocco, Clem experienced closer proximity to the Moors. In his response Clem explains how he “observed the wisdom of these Moors, for some two days” (2.1.17-18) when he was “invited to one of the chief bashaws to dinner” (2.1.18-19) and when he was welcomed to spend the night. Among Bess and all the English crewmen, Clem is the only one to be so receptive to Moroccan hospitality, and his affinity toward Moroccan culture, I am arguing, is directly linked to his turning Turk.

The willingness to eat together occurs also in *The Merchant of Venice* and *The Island Princess* but not in the laughable and derisive sense that is associated with Clem. Both *Merchant* and *Island Princess* feature princesses who entertain various suitors for the purpose of marriage. In *Merchant* Portia outlines the terms of the contest, which the Moroccan prince accepts, and the two presumably head off to dinner together, since she

says to him, “First, forward to the temple. After dinner / Your hazard shall be made” (2.1.46-47). Even if the invitation was merely an obligatory gesture on the part of the host and they did not actually eat together, it is significant that the Moroccan prince will first pass through, or be situated in, a place of Christian worship at the moment that he is going to eat.

Certainly the temple is the site where the Moroccan prince is expected to swear by the oath that Portia outlines (2.1.40-44), but I am suggesting that the temple also serves an additional purpose. Taking the Moor to a sacred Christian space immediately before dinner is served is a way to defuse the frightening possibility that the beautiful Christian princess could potentially marry a rigid Muslim Moor. Directing the Moroccan prince to spend time in the Christian temple and then eat with other Christians is meant to mollify an unwanted situation. In other words, the only way the Christian princess’s marriage to a Moor can be accepted is if the Moor undoes his Muslim faith and becomes more Christian. We see this happen in *Othello* where the relationship between Othello and Desdemona is acceptable only because the Moor has been baptised. In *Merchant*, there is a connection between the temple in Portia’s palace and the dinner that is to follow, and this connection is framed by the idea or hope of religious conversion on the Moor’s part.

The religions of the prince and princess are reversed in *Island Princess* where the main suitors are Portuguese Christian and the princess of Tidore, Quisara, is Muslim. Quisara hosts her Christian suitor Rui Dias at numerous banquets where they engage in “merrier talk” (1.2.92) and which have apparently been key in developing their courtship (3.3.125-27). These two lovers acknowledge their religious difference, and Quisara even seems open to the possibility of converting for Rui Dias (1.2.49, 57, 70). But later in the

play, when she falls out of love with Rui Dias and is seriously drawn to the other Portuguese venturer, Armusia, she asks her new suitor to convert to Islam in order to marry him (4.5.34-35). Quisara's pleas to Armusia to "change your religion" (4.5.34) and "renounce that faith you are bred in" (4.5.36) indicate her strong desire to marry a Muslim suitor (at least in this moment until Armusia derides her and her faith and threatens to sever their ties, after which point, and desperate not to lose him, she converts to Christianity). If Quisara's hope was always to marry a Muslim (based on her ardent requests for Armusia to convert), then it is entirely plausible that when she was in love with Rui Dias, she hoped he would also convert. Thus, "the banquets that [Quisara] bid [Rui Dias] to" (3.3.126) were not only to develop their courtship, but, as Quisara hoped, they were also a means through which Rui Dias would ultimately convert. In both *Merchant* and *Island Princess*, the banquet between two religiously different suitors functions as a means through which to turn the suitors' (or guests') faiths. Although both suitors willingly participate in the banquet, they are at the mercy of their hosts, who therefore have the power to control religion-specific aspects of the banquet, such as heading to the temple first.

The range of eating scenarios – from overtly cruel and perverse to more willing and accepting – in the Turk plays studied here demonstrates how the early modern English used theatre as a place to test out ways in which to deal with religious others. The "techniques of performance" (Schechner 76) employed in these scenarios, such as the way characters are addressed, their seating positions, staging directions, costume changes, etc., could all be learned by theatre goers and then applied to real situations. Similarly, playwrights drew on real-life encounters as fodder for the stage. It is important

to remember Burton's warning that Turk plays are not "direct reflections of historical circumstances" nor is there a "collinear relationship to trace between the Turkish plays and the course of Anglo-Islamic relations"; they do, however, present a "triangulation of anxieties, desires, and *real* material conditions" (*Traffic* 33). As Anglo-Turkish interactions were becoming more and more prevalent, the dramatic representations of hospitality – the avenue through which these encounters repeatedly took place – were a useful, convenient, even necessary way for Britons to learn how to adapt to the world that was quickly changing around them. And despite the range of eating scenarios, what these theatregoers saw over and over again to varying degrees was the necessity to exert some control in a food encounter with religious others lest they fall victim to crossing over boundaries and turning Turk.

Chapter 3

Conversion Panic: Forced Conversions, Dissimulation, and Food in *The Merchant of Venice* and *A Game At Chess*

The repercussions of the Reformation, coupled with England's emergent capitalism as it participated in global traffic, resulted in a heightened consciousness, even anxiety, about religious conversion. Even before the English increasingly encountered religious others in the Mediterranean and Islamic world in the late Elizabethan period, the English faced anxieties about religious identity because their country had undergone three conversions in a span of twenty-five years: England broke away from the Roman Catholic Church, legislated by the first Act of Supremacy in 1534, reverted again to Catholicism under Mary Tudor's reign, and converted once more to Protestantism under Queen Elizabeth I. Following these upheavals Elizabethan England hoped to maintain a religiously homogenous state that necessarily involved forced conversions: Catholics were forced to become Protestants, while Jews living in England appeared outwardly as Christians. Under these circumstances, the English were suspicious of the sincerity of the convert since many were well aware that outward piety did not always correspond with inward belief.

Anxieties about religious conversion were exacerbated when England became increasingly connected to the Mediterranean and Islamic world as a result of their commercial and political endeavours. Jonathan Gil Harris has shown how the English "mercantilists understood the nation in terms of a potentially paradoxical pair of relations to the outside: England assumed its national identity in relation both to readily demonizable 'forraine' bodies (other nations, their citizens, their goods), which

potentially damaged their economic health, and to universal “rules” of transnational commerce, which sustained it” (*Sick* 8). I would add that England’s economic relations with other nations were also perceived as a threat to its *religious* health. As I discussed in Chapter One, the importation of Islamic goods and traffic with the Islamic world was perceived by religious critics to lead to moral corruption that included religious conversion, even apostasy. Business dealings with religious others was a potential means through which to fall “victim” to the other faith.

Early modern England, I argue in this chapter, experienced a “conversion panic” resulting from both growing uncertainty around the faith of Protestant converts (who risked undermining religious homogeneity by practicing their “true” faith secretly) and the threat posed by engaging in commercial relationships with religious others. Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice* (c.1596) and Thomas Middleton’s *A Game at Chess* (1624) explore this conversion panic through the language of food and eating practices. *Merchant* demonstrates how, for Shylock, a business partnership with Antonio is an opportunity to forcibly convert him. In this play, Shakespeare appropriates Jewish dietary laws and metaphors of eating to contend with the issue of forced conversions. In *A Game at Chess*, the food trope is used to allow characters to discern the truth behind feigned or hypocritical piety. Both plays speak to the anxiety of religious identity that England was facing: insincere and forced religious conversions, dissemblance and hypocrisy, and the anxiety surrounding the discrepancy between outer religious show and inward religious conviction.

Jewish Ritual Slaughter in *The Merchant of Venice*

Merchant exemplifies the threat of religious identity (or blurred religious boundaries) as a result of the Venetian Christians (and by extension the English) participating in global mercantile endeavours. The business transaction between Shylock and Antonio eventually results in Shylock's punishment: his forced conversion to Christianity. But Shylock is not the only merchant in this business partnership whose faith is threatened. It is my contention that Shylock seeks to undo Antonio's Christianity – to forcibly convert him to Judaism – by slaughtering Antonio according to the Jewish laws of *schechita*. Forced conversions inherently produce liminal figures: the convert typically identifies with his or her own original faith privately, while being socially identified with his or her new religion publicly. By forcing Shylock to convert, and through Shylock's parallel attempt to force Antonio to convert, the play contends with the issue that the early modern English were facing in the late Elizabethan period: that religious identity is threatened as a result of interacting with others in mercantilist adventures, and that religious identities are destabilized as a result of forced conversions.

My reading of Antonio and Shylock's relationship demonstrates not only the usefulness of dietetics to explore anxieties of religious difference, but it also indicates how the play's themes of transgressed religious boundaries and religious integration are understood in terms of food practices. Whereas many critics read the food imagery in *Merchant* as both literal and figurative representations of cannibalism, I argue that Shylock's desire for Antonio's flesh has little to do with actually wanting to eat Christian

flesh; rather, the food imagery conveys his intent to forcibly convert Antonio by way of Jewish dietary laws.³⁵

In 1593, approximately three years before *Merchant* was staged, the Dutch Church Libel was posted on the door of an immigrant church in London. It was a document that contained accusations against foreign immigrants, particularly French, Dutch, and Italian Protestants who had fled their respective countries, or who were born in England, and were therefore second- or third- generation immigrants. The economic crises in the 1590s, as Mathew Dimmock has described, provide a useful context for why a central issue of the libel is foreign trade: “grain shortages and economic depression were coupled with a surge of incoming economic migrants fleeing starvation and poor wages in the countryside” (“Guns” 209). Among the list of complaints, the libeller inveighs against the immigrants’ corrupt involvement in trade, accusing them of trading valuable English goods such as lead, “vittaile” (food), and “Ordenance” (artillery), for what is perceived as useless garbage (“gawds good store”). Dimmock’s analysis shows that new policies to trade with the Ottoman Empire and with North Africa “brought England a great deal of criticism from both home and abroad” (210) since the English

³⁵ Kim Hall sees the cannibalistic imagery as a way to explore ideas about colonialism and miscegenation; for Hall, “the language of eating” links outsiders like Shylock with “one of the most completing tropes of colonialist discourse: the cannibal” (93). Joan Fitzpatrick also notes the cannibalistic imagery but for her, there is a “shift from the Jew as cannibalistic savage toward Jewish dietary laws” in the court scene (“Dietaries” 104). And David Goldstein notes that “Shylock does not, as far as we know, plan to drink the blood, but the scene’s cannibalistic overtones, alongside the association of usurers with bloodsucking, calls up precisely that image” (*Eating* 86).

were now trading with the enemies of Christendom. Furthermore, in defying the Pope, who had forbidden trade in weaponry and metals with Muslims, the Protestant English, “In the schism of ongoing Reformation . . . had become the ‘infidels’ of Christendom, increasingly bound together in polemical, mercantile, and symbolic terms with the Muslim ‘infidels’ of North Africa and the Ottoman Empire” (210). Therefore, the English involvement in trade with Muslims brought about anxieties that extended beyond economic concerns; religious identity was also called into question.

In fact, embedded in the list of economic crimes supposedly committed by London’s immigrants are derogatory references to their faith even though these immigrants are Protestant refugees and could therefore be considered coreligionists with the native English. In the first instance the libeller compares the targeted audience to Jews: “Your Machiavellian Marchant spoyles the state / Your usury doth leave us all for deade / Your Artifex, & craftsman works our fate,/ And like the Jewes, you eate us up as bread” (qtd. in Freeman). The Jewish reference harkens back to the medieval stereotype of Jews who were perceived as host desecrators and cannibalistic usurers. Another reference to Jews is made again, this time implicitly in the line, “That Egipts plagues, vext not the Egyptians more / Then you do us” and again in “Weele cutte your throtes, in your temples praying.” The vicious threat continues, “Not paris massacre so much blood did spill / As we will doe just vengeance on you all / In *counterfeiting religion* for your flight” (qtd. in Freeman, emphasis added).³⁶ These lines indicate that for the libeller, the immigrant Protestants are not sincere coreligionists but have rather fled religious

³⁶ Jonathan Gil Harris explores the possibility that the Dutch community in London could also include secretly practicing Jews (*Sick Economies* 68-71).

persecution in disguise so that they may abuse English generosity by not only practising their Catholic or Jewish faiths secretly but also earning a livelihood at the expense of the hardworking native Englishmen. The perpetrators of these economic crimes are marginalized also for their religion: “weel cutte your throtes, in your temples praying” implies that the immigrants are not considered fellow brothers and sisters in Protestantism; they are ostracized for both their economic and religious practices. The libel, then, is not only an attack on the immigrants’ effects on the economy; they are blamed also for their insincere religious convictions. Further, the conflation of usury with Jews, and unscrupulous mercantile pursuits with “counterfeit” Protestantism, indicates a causal link between corrupt religious beliefs and immoral economic practices.

Lloyd Kermode’s analysis of the Dutch Church Libel shows that it contains common themes and references to Robert Wilson’s *Three Ladies of London* (1584). He demonstrates how Wilson’s Artifex, a native Englishman, “is sick of being poor and seeing the foreign artisans succeed, so ‘to be a workman to Lady Lucre’ (3.101) he will work under the name of Fraud, inhospitable to his foreign neighbours and a cheat to his English customers” (73). Artifex has to compromise his English Christian values in order to compete with the immigrant businessmen. Therefore, he “can no longer survive untainted by the alien” (71). Kermode links Wilson’s Artifex to the libel’s “Artifex, & craftsman [who] works our fate” by demonstrating how Wilson’s Artifex essentially becomes like the immigrant workers who cheat hardworking Englishmen. Similarly, Kermode quotes Wilson’s Lady Conscience to show how another supposedly alien economic practice – usury – has had to make its way into England in order for England’s economy to survive: “But usury is made tolerable amongst Christians as a necessary

thing, / So that, going beyond the limits of our law, they extort, and many to misery bring” (10.25-26). In both cases, foreign economic practices infiltrating London have forced the native English to compromise their own Protestant values in order to survive in the marketplace.

Whereas the libel seeks to eradicate all immigrants, Wilson’s play admits to England’s incorporation of these aliens in their midst. As I mention in Chapter Two, most of the vice characters (of alien heritage) in Wilson’s play get away scot-free without punishment so as to suggest that their corrupt practices have a place – and are maybe even welcomed – in English society. However, it should be noted that Wilson’s play is an allegory reminiscent of medieval morality plays that were meant to convey a didactic message to the audience. *Three Ladies* speaks, as the libel does, to the problem of foreign alien economics entering London, but by incorporating these aliens into English society and demonstrating the loss of true Englishness characterized by the deaths of the virtuous Lady Conscious and Hospitality, the play seeks to warn its audience of the impending damage to their Englishness.

By the time Shakespeare wrote *Merchant*, xenophobic anxieties about aliens perpetrating their unchristian acts amongst the English loomed in the minds of his contemporaries. Wilson’s play anticipates Shakespeare’s *Merchant* in its money-lending plot; Gerontus the generous Jew lends money to the Christian Mercadore, who cannot pay back his loans, and Usury (who, as we learn from Wilson’s sequel, is the descendent of Jews) poses an economic threat to the fabric of English and Christian society. However, the “alien’s” threat to a Christian man’s religious identity as a result of engaging in a perverse economic transaction is much more frightening in *Merchant*. The

analogous marginalized other, Shylock, is keen in his intent to kill, or as I argue, forcibly convert, Antonio, and this threat upon the play's Christians is represented as a direct consequence of interacting too closely with the non-Christian other.

The argument that Shylock seeks to forcibly convert Antonio has been put forth by several critics, whose interpretations are informed by Christian and Judaic circumcision practices. Janet Adelman and James Shapiro both argue that Shylock literalizes the Pauline explanation of Christian circumcision, and they cite, from the Geneva Bible, Deuteronomy 10:16 as evidence: "Circumcise the foreskin of your heart," and Galatians 6:13: "For they themselves which are circumcised keep not the Law, but desire to have you circumcised, that they might rejoice in your flesh" (the gloss to this last line in the Geneva Bible is "that they have made you Jews"). Based on this exegetical tradition, and the "wound that traditionally displayed Christ's heart" (111), according to Adelman, Shylock seeks to cut Antonio "simultaneously" in *both* parts – the penis and the heart – as though to enact the wound of crucifixion and of genital circumcision, a "double location of Antonio's wound" (113), which would confirm his "bondage to the letter" (113) because he would be literally enacting Paul's metaphorical circumcision of the heart. Adelman sees this as Shylock attempting to "collapse the distinction" (113) between the circumcision of the heart and penis, thereby exposing his incapability of understanding the move from flesh to spirit. Her argument is very much like Shapiro's, except, as she notes, hers "preserves some ambiguity" (186) about the location of the cut (penis and heart) whereas Shapiro specifies the heart. For Shapiro, Shylock attempts to convert Antonio by undoing his Christianity: "Shylock will cut his Christian adversary in

that part of the body where the Christians believe themselves to be truly circumcised: the heart” (127).

Theodor Reik has argued that Shylock’s desire to cut Antonio’s flesh is “as if he demanded that the Gentile be made a Jew if he cannot pay back the three thousand ducats at the fixed time. Otherwise put: Antonio should submit to the religious ritual of circumcision,” and at the end of the play, “it is poetic justice that the Jew be forced to become a Christian after he had insisted that his opponent become a Jew” (358-59). Stanley Cavell, Marc Shell, and Marjorie Garber all similarly argue that Shylock wants to “perpetrate a forced conversion” (Garber 309) by symbolically circumcising Antonio, “and hence turn him into a Jewish brother” (Shell 73).

Critics have sought to identify the part of body from where the pound of flesh is to be taken since Shylock’s original demand, from the body part that pleases him, later changes to nearest the merchant’s heart. Adelman describes the incision that is to be made on Antonio as a “spatial indeterminacy” (110). Both Cavell and Adelman (and Marc Shell who cites Cavell) interpret the frequent repetitions of “forfeit” and the line, “to cut the forfeit from that bankrupt there” (4.1.124), as a “near pun” on foreskin, but “forfeit” only remotely relates to “foreskin” insofar as the first syllable sounds the same.³⁷ To support this connection, Adelman points to the play’s (possible) preoccupation with circumcision by referring to Shapiro, who demonstrates that the word

³⁷ In the Folger (eds. Barbara Mowat and Paul Werstine), the Oxford Shakespeare (ed. Jay Halio), and the Longman (ed. David Bevington), the same line uses the word “forfeiture,” which sounds even further from foreskin. Additionally, neither the *OED*, nor the *Lexicons of Early Modern English* show any connection between forfeit and foreskin.

“flesh” was often used as a sixteenth-century euphemism for penis (Shapiro 121-122), and to Nora Fienberg, who offers convincing evidence that Gratiano’s “hood” in the line “Now by my hood, a gentle and no Jew” refers to his foreskin (Fienberg 452). But the phrase “nearest the merchant’s heart,” which is repeated twice, and even emphasised, “Those are the very words” (4.1.261), poses a problem: these critics who focus on circumcision must now relocate the specified location upward near the heart.

At 4.1.81 and elsewhere in the same scene, the word “heart” has at least two meanings. The first is the obvious life organ. The second is the seat of religious sincerity and conviction. Additionally, when accompanied with the adjective “hard,” the word “heart” indicates a lack of true Christian faith. The latter definition is found numerous times in both the Old and New Testaments. Exodus 9:35, for example, reads: “So the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, neither would he let the children of Israel go, as the Lord had said by Moses,” and Proverbs 28:14 reads: “Blessed is the man that feareth always: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into evil” (Geneva Bible). In religious terms, a hardened heart refers to non-believers, and in the New Testament, it specifically refers to stubborn Jews who refuse to let Christ enter their hearts. Antonio highlights this perceived hardness of Jewish hearts when he tells Bassanio that accomplishing the most difficult tasks is easier than to soften the hardest thing of all, Shylock’s “Jewish heart” (4.1.71-81). I call attention to the association of hard hearts with Jews because I believe it applies to Shylock’s use of “heart” earlier at 3.1.125-26, “I will have the heart of him if he forfeit.” Shapiro and others cite this line to support an argument that Shylock intends to circumcise the merchant’s heart; this interpretation is problematic, however, because the bond specifies “nearest” but not actually the heart. To “have the heart” implies to

possess the heart physically, or otherwise have control over it; I therefore read “heart” here as the seat of religious faith. That is, if Shylock obtains the forfeiture, then Shylock will have control over Antonio’s heart, the heart that determines his religious faith.

Part of the reason why Shapiro and Adelman (and others) consider circumcision in their interpretation of Antonio’s flesh is because of Alexandre Silvayn’s *The Orator* (1596), a possible source for *Merchant*, in which the Christian victim’s flesh is specified (“privy members”). Additionally, both Shapiro and Adelman emphasise that the flesh is to be “cut off” rather than cut out, which further indicates, for them, that the flesh to be collected calls to mind circumcision (of the “privy member”). But Adelman admits that both “heart” and “cut off” keeps the “location of the incision equivocal” (111). If it is true that Shakespeare consulted this source, then he tellingly left out “privy members.” Furthermore, Adelman’s and Shapiro’s emphasis on “cut off” and “heart” seem to overlook that Shylock says “To cut the forfeiture *from* that bankrupt there” (4.1.124, emphasis added), and more importantly, that Portia uses the word “bosom” twice, and Shylock, in agreement, says “Ay, his breast,” which is also mentioned twice (4.1.263,300). I will return in a moment to the significance of the words “bosom” and “breast.”

In Deuteronomy, God commands that “Thou shalt kill of thy herd and thy flock which the Lord hath given thee, as I have commanded thee” (12:21); “as I have commanded thee” alludes to the rules about how to slaughter an animal, which are found in the Talmud. The laws of *shechita* contain several stipulations: a) the knife must be extremely sharp and should have no defects; b) the knife must swiftly cut across the throat to sever the vital arteries (carotid and jugular veins) so that the animal dies

instantly; c) the *Shochet* (ritual slaughterer) must be learned and pious; d) the animal to be slaughtered must belong to the category of clean animals as specified in Leviticus, and must not be sick or tainted in any way; and most importantly, e) the animal's blood must be drained, since "To remove the blood is the purpose of the laws of *Kashering*" (Dresner and Siegel 29). Shylock's whetting his knife is our first clue that he sees himself as a *Shochet*. Since the *shechita* laws emphasize the sharpness of the knife we cannot overlook the significance that Shylock not only literally holds a knife and whets it upon his shoe, but that Gratiano calls attention to it: Why does thou whet thy knife so earnestly?" (4.1.123). Moreover, Gratiano's reaction contains several allusions to the sharpness of the knife: "knife keen," "hangman's ax," "sharp envy," and "pierce" (4.1.126-28).

The slaughtered animal will die instantly if its veins and arteries are severed. Antonio hints at this imminent plight when he says, "For if the Jew do cut but deep enough, / I'll pay it instantly with all my heart" (4.1.292-93). Editorial glosses to this line indicate that "all my heart" means both "most willingly" (Oxford 202) and literally, with the "heart's blood" (Longman 209). The latter seems to take into consideration that the word "all" preceding "my heart" indicates the heart and all that accompanies it in order to sustain life: the veins and arteries which necessarily contain blood. In either case, the line contains enough evidence (deep cut, instant death, all my heart), to argue that Antonio alludes to Shylock's intention of ritual slaughter.

Returning now to the matter of the "breast" and "bosom," which I think might have been overlooked by Shapiro and Adelman in their focus on the "privy member" that is to be "cut off," I hope to demonstrate how these words fulfill the requirements for a

Jewish ritual slaughter. At this point we have the sharp knife and instant death required for *shechita* but we are still left with the matter of the “breast” and “bosom” that do not immediately call to mind the throat containing vital arteries. Certainly the words “bosom” and “breast” indicate the place containing vital organs, which might also direct critics to contend that Shylock seeks to circumcise Antonio’s heart. For example, in Shakespeare’s “Venus and Adonis,” the heart lies within the bosom: “Within my bosom, whereon thou dost lie,/ My boding heart pants, beats, and takes no rest,/ But, like an earthquake, shakes thee on my breast” (646-48). But in *Merchant* the words “breast” and “bosom,” which are interchangeable in this scene (Portia says “lay bare your bosom” while Shylock responds, “Ay, his breast” (4.1.262-63) bear an alternative meaning that has not been previously discussed.

In 1588, Timothy Bright published *Characterie: An Arte of Shorte, Swifte, and Secrete Writing by Character* and he has since been given credit for inventing modern shorthand (*Dictionary of National Biography*, 337-339). It is a complex system that allows one to produce writing that is “short, swifte, and in secrete.”³⁸ Bright also offers a list of words with accompanying associative words both similar and dissimilar, though not to be mistaken as simply synonyms and antonyms. For example, because the word “rosemary” does not have an assigned short-hand character, one would use its associate word, “herb,” and then place the character for the letter *r* on the left side of the

³⁸ For a useful explanation of Bright’s system, see Patricia Brewerton’s “‘Several Keys to Ope’ the Character’: The Political and Cultural Significance of Timothy Bright’s ‘Characterie,’” *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 33.4 (2002): 945-961. Print.

word “herb” to indicate that the word is the same as “herb” but starts with *r*.

(Unsurprisingly, modern critics have dismissed Bright’s system as impractical). If the word is dissimilar, the character for *r* would go on the right side of the word “herb.” For the purpose of my argument, however, we need not focus on the details of the system. Rather, I am calling attention to the fact that next to the word “throat” Bright offers the word “breast.” He does not specify that these are similar terms, but if we take a cue from his numerous word combinations elsewhere on the list, we can infer that for Bright, they are indeed associative. For example, next to “rocke” is “stone”; next to “memorie” is “remember”; next to “luck” is “fortune”; and next to “bosom” is “breast.”

The throat-breast association becomes enormously significant for my argument because it is the throat that must be severed, according to the laws of *schechita*, in order to drain the blood and allow the animal to die instantly. The bond specifies “nearest his heart” and I propose that the throat is a body part that fits this location. In fact, anatomically, the part that is *nearest* the heart would be the arteries that stem from it: “The vertue that is called *Vitalis*, is the vertue of life, & hath mouing by the throat, or artery pipes, in which it moueth the spirits that commeth from the hart. For this vertue hath place in the heart. *And of the heart springeth the hollow or artery pipes*, as the vaines spring out of the liuer” (emphasis added, Bartholomaeus Anglicus D3r).³⁹ The veins and arteries need to be severed; a synonym for “sever,” of course, is “cut off,”

³⁹ See also Thomas Vicary, *The Englishemans treasure, or treasor for Englishmen vvith the true anatomye of mans body*, compiled by that excellent chirurgion Maister Thomas Vicary (1586): “Nowe I will beginne at the Artere. This Artere is a member [...] simple and spermaticke, hollowe and synowye, hauing his springing from the heart, bringing from the heart to euery member blood and spirite of life” (Cv).

which means the “privy member” on which Adelman and Shapiro focus is not the only potential object of this verb. The throat, I am asserting, is the location Shylock seeks to cut in order to drain Antonio’s blood to render the *shechita* complete.⁴⁰

The trial scene contains a sharpened knife, an allusion to an instant death if the cut is deep enough, and clues pointing toward the location of the incision. But the most important law, the purpose of *shechita*, has not and will never occur for Shylock. The very thing Shylock needs to happen to render the *shechita* slaughter complete – the shedding of Antonio’s blood – is precisely what Portia averts. Joan Fitzpatrick argues that Portia ironically enforces the Jewish law that forbids the consumption of blood since the sacrifice of Antonio “must eschew the spilling of blood” (“Dietaries” 104). Therefore, she asserts, it is a Jewish dietary principle that saves Antonio, not a Christian one. Similarly, David Goldstein argues that “Portia’s checkmate of Shylock uses not only Venetian, but also Jewish law Portia might be seen for this moment not just as a civil judge but as a Rabbanical one, presenting Shylock with his religious error – the error of a Jew who refuses not Christian laws but his own” (*Eating* 86). Among “his own” laws, Goldstein includes Shylock’s “ignorance of more important prohibitions” such as “abstaining literally and metaphorically from the barbarity of blood” (87). Citing Fitzpatrick as the only critic who has studied the trial scene in the context of Jewish dietary laws, Goldstein asks us to re-examine this scene in light of kosher laws since “we

⁴⁰ The OED defines “cut” as the following: “To separate or detach with an edged tool. a. trans. To separate or remove by cutting; to sever from the main body; to lop off. . . also frequently cut away, cut off, cut out” (emphasis added, III. 14a).

tend to overlook the culinary implications of Balthazar's ingenious trap for Shylock: the requirement that 'no jot of blood' be shed" (84).

Although both Goldstein and Fitzpatrick address the Jewish prohibition of blood consumption, they overlook the point that in order to avoid blood consumption the blood must necessarily be spilt. Recall that "The Jewish method of slaughtering (*schechita*) is a method designed to cause the animal the least pain; to bring about instant death; and *to remove as much blood as possible*" (Dresner and Siegel 71, emphasis added). This process of "exsanguination [which] is the bleed-out of the carcass . . . is especially important in Jewish law as Jews are forbidden to consume blood Shechita ensures maximum exsanguination" (Hesselman, Rosen et al., 5). Thus Portia does not enforce a Jewish dietary law rather, she obstructs it – she prevents the draining of blood – and that is what saves Antonio.

Although Shylock is adamant in his refusal to eat with Christians, in Act 2, scene 5, Shylock surprisingly attends the dinner at Bassanio's house, albeit "in hate" (2.5.15). Goldstein's analysis seeks to account for Shylock's apparent contradiction, since for Goldstein, "There is no particular reason for him to join the Christians for dinner: the bond has been written and sealed, so there is not much to negotiate, and those negotiations could easily transpire in a less highly charged locale" (*Eating* 75). For Goldstein, "the best explanation for his [Shylock's] departure is to fulfil a plot point – to make sure that he is out of the house when Jessica escapes into the arms of Lorenzo (who leaves the very same dinner to steal her away)" (75). However, I think this explanation overlooks the reason Shylock himself provides: "But yet I'll go in hate to feed upon / The prodigal Christian" (2.5.15-16). The ambiguity of this line offers multiple interpretations

and is therefore too significant to be summed up as a simple dramaturgical move. If Shylock needed to be out of the house in order for Jessica to meet Lorenzo, I believe there could have been other places for Shylock to go.

Shylock does not specify who the “prodigal Christian” is, but since elsewhere Shylock calls Antonio “A bankrout, a prodigal” (3.1.43-44), it is likely that he is referring to Antonio here. Susan McLean has shown that “prodigal” in *Merchant* has three key meanings: “It can refer to extravagant expenditure, lavish generosity, or the parable of the Prodigal Son [Luke15:11-32], whose reckless defiance of paternal control led to sin, ruin, repentance, and ultimate forgiveness” (46). I am interested in exploring the possibility of applying the biblical reference to Shylock’s statement rather than the obvious definition of “extravagant expenditure.” By referring to the biblical parable of the “prodigal Christian” upon whom Shylock wishes to metaphorically feed at 2.5.15-16, Shylock is unknowingly foreshadowing his eventual conversion. If Shylock were to consume or take in this Christian prodigal – who is characterised by his turn to righteousness – then a prodigal Christian would become a part of him. The meal, where both Christian and Jew meet, is a site where Shylock’s religious identity becomes unstable.⁴¹ Considering that Shylock previously denounced sharing meals with Christians, he is transgressing a religious boundary by assuming a risk in going to Bassanio’s for dinner. The meal, like so many other meals involving religious others in the period, puts pressure on the fault lines separating religious others. Shylock has already made it clear that eating with

⁴¹ Unlike Shylock’s Jewish identity, Christian identity at this dinner is not threatened because the Christians are in control of the dinner; they are hosts living in a predominately Christian city whose laws fall in their favour. I discuss the idea of shared meals and control in Chapter Two on hospitality.

Christians would betray his faith, so his choosing to attend the meal signals his turn (even if only slightly) toward Christianity. Even though he leaves the dinner still seeking revenge on Antonio, I argue that the meal has changed him insofar as the offstage meal functions as a subtle turning point that foreshadows his eventual subsumption into Christianity. The Prodigal Son essentially undergoes a conversion, a turn back to righteousness; to feed on that figure implies Shylock will also turn, and at least appear outwardly to have turned to righteousness once he becomes Christian.

If Shylock's plan is to slaughter Antonio, one might wonder why Shylock would want Antonio to die at the moment that he converts. Unlike the wishes of the play's Christians, Shylock's wish to convert Antonio entails extreme measures, since, in a Christian Venice, there certainly would be no law enforcing a Christian's conversion to Judaism. Antonio must necessarily die at the moment he converts so that he dies a Jew, and so that there is no chance of reversion. Of course, Antonio's conversion is all based on Shylock's perspective; even if Antonio is forced to convert, just as Shylock is forced to convert in the final act, the conversion would be insincere. Nevertheless, the significance of faith at the moment of death is brought to our attention in Shapiro's reading of Christopher Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* (c.1590), where Abigail, upon her second (and sincere) conversion to Christianity, insists upon her deathbed, "Witness I die a Christian" (3.6.40). Shapiro connects Abigail's insistence to the popular belief that Jewish converts, upon their deathbeds, repudiated the Christianity they had once embraced (158). Similarly, Daborne's Benwash announces, just before he dies, "Bear witness, though I lived a Turk, I die a Jew" (16.213). Professing faith at the moment of death seems to function as a confirmation, and, perhaps, a final attempt to influence what

might occur to one's soul after death. In a 1572 pamphlet of "godly prayers and meditations," Thomas Achelley offers a prayer in which he emphasises religious conviction at the moment of death: "Geue me grace swéete Iesu to perseuer in my faith till the end [...] and at the very instant of death, when I fetche the laste gaspe, my mynd may be withdrawen with no idle or phantastical cogitations, but continually excercised in the meditation of the sweete and comfortable name of Iesu" (sig. M7r). Shylock's desire to have Antonio die at the moment he becomes a Jew is a way to confirm his conversion and prevent a potential reversion.

The koshering of Antonio might also make one wonder how Shakespeare could have known about kosher laws and *shechita* when England was ostensibly free of all known and practising Jews since their expulsion in 1290. Thanks to extensive scholarship by early twentieth-century historians, we now know that a "goodly company" of Jews lived in Elizabethan and Tudor England (Wolf 2). There were at least thirty-seven households in England in the late fifteenth century in which Jews practised their faith (Roth 137). In the 1530s, a certain Alves Lopes held a synagogue in his house, which served also as an "information centre for the Marrano community" (Katz 5). In 1541, orders were given to arrest "certain persons suspected to be Jews" (138), and it is on record that these Jews collected funds to maintain a secret synagogue (141). Some of this evidence is known because in 1556, a Portuguese sailor, Jurdao Vaz, before the Lisbon Inquisition, denounced a Marrano, Thomas Fernandes. Later, Fernandes confessed to living a secret Jewish life between 1545 and 1555; he also revealed two communities of Marranos living in Bristol and London. Fernandes' uncle, Henrique Nuñez, was the head of the Bristol community and with his wife, Beatriz Fernandes, held a secret synagogue

in their home: “In some way that is not explained she obtained Kosher meat, and it is on record that when she travelled from Bristol to London and back again – as she often did – she had trouble to find clean things to eat in the Inns, and things which had not been cooked in pans used by Christians” (Wolf 87). They also observed Jewish holidays, baking unleavened bread for Passover and fasting for Yom Kippur.

Closer to Shakespeare’s time, a Spanish prisoner of war, Pedro de Santa Cruz, was captured in 1586 and released two years later. He delivered a disposition in Madrid, stating that “in their [Marranos’] own homes they live as such observing their Jewish rites; but publicly they attend Lutheran Churches, and listen to the sermons, and take the bread and wine in the manner and form as do the other heretics” (Katz 65). Historian David Katz thus concludes that “the so-called secret community of Marrano Jews in Elizabethan London was therefore hardly secret at all” (65). There was also a well-known House of Converts known as the *Domus Conversorum* that was established in 1293 under King Henry III in order to provide a home for “destitute Jews” who converted to Christianity (Adler 2). From 1551 to 1578 it was empty, but in 1578, Yehuda Menda (whose public baptism was followed by Foxe’s popular sermon) entered the *Domus*. He had been living in London for six years before his conversion, indicating further the presence of secret Jews even closer to the end of the sixteenth century. Because the *Domus* was built on Chancery Lane, close to the Blackfriars and Globe theatres, Michael Adler suggests that it is “worth speculating whether Shakespeare ever visited *Domus* in order to obtain information upon Jewish dress and manners and religious customs” (29). In Adler’s opinion, “Elizabethan England was in a position to become well acquainted with Jewish matters in general” (31).

In 1598, two Polish converts, Philip Ferdinand and his wife Elizabeth, entered the *Domus* where Ferdinand lived for roughly one year before relocating to Leiden University to teach Arabic and Hebrew. Ferdinand, who had converted to Catholicism in 1585, came to England about ten years later where he converted to Protestantism. While in England, he matriculated from Cambridge University on 16 December 1596 (Hamilton n. pag). He knew the Talmud well, and in 1597, while still in Cambridge, he published a book in Latin, *Haec sunt verba Dei*. His book was directed toward the growing popular interest in Hebrew since Protestants had an interest in returning to the practices and beliefs of early Christians, so necessitating a closer study of Hebrew and the Old Testament. Since he was “the first scholar to introduce the English Hebraists to certain extracts from rabbinic literature ... His book was accordingly influential, referred to frequently by Samuel Purchas, treasured by John Selden, emulated by Hugh Broughton, and assimilated by numerous other students of Jewish tradition” (Hamilton).

Ferdinand’s book contained “specimens of Hebrew literature” including 613 precepts of Mosaic Law; the fourth chapter in his table of contents is devoted to Jewish dietary laws (Adler 31). The popularity of this book and its influence on other scholars and writers indicates that knowledge of Jewish dietary laws was not entirely unheard of at the end of the sixteenth century in England. A couple of decades later, in 1618, the English version of *Statutum de Pistoribus* (the baker’s statute) contained a clause prohibiting Christians from buying Jewish meat, which provides further evidence (in addition to Beatriz Fernandes’ acquisition of kosher meat) that Jews not only kept kosher in England around Shakespeare’s time but that Protestant Englishmen and women would have known or heard about Jewish meat (Hyamson 142).

Further evidence that the Elizabethans knew about Jews and their slaughtering practices is found in Giles Fletcher's *The policy of the Turkish empire* (1597). Fletcher, an English poet and diplomat (and uncle to the playwright, John Fletcher), refers to *shechita* laws – specifically the act of cutting the animal's throat – in his description of the manners and customs of Turks. Fletcher writes, "The place where the beasts are killed they [the Turks] call *Canaara*, that is, the place of sacrifices. They doo vse (according to the manner & custome of the Iewes) to cut the throat of the beast which they sacrifice" (sig. K1r). What is telling about this statement is that Fletcher refers to the Jews in a way that suggests his readers would already know about their manner and customs. In other words, he refers to the familiar practices of the Jews in order to explain the unfamiliar practices of the Turks.

According to Marvin Felheim, the food imagery in *Merchant* "is one of the most significant features of the play" (102). Indeed, food references abound; there are at least twenty-three occasions when someone is invited to dinner or refers to a meal (103). Critics have offered varying explanations to account for the prevalence of food imagery. Some read the language of eating in the play as metaphorical: Maryellen Keefe interprets appetite/emptiness as a desire (Antonio's melancholy is a sign of his hunger/desire for something, while Shylock's need to feed his revenge possibly grows out of an inner, spiritual emptiness). For Fitzpatrick, Shylock "does not enjoy feeding in the literal sense" ("Dietaries" 102), although she concludes that Shylock's identity is characterised by his dietary choices more than by his ethnicity. For Fitzpatrick, Shylock conforms to the melancholy type, and because of this humoral disposition he is averse to eating (102).

On the other hand, Chris Hassel considers the literal sense of eating in the play; he sees the food imagery reinforcing the Christian debates on the nature of the sacrament. For Hassel, Antonio is a Christ-like figure whose body and blood are sought after by Shylock, who seeks communion. Shylock intends to literally enact a “bloody sacrifice reminiscent of Christian Communion” (192). Leslie Fiedler’s opinion is that Shylock “does not even really want to eat him [Antonio], except maybe in dreams,” and though he notes the cannibalistic nature of Shylock’s hunger, he believes the “metaphors of eating disappear in Act IV” (111). Julia Lupton argues that Shylock’s adherence to the Jewish dietary laws prevents him from participating in a “common humanity”; for the play’s Christians, Shylock cannot enjoy a “dual citizenship” as a member of Israel and also take part within the general Venetian Christian community because he still holds on to the old laws, specifically the dietary laws (131). And finally, Goldstein, who has written most extensively on eating and *Merchant*, interprets the dietary laws in *Merchant* (particularly the laws concerning pork) as a way to explore “Jewishness” and “Scottishness” (“Jews” 316) since both the Jews and Scots were known to abhor pork consumption (323). He argues that the “threat of Judaism and Judaizing to the Venetian corporate body finds stark echoes in the debates about English and Scottish hegemony during the waning years of Elizabeth’s life” (316).

Goldstein studies further notions of eating in *Merchant* in his recent monograph, *Eating and Ethics in Shakespeare’s England*, which more broadly considers “eating from the point of view of community” (3) in order to argue that in early modern England, “eating was viewed primarily as a commensal rather than an individual act” (6). Thus, Goldstein examines the idea of shared food and meals in *Merchant* – specifically the

failure of meals since characters are constantly talking about eating but seldom ever actually eat – to point out “the high risk of eating in a culture that finds in Eucharistic worship a central paradigm for community” (23). Through eating, communities are either united or divided, “culminating in the trial scene, where the boundaries of the two religions dissolve in an intense exploration of both the kosher laws and Christian pieties of eating, especially Eucharistic ones” (23).

These varying interpretations underscore the significance of the language of food and eating practices in *Merchant*. My own analysis seeks to identify the food trope in *Merchant* as a major vehicle that carries the threat of a forced religious conversion, and this threat is a potential consequence of partnering in business with a religious other. From the outset, for Shylock, the opportunity to do business with Antonio is bound up with the possibility of a religious conversion. When Shylock contemplates lending three thousand ducats to Antonio in an aside, he resolves a tension between religious difference and economic practice by using a food metaphor: “I hate him for he is a Christian, / But more for that in low simplicity / He lends out money gratis and brings down / The rate of usance here with us in Venice. / If I can catch him once upon the hip, / I will feed fat the ancient grudge that I bear him” (1.3.42-47). If Shylock can have the upper hand financially, he muses, he will be able to act on his long-standing grudge against Antonio, by, I argue, forcibly converting Antonio. To feed the “ancient grudge” with fat is to indulge in the fantasy that the Jew will defeat the Christian in the ultimate way possible: converting him to Judaism. That he imagines koshering Antonio in order to forcibly convert him speaks to how religious difference is inextricably tied to food practices in the culture at large.

In *Merchant*, food and the body intersect to function as a potential site at which religious conversion takes place.⁴² In the face of religious difference, conversions are perceived in physical, even superficial terms. Upon Shylock's forced conversion to Christianity, for example, his request to leave because he is "not well" (4.1.414) suggests a bodily reaction to his imminent conversion. Food is therefore a unique mechanism through which to explore religious tensions because in addition to it being theatrical (food and/or eating is a common and useful trope and prop for playwrights), for early moderns, food and eating practices were a much needed visible and reliable marker of inner faith in a post-Reformation world where sincere, inner conviction was constantly questioned. Food's role in exposing hypocritical dissemblers is particularly evident in *A Game at Chess*. Like *Merchant*, in *A Game at Chess* food and faith are inextricably linked to the extent that inner faith is perceived or discovered by outer eating practices, whether literal or metaphorical.

Needless to say, there are all kinds of problems with Shylock's attempt to slaughter Antonio, the first and foremost being that he intends to commit the sin of murder. He is not a pious Jew therefore he is unfit to be a *shochet*. And Antonio, if we are to consider him an animal to be sacrificed, is not a clean, healthy animal: he is a melancholic, "tainted wether" (4.1.116). However, had Shylock succeeded and slaughtered Antonio according to a perverse performance of *shechita*, then to Shylock, Antonio would have been rendered kosher. And if kosher signifies Jewish, then a kosher Antonio means a Jewish Antonio.

⁴² This is also visually apparent in the figure of Middleton's Fat Bishop, a gormandizing hypocrite who converts twice in *A Game at Chess*.

Food and Faith: Jewish Dietary Laws and Markers of Faith Identity

Food historians and anthropologists have long established that food and eating is not just about nutritional value. Roland Barthes's essay on the psychosociology of food has influenced key food historians such as Jean Soler and Mary Douglas on the semiotic and symbolic power of food. Food is a "system of communication," a sign, that when studied, "constitutes an information" (Barthes 21). According to Carole Counihan and Penny van Esterik, editors of *Food and Culture*, "food touches everything" because it is "the foundation of every economy" (1). Indeed, food lies at the foundation of God's covenant with Moses, revealed in the Torah or Pentateuch.

The Mosaic dietary code "fulfills the same function as circumcision or the Sabbath" (Soler 57) in that it is a distinctive trait of the Hebrew people. In fact, the Mosaic dietary law functions to separate Hebrews from other people: "I am the Lord your God, which have separated you from other people. Therefore shall ye put difference between clean beasts and unclean, and between unclean fowls and clean; neither shall ye defile yourselves with beasts and fowls, nor with any creeping thing, that the ground bringeth forth, which I have separated from you as unclean" (Lev. 20:24-25). There are two purposes of Mosaic dietary laws that are of particular interest to my thesis: the first is social cohesion, bringing Jews together, and the second is to make the Jews distinct from the Gentiles (Beer 71). Even circumcision, which is meant to identify Jews, is not as suitable a marker as food because it excludes women, and because evidence has shown that in Jewish efforts to proselytize, some "Jews in the diaspora were prepared to allow some male gentiles to be treated as Jews even without undergoing circumcision"

(Goodman 67).⁴³ (An effort to convert Antonio without circumcision, then, is not at all impossible.) “Food, therefore, was the most palpable mark of Jewish identity” (Beer 77) in antiquity.⁴⁴

Because Mosaic laws functioned to separate Hebrews from other peoples, Christianity could only arise from breaking away from these demarcating structures. In fact, one of the “decisive ruptures” allowing for the emergence of Christianity is concerned with dietary laws (Soler 65). Unlike the Hebrews who adhered to dietary laws as a means to keep themselves distinct, “later-Jews” (or early Christians) abolished such laws for the opposite effect: to expand and welcome other peoples. For Christians, food does not defile a person: “That which goeth into the mouth, defileth not the man, but that which cometh out of the mouth that defileth the man” (Matt. 15:11). The Christians’ rejection of adherence to Mosaic dietary law is exemplified by Acts 10, in which Peter sees a vision containing all kinds of clean and unclean animals and then hears God’s voice speak to him: “arise, Peter: kill, and eat” (10:13). Peter resists the commandment twice because he does not wish to defile himself and eat an unclean animal, but God continues to repeat the order. Peter’s doubt is lifted with the following episode in which three men arrive, sent by the Roman Cornelius who wishes to hear Peter explain the gospel. He goes with Cornelius, shares a meal with him, and then baptizes him; Cornelius

⁴³ See Martin Goodman, who writes, “It is certain that an uncircumcised Jew was not a logical impossibility” (67). John Collins similarly concludes that “circumcision was not a universal requirement for conversion in the second-temple period” (163-179).

⁴⁴ See also David Kraemer’s study for an in-depth analysis of Jewish dietary laws and the shaping of Jewish identity.

is the first non-Jew to convert to Christianity (Soler 65). Peter's vision is important because it shows the Christian abolition of dietary laws and by implication, an "abolition of the distinction between Jews [early Christians] and non-Jews" (65). In other words, Peter's vision shows that Christians did not seek to remain one cohesive unit via adherence to dietary laws. "Not wanting to restrict Christianity to Jewish converts alone," explains food historian Ken Albala, "it is understandable why Paul and others sought to abolish the kosher laws outright" (*Food* 10). It is "from this starting point" (Peter's vision and Cornelius's subsequent baptism) that "Christianity could begin its expansion" (65). That early Christians broke away from kosher laws and rejected dietary rules is in itself a marker of Christian identity.

Prohibiting the consumption of unclean foods is just as much a sign of Judaism as permitting all foods is a sign of Protestant Christianity. Although an anti-Catholic polemicist, Thomas Becon differentiates between a Protestant, for whom all food is permissible since Christ "gave free libertie to all men, to eate all meates at all tymes," and the anti-Christ, the "doctrine of the Devilles, to forbidde that to bee eaten, whiche God has made to bee received with thanks giving" (sig. B6r, B7v). Rejecting the kosher law of abstaining from pork consumption, for example, serves as a Christian act defying Judaism in Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair* (1614). The hypocritical and satirized Puritan, Zeal-of-the-land Busy, retracts his earlier prohibition against eating the fair's pork to say that "There may be a good use made of it too, now I think on 't: by the public eating of swine's flesh, to profess our hate and loathing of Judaism, whereof the brethren stand taxed. I will therefore eat, yea, I will eat exceedingly" (1.6.82-85). The joke is that the Puritans were more tolerant of Jews than other Christian sects and after the Jews'

expulsion from England in 1290 they were readmitted under Oliver Cromwell during the Puritan Republic (Ostovich 576). Busy's proclamation to eat pork, however, serves to expose how kosher laws demarcate Jews from Christians.

That adherence to Jewish dietary laws is tantamount to faith itself is a notion Shylock himself argues: "I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, and so following, but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you" (1.3.35-39). In Shylock's description of everyday living (buying, selling, talking, walking, etc.), he excludes from sharing with Christians the part that is generally accepted to be as perfunctory as the rest – eating and drinking. Understandably, a Jew would not pray with a Christian; including eating and drinking in the same category as prayer, Shylock equates the activities. Furthermore, Shylock's sarcastic response to Bassanio's dinner invitation begins with a line that explains why Shylock would be averse to joining the Christians for dinner: "Yes, to smell pork! To eat of the habitation which your prophet the Nazarite conjured the devil into!" (1.3.33-34). If Shylock were to eat with the Christians, whose diet included pork, Shylock would be running the risk of threatening his Jewish identity, a fact I discussed earlier in my explanation for what happens when Shylock ultimately does attend the dinner at Bassanio's.

An important implication of food functioning as a marker of religious identity is that inherent in adherence to, or rejection of, dietary laws is a fear of assimilation and

consequently conversion.⁴⁵ For example, in the Book of Daniel, Daniel and his three companions are taken captive by King Nebuchadnezzar into Babylon where they are given a portion of the king's meat. But Daniel chooses not to eat the meat lest it defile him (1:8). The commentary in the Geneva Bible indicates that the king's meat was permissible "for afterwards he did eat," but he chose not to at first for he might be enticed "to forget his religion and accustomed sobriety" and that "in his meat and drink he might daily remember of what people he was from." For Daniel, then, to partake of the king's meat would facilitate his assimilation with the Babylonians whereby he would forget his devout and sober lifestyle. John Calvin's opinion in his commentaries on Daniel 1:8 is that Daniel perceived the king's meat to be danger to him, and did not wish to become "degenerate" by eating it; he refused it to "escape being tampered with" (97). Calvin's lengthy commentary seems to shy away from the possibility that Daniel abstained from the king's meat because it might not have been kosher. However, George Joye's (1545), Andrew Willet's (1610), and John Downname's (1657) commentaries on the same verse suggest that Daniel wished to adhere to kosher laws: "Daniels faith shyneth in these wordis. That he determined not to be poluted with sicke [such] meatis as God had forboden him and all iewes in leuitico" (Joye sig. B8r). Willet also tellingly raises the issue of Daniel possibly forgetting his religion if he were to indulge in the king's meat (sig. C1r).

⁴⁵ See also Maggie Kilgour who argues that "to eat in a country is potentially to be eaten by it," that is, to be "subsumed" by a "hostile host" (23). Kim Hall cites Kilgour to support her point that Shylock's reluctance to eat with the Christians reflects his fear of "be[ing] subsumed...by a hostile host" (99).

Food's role in reflecting faith is prevalent in both the Old and New Testaments: "The New Testament," Albala writes, "is rich with food references and metaphors" (*Food* 12). Food is also mentioned repeatedly as a marker connected to religion in early modern contemporary literature from dietaries to medical tracts to histories. For example, in Holinshed's *Chronicles* (1587), we learn of some Jews who were invited to supper at a Christian Spaniard's home. The Jews were served "brawne" (pork), and thinking they were eating fish, ate "very earnestly." Soon after they finished eating, they were shown the head of the pig from which they had eaten. They rose from the table, ran home, and induced themselves to vomit "till (as they supposed) they had clensed [sic] their stomachs of that prohibited food" (222). The Jews' reaction indicates a fear of contamination more than a remorse for breaking a kosher law - after all, they ate unintentionally. It is as if consuming pork for these Jews was tantamount to apostasy. David Kraemer's study on Jewish eating and identity notes the real possibility that in non-Muslim lands, Jews who ate pork were considered apostates: "A Jew who ate pork [...] in public, in the company of non-Jews [was] an apostate" (3). Like Daniel, who feared forgetting his own religion by eating the king's meat, these Jews feared incurring a distance between themselves and their faith so long as the pork remained in their bellies.

Another example linking food, faith and conversion is in *Principal Navigations* (1589-1600), in which Hakluyt describes his experience meeting a group of Muslims (specifically Moors) in China. According to his observation, these Muslims seemed to know very little about their religion other than a few superficial details: they could recite brief passages from their "Alcoran," they knew that "Mahomet" was a "Moore," and they abstained from eating pork (sig. Ggg3r). In Hakluyt's experience, these Moors primarily

saw themselves as Muslims on the basis of their adherence to dietary laws. He further describes how the Moors' proselytizing efforts with a group of Chinese women indicate that the women's attitude to Islam is also based on dietary principles:

I asked them whether they conuerted any of the *Chinish* nation vnto their secte: they answered mee, that with much a doe they conuerted the women with whom they doe marry [...] but the difficultie they finde in them to be brought from eating swines flesh and drinking of wine. I am perswaded therefore, that if this Countrey were in league with vs, forbidding them neither of both, it would be an easie matter to draw them to our Religion... ("Reports of China," sig. Ggg3v)

In this excerpt, adhering to the Islamic dietary law of abstaining from pork and wine is an obstacle hindering conversion. It took much effort, "much ado," to convert the women, and that too, for the presumable benefits of marriage. Yet, the difficulty they faced in order to convert the Chinese women was not based, according to modern standards, on a fundamental belief; according to this anecdote, it was not a problem for the women to believe in Muhammad as the final Messenger, or to believe that God has no son (core beliefs of Islam). Rather, the difficulty depends on the new Muslim converts' (or the potential converts') struggle to adhere to Islamic dietary laws; their struggle suggests, perhaps, that, at least from Hakluyt's point of view, adherence to dietary laws *is* fundamentally Islamic (or Jewish if it were kosher laws). If it were the English in the place of the Moors, according to Hakluyt, the English would have easily converted the Chinese because no such dietary laws would have come in the way. Here, religious conversion hinges on dietary laws.

For the early modern English, Jewishness is defined or represented by Jewish dietary laws to the extent that kosher food/food practices are metonymically Jewish faith itself. In Robert Davenport's early seventeenth-century play, *A New Trick to Cheat the Devil* (1639), a Puritan spirit says, "I am a Puritan, one that will eate no Porke, / Doth use to shut his shop on Saterdayes, / And open them on Sundayes [...] / [...] A Jewish Christian, and a Christian Jew" (sig. G1v). In this period, radical Protestants such as Davenport's Puritan spirit were accused of being "Judaizers," Christians who followed certain Jewish practices. The problem of Judaizing in early seventeenth-century England was serious enough "to warrant the imprisonment of a handful of Christians emulating Jewish ways" (Shapiro 21). Among these Judaizers was John Traske, "the most notorious Judaizer in England in the early seventeenth century" (23). The Star Chamber found him guilty of teaching Mosaic dietary laws concerning the difference between unclean and clean meats, and when he was imprisoned, he was allowed to eat only the meat he had previously prohibited (23). Traske later renounced his ways, as did one of his followers, Mary Chester, who was released from prison only "after recanting 'her errors on holding certain Judaical tenets touching the Sabbath and distinction of meats'" (*Calendar of State Papers, Domestic 1635-36*, qtd. in Shapiro, 24). Many contemporary writers found difficulty in defining Traske; while some believed he was an outright Jew, others like John Chamberlain (notable for writing letters), called him a "Jewish Christian" (Shapiro 24). Traske was accused of being "Jewish" mainly because of his observance of Saturday Sabbath and adherence to Jewish dietary laws. The example of Traske and his followers demonstrates the early modern English tendency to perceive diet as a significant marker of faith when confronted with religious others; when Traske refused to eat the meats

prohibited by God in Leviticus, Trask's Christian identity was consequently called into question.

The Problem of "Counterfeit Christians" and Religious Dissimulation

One of the dangers of "Judaizing" was that "ordinary people could suddenly turn Jewish [and this] was surely symptomatic of deeper cultural anxieties about religious identity experienced by English men and women at the time" (Shapiro 26). It must be stressed that despite the nation's formal conversion to Protestantism as a result of the Reformation, England's history of conversion caused a great deal of anxiety around the sincerity and truthfulness of religious conviction among Englishmen and women even near the end of Elizabeth's reign. As Jeffery Shoulson has shown in his recent *Fictions of Conversion*, "Even during the relative calm of the Elizabethan Settlement the national conversion to Protestantism was repeatedly challenged, not only by those who remained loyal to the Pope, but also by Puritans and other Protestants of the 'hotter' sort, who insisted that the break with Rome remained incomplete" (1).

The legal pressure to conform to England's national religion in the late-sixteenth and early- to mid-seventeenth century gave rise to an increasing problem of religious dissimulation. Catholics who chose to remain in England were forced to convert, and Jews who remained in England were forced to practice their faith secretly. The English called new Protestant Christians, whether they were previously Jews or Catholics, "Marranos" and "Conversos" respectively. Marranos were specifically linked to Spaniards especially of Jewish descent. John Florio's Italian-English dictionary (1598) defines the term as "a Jew, an infidel, a renegado, a nickname for a Spaniard" (216), and

in 1611 Florio edits this definition to read “a nickname for Spaniards, that is, one descended from Jews or infidels, and whose parents were never christened, but for to save their goods will say they are Christians” (300).⁴⁶ As for Conversos, Shapiro’s research shows that “what individual Conversos actually believed ranged from devout Catholicism to equally devout Judaism, with all kinds of permutations in between” (16).

The early modern English were highly suspicious of the sincerity of Jewish and Catholic conversions. William Prynne, the Puritan and pamphleteer, wrote in 1656, that

Most of the Jews, who since their dispersion have been baptized, and turned Christians in any age or place, have done it either out of fear, to save their lives, or estates, when endangered by popular tumults, or judgments of death denounced against them for their Crimes; or for fear of banishment, or by coercion of penal Laws, not cordially and sincerely, they still playing the Jews in private upon every occasion, and renouncing their baptism and Christianity at last, either before or at their deaths. (*A short demurrer* 93).

Here, Prynne offers an understandable explanation as to why Jewish conversions were generally perceived as insincere. If they were forced to convert to save their lives and livelihoods (just like Shylock some sixty years before Prynne wrote this pamphlet), then

⁴⁶ According to Jeffrey Shoulson, the history of Iberian Jews – their forced conversion in fourteenth-century Spain and the subsequent legal justification for “enforcing a Jewish designation on those who had converted to Christianity in order to avoid expulsion, forfeit of property, or execution” – inform English ideas about Jewish converts. He writes, “English encounters with Jews—occasionally on English soil, more often in the Levant, and especially in the growing Jewish communities in the Low Countries – were nearly always with the descendants of this recent history of forced conversion” (4).

it is no wonder that they practised their faith secretly. Forced conversions inevitably raise the question of sincerity. However, the sincerity of Jewish conversions has also been challenged for more illogical reasons that are rooted in racial discourse.

Jewish conversions to Christianity were challenged because of their subjects' inherent Jewish blood. As Brett Hirsch and others have argued, Jews were believed to be biologically and racially different, so their conversions to Christianity could never fully erase their essential Jewishness. Hirsch finds that *Merchant* and *The Jew of Malta* are “informed by the blood logic and incipient racial thinking that cemented Jewish identity as immutable and essentially different” (para 4). As a result, he concludes “that whether on the scaffold, stage, or page, the sincere conversion and successful assimilation of all Jews in the early modern English imagination was ultimately treated with suspicion or as a joke, regardless of whether they were male or female, father or daughter” (para 4).

In the second part to his *Short Demurrer*, Prynne goes on to worry that the admittance of Jews back into England would pose a problem for the fabric of Christian society. Even if they converted to Christianity “upon real ...grounds” they nevertheless need to be contained, so to speak, at the *Domus Conversorum*. According to Prynne, “if the Jews be now readmitted into *England*, and any of them shall chance to be converted to Christianity and baptized, either upon real, or hypocritical, or politick grounds, they ought to be there [at the *Domus*] received and maintained in the self-same manner as they were in former times” (127). Prynne's concern is telling because it demonstrates the unwillingness of Prynne (and some of his like-minded contemporaries) to allow for the assimilation of sincerely converted Jews into English society.

The figure of the conniving and dissimulating Jew was popularized by the drama, which both spurred and contributed to the general early modern English paranoia of insincere conversions. Robert Daborne's *A Christian Turned Turk* (1612), for example, uses both character and language to showcase the dissembling Jew. He has Benwash, the Jewish merchant, convert to Islam for no other reason than to stave off "Mahometan dogs" from pursuing his wife: "Thou has forgot how dear / I bought my liberty, renounced my law / (The law of Moses), turned Turk—all to keep / My bed free from these Mahometan dogs" (6.73-76). Yet, ten lines prior, the English officer Gallop refers to Benwash as "this Jew" (6.63). Although Benwash has formally turned Turk he is nevertheless identified in the play as a Jew.

Daborne plays with the stereotype of the dissembling Jew again by employing the common adage, "to play the Jew," when he has Sares, the Dutch captain, describe how the Christian pirate, Ward, faked his circumcision during Ward's Islamic conversion ritual. Danisker asks, "Ward turned Turk? It is not possible" (9.1), and Sares responds, "I saw him Turk to the circumcision. / Marry, therein I heard he played the Jew with'em, / Made 'em come to the cutting of an ape's tail" (9.2-4). Vitkus explains that Ward tricked the Turks by substituting an ape's tail for his foreskin and this deception is characterized by the "anti-Semitic stereotype maintained by early modern Christians [that] Jews were proverbial deceivers and oath breakers" (*Three* 237).

The Jew of Malta also explicitly calls attention to the counterfeit Christian or the dissembling Jew. In an aside, Barabas admits, for instance, that "We Jews can fawn like spaniels when we please, / And when we grin, we bite; yet are our looks/ As innocent and

harmless as a lamb's" (2.3.20-22). Feigning innocence here echoes his earlier instructions to Abigail regarding his plan to seize the wealth he had hidden in his confiscated house:

BARABAS	Let 'em suspect, but be thou so precise	285
	As they may think it done of holiness.	
	Entreat 'em fair, and give them friendly speech,	
	And seem to them as if thy sins were great,	
	Till thou has gotten to be entertained.	
ABIGAIL	Thus, father, shall I much dissemble.	
BARABAS	Tush,	290
	As good dissemble that thou never mean'st	
	As first mean truth and then dissemble it.	
	A counterfeit profession is better	
	Than unseen hypocrisy. (1.2.285-294)	

In this exchange, Barabas instructs his daughter to feign a religious conversion so as to be admitted into the nunnery (his former house) in order to retrieve his wealth. Abigail's innocence and sense of virtue leads her to resist, if slightly, her father's instruction, for she is conscious that dissemblance is immoral. Barabas's response, therefore, has to convince Abigail (and alert the audience) that to deliberately dissemble – to fake a professed religious vow and be conscious that it is fake – is not as immoral as the hypocrisy of truly converting to Christianity and then acting in an unchristian way. In his response, Barabas demonstrates the common problem felt by the early modern English of feigned religious conversion for the purpose of serving one's own means. His response also alerts us to the fact that hypocrisy is a crime committed by the play's

characteristically Catholic figures – the fraudulent Friars Jacomo and Bernardine, and the nuns. Barabas’s opinion that a counterfeit profession is better than an unseen hypocrisy is given support in *A Game at Chess* where the Protestant players, who feign interest in converting, remain morally superior to the Catholics, who boast their piety but eventually expose their vices.

Food as Faith Markers: Discerning Religious Identity in *A Game at Chess*

A Game at Chess dramatizes the infamous Spanish Match, which was a marriage intended to unite Prince Charles, the son of King James I, and Infanta Maria, the daughter of Philip III of Spain. The proposed match was negotiated over several years, culminating in Prince Charles and the Duke of Buckingham visiting Spain in 1623 in order for the Prince to woo Maria; the Englishmen returned to England after six months, having failed to implement the plan.⁴⁷ In Middleton’s version, the play sacrifices some factual details so that it ends with the decisive triumph of the English court and the ultimate demise of the Spaniards. Since the Protestant English disapproved of the match to begin with (“they did not want a Catholic Spanish Queen of England” [Taylor 1774]), Prince Charles’ return to England without the Spanish Infanta was met with such heightened celebration that, as historian Glyn Redworth writes, “It is hard to find words to describe the euphoria that greeted Charles” (138). Middleton capitalized on the popularity of this occasion, writing what Gary Taylor has described as “the most spectacular play of its period,” one

⁴⁷ The reasons for this failed plan have been discussed in Brennan Pursell’s “The End of the Spanish Match” and Glyn Redworth’s *The Prince and the Infanta: the Cultural Politics of the Spanish Match*.

which “had the longest consecutive run of any English play before the Restoration” (1825-1829).

A Game at Chess presents a polarized conflict between Catholic Spain, represented by the black pieces of a chess game, or the Black House, and Protestant England, represented by the white pieces, or the White House. In both *Merchant* and *A Game at Chess*, food serves as a means through which to learn or discover one’s internal religious convictions; it is a reliable, physical marker of religious difference in a world where identities are increasingly unknown and blurred. Metaphors of food and eating likewise function as a reliable means through which to convey religious difference. For example, in act 5 scene 1, when the White Knight (Prince Charles) and White Duke (Buckingham) are welcomed ceremoniously by the Black House, the stage directions indicate a very Catholic setting; there is an altar, candlesticks, and statues. At this point, in an aside to the White Duke, the White Knight calls attention to the Catholicism on stage: “There’s a taste / Of the old vessel” to which Buckingham replies, “Th’erroneous relish” (5.1.35-37). Here the White Duke and the White Knight call attention to religious difference in terms of food imagery. The “old vessel” metaphorically refers to the old religion (Catholicism); as Taylor glosses, it is literally a “receptacle (suggesting the ornate Catholic communion cup)” (1873). The adjective to describe relish – “an individual taste or liking” (*OED* “relish” n.² 3) – is “erroneous,” which implies that the Black House’s “taste” for Catholicism is wrong. The word “erroneous” might also recall the character Error from the play’s opening sequence, who is the allegorical personification of Catholic heresy. As the scene closes, the White Knight and the White Duke make their way toward the off-stage meal hosted by the Black House, and have

thus foreshadowed what is to come: religious difference and conversion between Catholicism and Protestantism is articulated through food and eating imagery.

The final scene begins with the White Knight and the White Duke walking in from supper along with many of the Black House characters. The entire scene until the pivotal “checkmate” point is comprised of the Black House’s proselytizing attempts and the White Knight and the White Duke’s feigned interest in converting. Whereas in 5.1 religious difference was observed through allusions to food from the White House’s point of view, here, the scene begins with the Black House stating the difference between the two faiths in a lengthy description of roughly fifty lines that boasts their level of restraint when it comes to eating. Unlike the “arch-gormandizer / With two-and-twenty courses at one dinner” (5.3.22-23), the Black House prides itself on a strict dietary regime. “Surfeit,” the Black King states, “is / A thing that’s seldom heard of in these parts” (5.3.3-4). The Black Knight continues by contrasting their restrictive dietary habits to those of the White House. He describes “White House gormandizers” as “hogs / Which Scaliger cites, that could not move for fat, / So insensible of either prick or goad / That mice made holes to needle in their buttocks / And they ne’er felt ’em” (5.3.39-44).

The fat imagery painted here by the Black Knight’s insult might call to mind the play’s preoccupation with fatness, which is conveyed elsewhere through the Fat Bishop. Even though the insult is directed to the White House, there is no denying that among the Black House this character is the fattest one of all (since by this point in the play, the Fat Bishop has reverted to Catholicism), thereby discrediting the Black Knight. In fact the Black House’s argument here, that they are the superior faith (based on their approach to food and eating) is further undermined through the trope of food when the Black Knight

responds to the White Knight's fear of transgression. The White Knight, in feigning interest in Catholicism, worries that adhering to the Black House's dietary restraint will be too difficult for him and he would therefore run the risk of transgressing if he were to convert. (The White Knight's worry corroborates with what I have argued elsewhere, which is that breaking dietary rules renders one a recreant). To allay the White Knight's fears, the Black Knight responds by telling him not to worry because they can make an exception, and so allow him to eat to his fill: "You may eat kid, *cabrito* [baby goat], calf, and tunas— / Eat, and eat every day, twice, if you please—" (5.3.66-67). Yet, just a few lines earlier, the Black Knight bragged about the parsimonious diet of Catholics. In making the exception, which Taylor notes is characteristic of Catholicism (to make exceptions to ethical rules), Middleton undermines the Black Knight's (and Catholicism's) integrity; on one hand they preach restraint and on the other they facilitate gluttony.

Thus far, the Black House's attempt to convert the White Duke and the White Knight has been conducted through the language of food and eating. To attract these characters to their faith, they have demonstrated a contrast in eating habits to show that the Black House is more pious. They have also made an exception by offering all kinds of meat to satiate the White House's appetites. Once the White Knight is satisfied with the Black House's willingness to make an exception, the food trope shifts from the literal consumption of food to the metaphorical consumption of lust and ambition, where the White Knight seeks to consume a dish of "hot ambition" (5.3.78). The dialogue here, that transitions from the literal to the figurative, introduces a lengthy passage that employs the food metaphor to demonstrate not only that conversions are, once again, understood in

terms of food, but also that food is used in this scene to elicit confessions. Food is used to discover the truth behind the façade of the Black House and their ostensible Catholic piety. To please the White Knight's appetite for ambition, the Black Knight boasts the following:

And in the large feast of our vast ambition
 We count but the White Kingdom (whence you came from)
 The garden for our cook to pick his salads. 85
 The food's lean France, larded with Germany,
 Before which comes the grave chaste signory
 Of Venice, served in (capon-like) in whitebroth;
 From our chief oven Italy, the bake-meats;
 Savoy, the salt; Geneva, the chipped manchet. 90
 Below the salt the Netherlands are placed,
 A common dish at lower end o'th'table
 For meaner pride to fall to. For our second course,
 A spit of Portugals served in for plovers,
 Indians and Moors for blackbirds. All this while 95
 Holland stands ready melted to make sauce
 On all occasions; when the voider comes
 And with such cheer our crammed hopes we suffice,
 Zealand says grace, for fashion, then we rise. (5.3.83-99)

For the Black Knight, the “master cook of Christendom” (5.3.76) mentioned just a few lines earlier is Catholic Spain, who prepares a feast in which the dishes are the nations it dominates or seeks to conquer. Furthermore, the degree to which Catholicism dominates the nation is reflected in the particular significance of each foodstuff, from the esteemed bake-meats coming out of the “chief oven” in Italy to the humble salt of Savoy. In other words, the heartiest dishes or entrées, such as the bake-meats and the spit of plovers and blackbirds, correspond with the power of Catholicism in that foodstuffs’ associated nation. For example, because England’s Protestantism dominated the country and consequently suppressed any form of Catholicism, it is a country that has not been subjugated to Spain; England, therefore, stands as a meagre salad, which is here perceived as the “least substantial part of the feast” (Taylor 1879), because it has yet to be conquered by Spain. By contrast, the “second course” of the Portuguese plovers and the Indian and Moorish blackbirds, which are arguably the main dishes of the feast, represent the ultimate Spanish conquest since the Portuguese were ruled by Spain, while the “Indians” (Indigenous Peoples) of the New World and the Moors of African descent (Muslims) were conquered and forced to convert under Spanish rule.

Although the Black Knight’s metaphor is intended to convey the ambition of the Black House, inherent in his speech is the degree to which Catholicism has succeeded in forcefully converting other nations. The master-cook who prepares dishes is ultimately in control; he or she has the power to convert ingredients into what is most palatable to the eater. Likewise, Catholicism, from the Black House’s point of view, has the power and control to convert other nations, and it has done so as evidenced by the plight of Native Americans and Spanish Moors. In the case of the latter, Taylor glosses the word “Moors”

as “(a) Africans (b) Moslems (c) Moriscos (Spanish Moors who had publicly converted to Christianity, but were nevertheless collectively expelled in 1609)” (1879). The process of conquering, converting, and disposing of Moriscos parallels the process of hunting a blackbird, converting it into a dish, and excreting it upon digestion. The conquered and converted nations that make up the Black House’s feast undermine, again, the Black Knight’s earlier proclamation of their parsimonious diet. Through this food metaphor, Middleton undermines the Black House, articulates degrees of religious homogeneity and conversion (Catholic Italy versus the Christian schism in the Netherlands, for example), and exposes the Black House’s sins of rapacity and greedy ambition.

Food, sin, and conversion are linked throughout 5.3, most notably in the way that the food trope is used to elicit the confessions of the Black House so as to allow the White House to “discover” their vices in order to defeat them. Recall that the White Duke and the White Knight’s feigned interest in converting to Catholicism is couched in the language of food: they worry their gluttonous appetites will transgress the parsimonious restrictions of the Black House; they worry their appetite for ambition cannot be satiated; and they worry their ravenous hunger for wealth and sex cannot be quelled. The latter sins of covetousness and fornication are also introduced through a food metaphor: “When I ha’ stopped the mouth / Of one vice [ambition], there’s another gapes for food. / I’m as covetous as a barren womb, / The grave, or what’s more ravenous” (5.3.105-108). The womb, Taylor glosses, is “often described as a mouth, hungry for insemination, and not satisfied until pregnant” (1880). As with ambition before, the Black Knight responds with a hyperbolic assertion that is intended to alleviate the White Knight and the White Duke’s fears: not only are the vaults in their monasteries crammed with riches (5.3.115-117), but

they also enjoy sex to the extent that “at the ruins of a nunnery once / Six thousand infants’ heads [were] found in a fishpond” (5.3.129-130). The hypocrisy of nuns aborting babies as a result of their promiscuity is described as if a sin has barely been committed at all. Venerly the Black Knight describes as “The trifle of all vices,” and it is so prevalent and normal that it is “all the fruit we have here after supper” (5.3.125,128). Once again, the sin is rendered in an edible form.

In Chapter One, I discussed how early modern humoral theory espoused the view that diet could alter the state of the soul and could therefore lead one to commit sins. If the White House consumes the sins of ambition and venerly as if they are the master-cook’s feast or the fruit after supper, then they are essentially feeding their humoral body (and soul) with the “diet” of the Black House, and would consequently become like the Catholics, or convert to Catholicism. Indeed conversion is at the heart of this entire scene (until the point of checkmate when conversion is no longer possible), and we are reminded that it is when the Black Knight asks the White Knight with a hint of urgency and hope, “Are you ours yet?” (5.3.137).

Although the pivotal “checkmate” moment is generally attributed to the White Knight and the White Duke’s dissemblance, I argue that the final “checkmate by / Discovery” (5.3.160-161) depends just as much on the food trope as it does on dissemblance. Because food and eating are very much a physical and visible item and a practice, and because food and eating are inextricably linked to faith, food plays a critical role in one’s ability to discern and judge the internal convictions of others. The White House members successfully dissembled their interests in joining the Black House, but if it were not for the trope of food, through which the White House could elicit and

visualize the sinful ways of the Black House, the checkmate by discovery could not have happened.

Middleton uses the food trope to free religious identity from the confusion of blurred religious boundaries that result from religious dissimulation, hypocrisy, and forced or insincere conversions. Even though the White Knight and the White Duke win the game, they nevertheless have to dissemble and “become Black” (feign conversion through the food metaphor) in order to defeat the Black House (like Marlowe’s Abigail). This idea of White players occupying Black space is further echoed by the actual journey that Prince Charles and the Duke of Buckingham undertook, physically leaving England and entering Spain. An actual chess board (the stage) is chequered so that each colour is designated to a particular side, but at any given time, any player (with the exception of the bishop) can occupy a square of either colour. The knight, who moves in an “L-shape” must, in fact, land on an opposing coloured square every time he makes a move. The traversing of coloured squares and the blurring of religious boundaries as a result of either dissemblance, hypocrisy, or conversion is perhaps best exemplified by the Fat Bishop.

According to the rules of chess, the bishop is the only player who must remain on the same coloured square as the one on which he started the game. As critics have noted, Middleton’s Fat Bishop violates the rules of the game since he converts from Catholicism to Protestantism and reverts again to Catholicism. As a result of his conversion and reversion, the Fat Bishop is a highly suspicious character whom we distrust because he is literally and figuratively shifty. But for all the shifting and hypocrisy that characterises the Fat Bishop, the *insincerity* of his religious convictions is loud and clear, not least

because his abundant size, which is symbolic of his gluttonous ways, serves as a visual cue to others (and to the audience) of the extent to which he is “full” of pretense.

When the Fat Bishop first appears on stage, he begins by correcting his pawn, who reveres him for his “great holiness” (2.2.2). “Fat cathedral bodies,” the bishop enlightens his pawn, “Have very often but lean little souls” (2.2.2, 4-5). The Fat Bishop contrasts outer and inner size (fat versus lean) to demonstrate that his outer religious persona, as “great” or large as it seems, deceptively implies an inner religious piety. Perhaps because his own pawn cannot tell the difference, the Fat Bishop thinks he is deceiving those around him on the basis that his outer, grand appearance seems “cathedral” or holy. But it is clear that his size – and his eating habits – reflect his inner impiety. Middleton goes on to demonstrate how the Fat Bishop perceives the two Christian sects on the basis of their eating practices; how food and eating habits determine his choice of faith; and how he metaphorically consumes the “food” of religion (i.e. religious doctrine) but this food nourishes only his secular, bodily appetites – represented by his paunch – rather than his soul.

In his soliloquy, the Fat Bishop reveals his affinity toward the White House because of their dietary habits in comparison to the penurious lifestyle of the Black House, an idea that is repeated, as I have discussed, in the final scene of the play. The Fat Bishop’s comparison of the two faiths is once again determined by each religion’s approach to eating: “Of all things I commend the White House best / For plenty and variety of victuals. / When I was one of the Black House professed, / My flesh fell half a cubit; time to turn / When my own ribs revolted” (2.2.23-27). The Fat Bishop’s assessment of Christian sects on the basis of food anticipates *The Renegado’s* Gazet, who

similarly chooses faith based on eating practices, which I discuss in Chapter Two. The Fat Bishop's lines here also demonstrate a curious link between the body and belief: "time to turn / When my own ribs revolted" (2.2.26-27). Superficially, he converts because he is starved as an adherent to the Catholic diet. But the word "revolted" implies that there is something to be revolted against; in this case, it is both himself – his stomach is revolting against the poor diet that he has been feeding it – and more importantly, his gut is revolting or rebelling against the established authority, Catholicism. Therefore, his ribs, which are a synecdoche for his body, govern his choice of faith. Food and the body are once again the site of religious tension and conversion.

Fatness in the play also represents the corrupt consumption of religious doctrine, or using religion for personal gain and secular advantages, which the Fat Bishop certainly embodies. He opens his soliloquy by gloating that "It's a most lordly life to rail at ease, / Sit, eat, and feed upon the fat of one kingdom / And rail upon another with the juice on't. / I have writ this book out of the strength and marrow / Of six-and-thirty dishes at a meal" (2.2.18-20). The Fat Bishop takes it upon himself to write books against the opposing religion; his source material is the "fat" (or religious doctrine) of the present faith he consumes in order to rail against the other religion. The "fat and fulsome volumes" (2.2.51), as the Black Knight puts it, correlate with the fatness of his body; both his books and his body are full of matter that nourishes neither the soul, mind, nor body. In his case, fatness reflects the degree to which he consumes for self-centred, worldly reasons. Significantly, others in the play see his fatness as a visual sign of his inner impiety, as they call him the "greasy gormandizing prelate" (2.2.49) and "that lump of rank ingratitude / Swelled with the poison of hypocrisy" (4.4.82-83). Thus to outsiders, the Fat

Bishop's eating habits, symbolized by his visible fat stomach, are a means through which to discern the insincerity of his inner so-called faith.

The conversion panic in *Merchant* is the perceived danger of proximity to religious others; specifically, it highlights the threat of forced conversions as a result of a seemingly innocuous business contract. Conversions are not forced in *A Game at Chess*, but they are undoubtedly insincere. The hypocritical Fat Bishop converts and reverts, and the White Knight and the White Duke dissemble interest in converting to the Black House; in both cases these characters transgress and blur religious boundaries, inevitably raising questions about their religious identities. Both plays thus contend with the common early modern English worry that outer appearances do not always correspond with inner convictions, a worry that emerges in part from the prevalence of forced and insincere conversions. That these playwrights turn to food in order to explore and articulate these anxieties indicates that food's role in faith negotiations and boundary policing is of paramount importance.

Chapter 4

“The Tankard Cannot Lye”: The Christian-Muslim Encounter with Alcohol

The pivotal conversion scene in Robert Daborne’s *A Christian Turned Turk* is conveyed through a dumb show. Without the spoken word, Daborne relies on recognizable props and costumes in order to distinguish the Muslims from the Christians on stage, and more significantly, to dramatize Ward’s simultaneous rejection of Christianity and conversion to Islam. Scholars interested in this play focus on the latter – Ward’s conversion to Islam – because the main action of the dumb show is Ward’s circumcision, a physical mark of a male Muslim. Additional attention has been paid to the stereotypical Islamic images replete in this scene: half-moons, turbans, robes, swords, and even “Mahomet’s head.” Certainly the scene is meant to convey Ward’s conversion to Islam, but what seems to go unnoticed by scholarship is the final action after the circumcision, which bears crucial significance for my thesis.

Near the end of the dumb show, just after Ward has been circumcised, or perhaps castrated – “the idea of adult circumcision was conflated and confused with the idea of castration” (Vitkus *Three* 5) – and swears allegiance to Mahomet’s head, Ward is offered a cup of wine “by the hands of a Christian” (8.sd). Ward’s reaction is to “spurn at him” and throw the cup away before exiting the stage. While Ward’s circumcision and allegiance to Mahomet’s head would sufficiently convey his conversion, Daborne adds one final act to confirm Ward’s explicit apostasy. Here, the cup of wine represents Eucharistic wine and therefore serves as a symbol of Christianity. Thus Ward’s rejection

of the wine indicates his rejection of Christianity. It may also simultaneously indicate his acceptance of Islam since Muslims are not permitted to consume alcohol.

Wine's function in other Turk plays also calls to mind religion even when it is drunk outside a Christian context. In Thomas Goffe's *The Courageous Turk* (1619), wine is drunk in celebration of Bajazeth's marriage to Hatam. Bajazeth's father, Amurath, offers a toast at the end of the wedding dance: "And health to our Bride and her father! / O (Nobles) would this wine were Christians blood, / But that it would Phrenetique humours breed, / And so infect our braines with Superstition!" (4.2.88-91). In this play, wine's primary function is for drunken celebration, but even here it is curiously linked to Christianity. Amurath's toast indicates that early moderns easily perceived a close association between wine and blood. This is hardly surprising given the Catholic belief in transubstantiation whereby Eucharistic wine is thought to literally transform into Christ's blood, or the Protestant belief that Eucharist wine symbolically represents Christ's blood.

Amurath's toast substantiates my thesis that consumption of food or drink was believed to be able to alter the body psychophysiologically and so manipulate one's faith. If the wine that Amurath is about to consume was characteristically Christian ("Christians blood") then it would engender "Phrenetique humours," or what Susan O'Malley's edition glosses as "mentally deranged" humours, which would in turn cause the consumer to fall into false belief ("infect our braines with Superstition!"). Here, the consumption of a foodstuff/drink is the first step in a chain reaction toward influencing one's faith: the wine initially alters the physical body by disturbing the humors, which would then affect the mind and consequently manipulate one's faith. The *OED* defines "Superstition" as "a religious system considered to be irrational, unfounded, or based on fear or ignorance; a

false, pagan, or idolatrous religion” (*OED* n. 4) and it cites Richard Knolles’ *The Generall Historie of the Turkes* (1601), a known source for Goffe’s play, to support this definition: “The Turks received the Mahometane superstition” (Knolles 5). An infected brain with a belief in false religion is the direct outcome, according to Amurath, of consuming something characteristically or metonymically Christian.

Wine is drunk by Turks in another of Goffe’s plays, *The Raging Turk* (1618), but here the connection to religion is far less obvious to a modern reader. The play chronicles the tragedy of Bajazet II as his sons and brother plot against him and each other to gain power and control over the Ottoman Empire. In this play a banquet scene occurs in celebration of military victory. Bajazet asks his guests to kneel around as he begins the first toast to Achmetes, a “noble warrior,” who in turn toasts to Isaack, and so on until ten toasts are made from one soldier to the next. When the last toast is said, Bajazet toasts to himself and then reveals his malicious motives in an aside. In this scene wine functions explicitly as a means through which the soldiers (excluding Bajazet) express their camaraderie, respect and love for one another. In fact wine is the focal point here since each soldier’s line is a toast often referring to the wine itself rather than to the reason for celebrating. For example, upon Selymus’ turn, he says,

I am the last be prodigall in wine,
 Fill up my bowle with Nectar, let it rise
 Above the goblets side, and may it like
 A swelling Ocean flow above the banckes,
 I will exhaust it greedily, 'tis my due. (2.7. 36-40)

Furthermore, the circle of men then speaks in unison, “Weele drinke with Bacchus and his roaring crew” (2.7.41), referring to Bacchus the Roman god of wine.

Though seemingly innocuous, the wine drunk here in celebration would have been triply repulsive to an early modern English audience: first, the Turkish soldiers are celebrating their conquest over Christians. Second, the means of their celebration – wine – was known to be absolutely forbidden to Muslims. (I will address early modern England’s fascination with the “Mahometan” law forbidding the consumption of alcohol later). For Turks to revel in what was supposed to be impermissible to them went to show only how debased and false they were. And third, the ritual of toasting or drinking of “healths” was considered by moralists of the period such as Samuel Ward “an engine invented by the devil, to carry on the sin of drunkenness” (sig.A3r). Numerous early modern writers reacted against this practice because it encouraged excessive drinking. One influential religious writer, Arthur Dent, claimed that “there is no true fellowship in [pledging]” and that “it is mere impiety” (165). “The condemnation of health-drinking by religious writers,” historian James Nicholls writes, “became increasingly widespread in the first half of the seventeenth century” (23).⁴⁸ Thus for the latter two reasons, wine drunk in this scene also recalls religion.

Bajazet’s aside as the soldiers continue to drink further corroborates the notion that wine’s effect on the physical body has emotional and spiritual consequences. He seethes with anger as he relates to the audience, “how my blood / Boyles in my breast,

⁴⁸ For a book-length study on the political, cultural, and religious attitudes toward alcohol in the history of England see James Nicholls’ *The Politics of Alcohol: A History of the Drink Question in England* (2009).

with anger, not the wine / Could worke such strong effect; my soule is vext, / A chafing heat distempers all my blood” (2.7.49-52). Although he clarifies that the wine is not the reason for his anger, his doing so nevertheless exposes the early modern concept of wine’s effect on the physical and spiritual body because he uses wine as a point of comparison to express the degree to which he is angry. In other words, he is so angry that not even wine can cause such an effect; this confession in and of itself indicates that wine can have such an effect. He goes on to explain how his soul is vexed, which is a direct result of his disturbed humors. Recall from Chapter One that humors bore hot and cold properties whose retention and expulsion of heat altered the body’s temperament. The “chafing heat” disturbs his blood (and humors) thereby causing his vexed soul.

The function of wine and drinking in Turk plays thus far has been relatively straightforward; wine is either a metonym for Christianity, or it is used for celebration, or to maintain camaraderie, and it is thought to elicit psychophysiological and spiritual changes in the body. However, the treatment of wine, alcohol and drinking in relation to Christians and Muslims is more complicated in William Percy’s *Mahomet and His Heaven* (1601).⁴⁹ Whereas the other Turk plays only briefly stage or refer to drinking, Percy’s play devotes considerable attention to religion and drinking especially as it pertains to Islam. The play’s many references to and images of drinking express and reveal new insights about Anglo-Islamic encounters. It is my contention that early moderns understood their relationship toward religious others in part through the discourse of drinking. Alcohol and drinking serve as a trope by which the playwright

⁴⁹ Also titled *Arabia Sitiens* or *A Dreame of a Dry Yeare*, this manuscript play has, for the first time, been published in a modern, critical edition (2006) by Matthew Dimmock.

builds and collapses the divide between Christians and Muslims.

Early Modern English Attitudes Towards Islam and Drinking

To drink is a Christian Diversion,

Unknown to the *Turk* and the *Persian*:

Let *Mahometan* Fools

Live by Heathenish Rules,

And be damn'd over Tea-Cups and Coffee.

But let British Lads sing,

Crown a Health to the King,

And a Fig for your *Sultan* and *Sophy*. (4.1.399-406, *The Way of the World*, 1700)

In William Congreve's *The Way of the World* (1700), Sir Willful Witwoud, a drunken country bumpkin, is admonished by his aunt, Lady Wishfort, for reeking of alcohol. She tells him he smells so bad that he needs to remove himself "far enough, to the *Saracens* or the *Tartars*, or the *Turks*" because he is "not fit to live in a Christian Commonwealth" (389-91). Sir Willful's drunken response is a vehement refusal to ever visit a Turkish land because Turks are "infidels" who "believe not in the Grape" (393). His reply contains two meanings at once. The first is obvious given his drunken state: Turks do not drink wine. The second explains why they are considered infidels: they do not believe in salvation through Christ. Here the word "grape" also functions as a

metonym for Christianity.⁵⁰ Sir Wilfull then sings this song in which he claims “Mahometans” are fools for abstaining from alcohol, but he is himself the fool of the play, characterized by his penchant for drinking; the satirical underpinnings here are found also in Percy’s *Mahomet*.

Although *The Way of the World* is a Restoration play, it still echoes the same fascination with Islam and alcohol that had been repeatedly noted centuries prior. The Muslim prohibition against alcohol, Dimmock has noted, was a “cause of considerable interest in Christian texts through the medieval and early modern period” (*Mahomet* 21). Early modern writers, whether clerics or playwrights or travellers, seldom failed to comment on what seemed to them a strange and/or curious Islamic prohibition. While their tone and explanations differed (as I will elaborate further below), they nonetheless reveal the extent to which early modern England was fascinated by the Muslim attitude toward alcohol.

Dimmock’s ground-breaking research on Percy’s *Mahomet and His Heaven* and early modern attitudes toward the Prophet Muhammad is crucial to our understanding of the early modern English preoccupation with Islam’s prohibition against alcohol. Since Islamic laws were known to have originated from “Mahomet” and his “Alcoran,” a brief look at English constructions of Mahomet will demonstrate how medieval and early modern writers propagated various explanations for Islam’s prohibition of alcohol. Like Dimmock, I refer to Mahomet as the “composite figure of Christian mythology” (xiii)

⁵⁰ See Tim Unwin’s *Wine and the Vine* (1991) for a comprehensive analysis of the symbolism of grapes (vine) and wine in Christianity and Judaism.

and not the Prophet Muhammad of Muslim biographical traditions. Mahomet, rather, is a “clear signal of the fabricated nature” (xiii) of the actual Prophet, and the fabricated stories told about him with regard to alcohol contribute to early modern English perceptions of Islam.

Among the predominant texts that portrayed Mahomet were Ranulf Higden’s *Polychronicon* (1482), Jacobus de Voragine’s *Golden Legend (Legenda Aurea)* (1482), John Lydgate’s *Fall of Princes* (1494), and the *Travels* of Sir John Mandeville, first printed by Richard Pynson in 1496. Among these, Mandeville’s *Travels* was immensely popular, as evidenced by Thomas East’s editions in 1568 and 1582. Parts of *Travels* were also included in both Hakluyt’s *Principall Navigations* (1589) and Purchas’s *Purchas His Pilgrimage* (1613) and *Pilgrimes* (1625), and there were at least nine other editions in the seventeenth century (*Mythologies* 41). The *Travels* is important because it contains a story that explains why Mahomet prohibited alcohol:

And also Machomet loved well a good man an hermite that dwelled in the wildernesse a myle from mounte Sinay ... and Machomet went so often to this hermyte that all his men were wroth, for he harde gladly the hermit preach, and his men did walke all the night, and his men thought they would this hermyte were dead. So it befell on a night that Machomet was full dronken of good wine, and he fell in a sleep, and his men toke Machomet’s sworde out of his sheath whyles he lay and slept, and therewith they slew the hermit, and afterwarde they put up the sword againe all bloody, and vpon the morrow when that he founde the hermite thus dead, he was in his mynde verye angry and right wroth, and woulde have done his men unto the death, but they all with one accorde, and with one will

sayde that he himselfe hadde slaine hym whan he was dronken, and they shewed his owne swerd all bluddy, & than he beleved that they sayde soth, & than cursed the wine & all those that drank it. And therefore Sarasins that are devout drinke no wine openly. (*Here begynneth sig. J3v, J4r*)

Dimmock has noted that this “drunken rage is specifically emphasized in the *Travels*” (*Mythologies* 45). Both Higden and Lydgate narrate a very similar account, adding also that Mahomet was a drunkard despite preaching abstinence. In Higden’s version, Mahomet not only had the “fallynge euyll” (epilepsy), but “he was dronke and fylle doune in the street,” where “swyn ete him” (sig. F250v.). The fact that he is eaten by swine – an unclean animal according to Islamic law – is all the more derisive. Dimmock suggests that Lydgate might have turned to Higden’s *Polychronicon* since Lydgate’s version is identical: “Lyke a gloton dyed on dronkenes / By exces of drynkyng moch wyne / Fyll in a podell deuoured amonge swine” (sig. E6v). Higden later adds that “they [Mahometans] that holde his laws spare wyn and swynes flesh” (sig.F250v).

In contrast to Lydgate’s and Higden’s versions, Mandeville’s appears almost sympathetic toward Mahomet. His version portrays Mahomet with a moral conscience that is strong enough to recognize the evil consequences of drunkenness and the desire to prevent such consequences from happening by administering a law to forbid drinking. Moreover, the fact that Mandeville’s narrative begins with Mahomet befriending and seeking knowledge from a learned hermit, a “good man,” suggests that Mahomet did have at least some ties to goodness and that his source of knowledge was not unequivocally linked to the devil as other medieval narratives purported. Where Mandeville offers an explanation for Mahomet’s prohibition of alcohol, Lydgate and

Higden do not. In fact Lydgate's and Higden's versions are simply derisive by calling him a glutton, an excessive drinker, and a victim of swine. Even his epilepsy they call the "fallynge evyll," a small but significant difference from the early modern term "falling sickness."

Mandeville's *Travels*, which survived in popularity and enjoyed multiple printed editions well into the early modern period, contrasts Lydgate and Higden in tone and attitude toward Mahomet and alcohol. Scholars have suggested that Mandeville is a pseudonym; this anonymity might explain why its contents regarding Mahomet and alcohol did not bear the same polemical tone as Lydgate and Higden (Bale xi). As we will see, the early modern explanations for why Mahomet prohibited alcohol shift in tone from the derisive attack found in Lydgate and Higden to a more sympathetic, understandable tone to which even an early modern Englishman may relate.

Despite differences in tone and attitude, these writers more or less agreed on key aspects of Mahomet's life. As Dimmock has described, some of these aspects include his "manipulation of his 'falling sickness'; ...that he was involved in magic or astronomy; that he was a drunkard," and that Mahomet was "hungry for power, prepared to deceive believers by fabricating divinity, sexually active (if not rapacious) and a drunkard epileptic, a condition with serious moral connotations for medieval and early modern readers" (46). By emphasizing the fact that Mahomet hypocritically preached abstinence from alcohol even though he was himself a drunkard (Lydgate, Higden), and that his followers drink in secret (Mandeville), these writers sought to establish the falsehood of Mahomet and his religion. As Dimmock notes, for these writers and their wide audience, Mahomet "could be no legitimate prophet" (46).

Some writers linked Mahomet's excessive drinking with his epilepsy. In *Emblems of rarities* (1636), Donald Lupton writes that Mahomet "felt himself oppressed with Wine of late, for Wine taken more excessively and intemperately in stopping the passages of the braine, that no respiration might be had doth breed and nourish the falling sickness, and Swines flesh maketh gross humour wherewith obstruction of the braine commeth quickly, and many other diseases springe thereof" (sig. K10v). In order to "easily cloake his disease," Lupton explains, Mahomet "commanded abstinence of wine and flesh" (sig. K10v). Lupton's explanation demonstrates an early modern putative understanding that excessive drinking and consuming pork (depending on one's natural humoral composition) results in various sicknesses. Here, Lupton's explanation for why Mahomet prohibited alcohol is focused more on the physiological effects of inebriation than on Mahomet's character or faith. By discussing how alcohol could obstruct the "passages of the brain," leading to a lack of "respiration," which would in turn result in sickness, Lupton's explanation is not unique to Mahomet since anyone who drank excessively could suffer the same diseases. This is important because unlike medieval narratives on Mahomet and drinking, Lupton's medically-focused explanation is applicable to all, and therefore Lupton's early modern reader can relate (somewhat) to the Mahomet of his narrative.

One final explanation for Islam's prohibition of alcohol was the tale of Haroth and Maroth, which is especially important because it is also the central plot of Percy's play, in which Haroth and Maroth, two angels, descend to Arabia in order to avert mankind's destruction. Almost all retellings of this myth, Dimmock explains, have been used to explain Islam's prohibition of alcohol in the medieval and early modern periods.

The myth itself is considerably different than the brief mention of Harut and Marut in the Qur'an; as Dimmock has shown, the Qur'anic source on its own could not have been the source for Percy's play.⁵¹ Dimmock's research reveals that Percy would have likely consulted Riccoldo da Montecroce's *Contra Legem Sarracenorum* (c. 1300), and if not, any other English or Latin version of the myth since "they all inevitably reproduce[d] Riccoldo's version" (21). Riccoldo's myth is polemical in tone and differs from the one found in Islamic traditions.⁵² Dimmock offers a translation of an excerpt from Riccoldo:

In the chapter The Story, Mahomet himself gives the reason why wine is forbidden. He says that God sent two angels to earth in order to give good orders and to judge wisely. These angels were Harut and Marut. However, a certain woman, coming to them and having justice, invited them to lunch and put wine before them, wine that God had commanded them not to drink. However, when they were intoxicated, they demanded that she sleep with them. She agreed, but required that one of them should make her go up to heaven, and the other should

⁵¹ The contemporary translation of the Qur'anic version by Abdullah Yusuf Ali is as follows: "the blasphemers were, not Solomon, but the evil ones, teaching men magic, and such things as came down at Babylon to the angels Harut and Marut. But neither of these taught anyone (such things) without saying: 'We are only for trial; so do not blaspheme.' They learned from them the means to sow discord between man and wife. But they could not thus harm anyone except by Allah's [God's] permission. And they learned what harmed them, not what profited them. And they knew that the buyers of (magic) would have no share in the happiness of the Hereafter. And vile was the price for which they did sell their souls, if they but knew!" (2:102).

⁵² The Islamic version can be found in Gertrude Lowthian Bell's translation in *Teachings of Hafiz*.

return her to earth. And she went up to heaven. However, God seeing her and hearing the justice she had, made her the morning star, so that she was just as beautiful in the heavens as she also was among women on earth. When the choice was given to the sinning angels when they wanted to be punished, in the present or in the future, since they chose rather to be punished in the present, he made them hang by their feet by a chain in a well of Babylon until the day of judgement. (qtd. in *Mahomet* 187).

Dimmock concludes that Riccoldo's intention is "to divest the original of any didactic purpose and use it instead to specifically demonstrate Muslim foolishness and carnality For Riccoldo the crucial point about this episode is that it is 'fabulas' – nonsensical, illogical, and meaningless" (*Mahomet* 21). According to Riccoldo, "any wise man can see this law [forbidding alcohol] is not divine at all, for God does not speak with mankind through fictional tales" (qtd. in *Mahomet* 21). Despite Riccoldo's dismissal of the narrative, it nonetheless contains a reasonable or understandable explanation why alcohol should be prohibited: excessive drinking causes lasciviousness, which in turn results in other problematic behaviour (in this case betraying God by wrongfully admitting the woman into heaven). Although the story has its roots in Islamic tradition, the moral – that alcohol leads to lust – is also familiar to early modern Christians.

Bartolomej Georgijevic's treatise on the Ottoman Empire (trans. Hugh Goughe, 1569) also retells the myth; his version highlights Mahomet's drunkenness as the final piece of evidence for Mahomet's falsehood.⁵³

Machomet write in this Alkaron of two Angelles called Aroth and Maroth, whome he affirmethe to haue beene sente by God into the earthe, that they shoulde minister justice and equitie onto menne, and were commaunded to drinke no wyne, neyther adjoyne them selves in companye with women, or shew unto anybody the waye whiche leadeth to the place of perpetual blissednes, *whilhe transgressynge the commandement of God, becam drunke*, deceived by a woman, defyled them selves, and declared unto her the waye whyche to heaven bringeth . . . Therefore in as much as he was not ashamed to declare suche trifles, by mouth, but also to write them in his Alkaron, he ought deservedly not to be called a Prophet, but a false deceyver, and malicious seducer from the truth. (emphasis added, sig. D7r, D8v)

Georgijevic's version contains the same explanation for why excessive alcohol is evil: the drunk angels were "deceived by a woman" and had "defyled themselves." This sort of reasoning is found also in early modern anti-drinking texts such as Thomas Young's (1611), in which he quotes Plato that "drunkenness is a monster with many heads" where the second head is fornication (sig. B1r). Therefore, even though writers such as Riccoldo and Georgijevic intended to malign Mahomet, when it came to explaining the reason

⁵³ The myth also appears in slightly differing ways in Thomas Heywood's *The hierarchie of the blessed angells* (1635) and in Adam Olearius's *The voyages and travells of the ambassadors* (1669).

behind Mahomet's prohibition against alcohol, their retelling of the Haroth and Maroth myth inadvertently exposed a common understanding between Christians and Muslims. In other words, according to early modern Christian writers, the reason why Islam prohibits alcohol is because of what its effects lead to (fornication, betrayal), which Christians must have certainly understood and could relate to themselves.

From as early as medieval narratives such as Mandeville's *Travels* to as late as the Restoration play by Congreve, English writers on Islam have had a preoccupation with the religion's prohibition of alcohol. What was all the more baffling was the fact that alcohol was permitted in paradise but not on earth. Samuel Purchas attempts to answer this question by explicitly asking, "But why is wine lawfull there, and here unlawfull?" His answer replicates the myth but does not actually address his own question:

But why is win lawfull there, and here unlawfull? ... The Angels Arot, and Marot, were sometime sent to instruct and governe the world, forbidding men wine, injustice, and murther. But a woman having whereof to accuse her husband invited them to dinner, and made them drunke. They, inflamed with a double heate of wine and lust, could not obtaine that their desire of their faire Hostesse, except one would teach her the word of ascending to heaven, and the other of descending. Thus shee mounted up to heaven. And upon enquirie of the matter, shee was made the Morning-starre, and they put to their choice whether they would be punished in this world or in the world to come: they accepting their punishment in this, are hanged by chaines, with their heads in a pit of Babel, till the day of Judgement. (218)

Once again, the retelling of this myth demonstrates that it is the “double heate of wine and lust” that causes the angels to betray God and agree to the terms of the fair Hostess. I will return to the idea of alcohol in a Muslim heaven in my discussion of *Mahomet and His Heaven*.

The Haroth and Maroth myth surfaces when writers choose to explain why Islam prohibits alcohol, but elsewhere in early modern English discussions of Turks or Persians no explanation is offered; quite simply, they mention the law forbidding alcohol, followed immediately by a disapproving statement about how Muslims do not generally obey their own law. This pattern occurs repeatedly: William Lithgow, in 1616 wrote, “*Mahomet*, chiefly prohibiteth in his *Alcoran*, the eating of Swines flesh, and drinking of wine, which indeed the best sort do, but their baser kind are daily drunkards” (sig. H4r). Lord Henry, in 1630, wrote, “That false Prophet *Mahomet*, by his Law forbad the drinking of wine, but it was a Tradition and Imposture of his owne, and the very *Mullaes* and Priests do not observe it alwayes at present, as I my selfe have beheld” (sig. H2v). And in his widely read *Generall historie of the Turkes* (1603), Knolles describes a feast at emperor Bajazet’s house: “*Bajazet*: who to make his guests the merrier, drunke wine plentifully himselfe, causing them also to drinke in like manner, so that they were full of wine: a thing utterly forbidden by their law, yet daily more and more used” (443). Similar remarks are found in Franciscus Billerberg (1584), Meredith Hanmer (1586), Joannes Boemus (1611), Samuel Purchas (1613), Fynes Moryson (1617), and Adam Olearius (1669) among others.

Even though these writers accused Muslims of being drunkards, they were writing in a society that was also struggling with drunkenness.⁵⁴ Perhaps they recognized this similarity and sought to differentiate themselves by emphasizing the fact that Muslims were drunkards despite their own law prohibiting alcohol. Of course drunkenness is also a Christian sin so recognizing the similarity between Christian and Muslim drunkards would have been an unwelcome reality but a reality that nonetheless demonstrated a degree of sameness between the two groups.

Consumption of alcohol was a useful way for early moderns to gauge social and moral standards of themselves and others. The more one drank, the farther debased he or she was because the more inclined he or she was to commit various sins. Sometimes the test indicated that both groups were equally debased. Occasionally, however, some Muslims were admired for their discipline in abstaining from drinking. In the context of military conquest, for example, the success of the Muslim army was attributed to their abstinence. In Giovanni Botero's English translation *An historicall description of the most famous kingdoms* (1601), the Turks' military strength was attributed to their disciplined regime, which included a spare diet devoid of wine. They had "their carriages laden onely with provision, at sea their ships, and not with wine, pullets, and such needlesse vanities" as the Christians. "[A]nd so discommodious is gluttonie to the proceedings of the Christians" that their army pales in comparison to the Turks who go "to the warre to fight, and not to fill their bellies" (422).

⁵⁴ Peter Clark describes the extent to which the problem of drunkenness preoccupied Elizabethan and early Stuart sermons and pamphlets. Parliament had passed four statutes penalising drunkards between 1604 and 1625. For more on drunkenness in early modern England, see Clark's *The English Alehouse*.

A similar explanation for the Turks' military strength is found in an English translation of René de Lucinge's *The beginning, continuance, and decay of estates* (1606). Lucinge first describes how the Turks excel in military discipline before he candidly explains that it is diet that differentiates the two armies: "to say the trueth, see wee not that the Turke more easily furnisheth an hundred thousand men with vittailles, then we fiftie thousand? For besides that his souldiers make not, as ours, any account of the diversitie of vittailles, of delicacie or of toothsome morsels, they drinke no Wine nor Beere, which importeth the consideration of almost the one halfe of our munition and charge" (30). The fact that English writers used the same test – consumption of alcohol – for both Christians and Muslims indicates their commensurability, which inadvertently exposes another degree of sameness between the two.

Thus far early modern English texts make it clear they are fascinated with Islam and alcohol. In medieval narratives the tone and content is generally accusatory and derisive, which supports a binary opposition between Christians and Muslims. Later texts, such as Donald Lupton's *Emblem of rarities* (1636), however, seem to lighten to polemical tone by relating stories about Mahomet that render his explanation understandable, even an account to which an early modern reader might relate. As a result, both faiths, in practice and moral framework in relation to alcohol consumption, do not seem all that different: the Haroth and Maroth myth contains the same moral as anti-drinking literature, including sermons; the physiological damage suffered by Mahomet because of his excessive drinking is the same kind of physiological damage experienced by drunk early moderns; drunkards are found in both Muslim lands and in England; and the fact that consumption of alcohol is used to measure the moral and social

standards of people – no matter their faith – demonstrates their commensurability of their people and their faith. This kind of blurring or slippage between Christianity and Islam is explored more explicitly in *Mahomet and His Heaven*.

William Percy's Mahomet and His Heaven

This obscure play was “unlikely to have been performed on the public stage” (Dimmock 30). It was first written in 1601 and revised for the next thirty-five years, and was dismissed prior to Dimmock’s critical edition as being a play that is not “worthy of notice” (Dodds 175). In terms of literary merit, the few critics who have published on this play tend to agree with Jonathan Burton’s assessment: “*Mahomet and His Heaven* is never likely to garner attention for its artistry or stage history. Percy’s poetry is strained and atonal [and] his characters are flat” (171). But for early modern Anglo-Islamic scholarship, this play, to use Dimmock’s words, “can no longer be ignored” (1). Certainly *Mahomet* offers new ways of thinking about early modern Christian-Muslim relations especially since this is the only extant early modern play to stage the Prophet Muhammad and to “flaunt its Qur’anic source” (1). The play is especially significant for my thesis because it reveals how Christians perceived their own faith relative to Muslims through the trope of alcohol/drinking.

The play begins in a Muslim heaven where Mahomet is angry for the wickedness he sees in Arabia; he thus declares to the angels that he will destroy Arabia by causing a draught. Two angels, Haroth and Maroth, plead with him for mercy, and Mahomet eventually relents, allowing them to descend to earth in order to find virtue and avoid the intended destruction. But when Haroth and Maroth arrive on earth they are surprised to

find more evil than expected, and they travel from the outskirts of the cities into the Arabian desert where they happen upon the empress, Epimenide, and fall in love with her. Epimenide has also three other suitors, pastors Caleb and Tubal, and the magician Geber; she manipulates the pastors to steal Geber's magical purse and ring, which they accomplish, but Epimenide spurns them all, including Haroth and Maroth. As a last resort, the angels reveal themselves to her and are persuaded to teach her the magic words that can transport them to heaven; she immediately recites the incantation and the three of them ascend. Epimenide's initial presence in heaven is chaotic; she physically strikes Mahomet and consequently ridicules him (4.6.35-37, s.d.). She is perceived by the angels and Mahomet as a great disturbance, one who "infects the whole Court of heaven" (4.6.16). Mahomet reacts angrily at first but eventually falls in love with her, although his love is also rejected. Meanwhile on earth Epimenide's two handmaidens, Nabatha and Shebe, meet Caleb and Tubal, and they manage to bribe the priest Sergius to disclose the magic words he overheard Haroth and Maroth teaching Epimenide. They all recite the incantation and are transported to Heaven.

The sub-plot involves two spirits of fire and air, Pyr and Whisk, who are caught in the middle of a dispute and agree to settle it by making a bet. The bet is to determine which of the two spirits can find the greater knave from earth and bring him to the porter of heaven, Belphegor, who will then have each knave sip from the "Tankard of Tryall" to determine who is more debased; whatever kind of wine he declares he can taste will indicate the degree of his immorality, thereby revealing the greater knave. That is, if he tastes claret he would be a positive knave; muscadine would reveal a comparative knave;

and sack, a superlative knave.⁵⁵ Pyr and Whisk bring with them a corrupt Chiause (also called Lawyer) and a dissolute Dervis (also called Fryar) who prove to be equal knaves and are thus sent to Mahomet for judgement. The final judgement occurs at the end of the play, which is interrupted by Mahomet's rival, Haly, who renounces his way and joins Mahomet. Epimenide is condemned to live forever on the moon along with Haroth and Maroth, and the other characters receive their own punishments. The handmaidens are then married to Caleb and Tubal, and the play ends with a song and epilogue.

Dimmock's analysis of the play concludes by stating that "it is probably most productive to consider *Mahomet and His Heaven* as an experimental emulation (or perhaps reinvention) of the Corpus Christi dramatic cycle, a means of celebrating Christ and Christianity on stage at a point when such spectacles had been vigorously suppressed and were explicitly associated with 'papisty'" (46). According to Dimmock, Percy creates an Islamic universe that is the "dark double" of Christianity (27): where God promises Noah a flood as a means for punishment in Genesis (6:12-13), Mahomet sends down a drought (1.1.24-30); and where judgment occurs before God in Revelation (20:12-13), Mahomet presides over judgement in the final scene (5.13).⁵⁶ This "grand Christian narrative" from the Biblical flood to the Day of Judgement is mirrored in the scale of the Corpus Christi play cycle (34). In Corpus Christi plays, Christ is a "conspicuously absent" figure who is dramatized only through the representation of the

⁵⁵ In both the later manuscripts these wines have been revised to cider, methegline, and ale.

⁵⁶ Another similarity between the Bible, Qur'an, and Mahomet's Arabia is the story of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen.18-20 – Gen.19), referred to in the Qur'an as the people of Lut (54:33-36, 7:80-82), where God destroys the twin cities, Sodom and Gomorrah, because its citizens were transgressors against God's instructions.

Antichrist. By identifying a parallel between the Corpus Christi cycle plays and *Mahomet*, Dimmock argues that Percy's portrayal of Mahomet allows the playwright to dramatize Christ by representing Mahomet as the Antichrist. Thus the play "contains a sense of Muslim threat that corresponds with other dramatic portrayals, most notably in *Tamburlaine* and *Selimus*" (28).

To argue that Mahomet functions as the Antichrist and that Islam is presented as the inversion of Christianity suggests that Islam and Christianity are polar opposites in the play. But elsewhere Dimmock notes that a "curious amalgam" of both faiths is present, though it seems, according to Dimmock, to happen only in the earthly province of Arabia, and only because it is necessary for the "satirical thrust" of the comic subplot (28-29). After all, he argues, if "Percy represented the rituals of Islamic belief as entirely alien in comparison to Christianity, the Dervis would not be immediately recognizable as a 'Fryar', nor the Chiause as a 'Lawyer'" (29). Dimmock calls our attention to the multiple Christian references within the play to suggest that Percy complicates the Islam-Christianity divide; in doing so, Dimmock argues that Percy opens up satirical possibilities (29).

In fact the play's satire is more trenchant than Dimmock suggests. Whereas Dimmock sees the play containing "a sense of Muslim threat" where Islam is the "dark double" of Christianity, I argue that the play's representation of Muslims is much more farcical than it is threatening: Mahomet is depicted as a ludicrous Justice of the Peace rather than an evil Antichrist. Percy satirizes Catholicism, the contemporary legal system, and the occult. He repeatedly conflates Catholicism and Islam so that both faiths appear equally foolish in the play, and he conflates religion and law so that both appear false and

deceptive; I will return to this argument later. The “curious amalgam” of faiths that Dimmock refers to, then, is not one of Islam and Christianity in general, but more specifically, an amalgam of Islam and Catholicism. In fact, the more one learns about the details of Percy’s curious and lonely life, the more one understands the extent to which cynicism underscores the satire of the play.

Percy was born in 1570 to Katherine Neville (c.1545-96) and Henry Percy, the eighth earl of Northumberland (c.1532-85). He had seven brothers and three sisters of whom five brothers and two sisters survived past childhood. Percy was the third son and heir presumptive to the earldom until his eldest brother, Henry, the ninth earl, had a son, Algernon, in 1603. Mark Nicholls and Gerald Brenan, historians whose research has allowed us to glean some insight into the obscure life of Percy, have described his later life as reclusive, “melancholy and tired” (Nicholls “Happy” 301). He “gradually retreated in the shadows” (Nicholls “Enigmatic” 471) and “drifted (through an unhappy love affair, it is said) into obscurity” (Brenan 207). He died, unmarried, in Oxford in 1648.

During his life, Percy was known to “suffer long under the shadow of bankruptcy” (Nicholls “Happy” 298) and records show his debts led him to imprisonment multiple times (298-99). He was also charged with homicide when, a few weeks after wounding one Henry Denny in February 1596 during a duel, Denny died. Percy was later exonerated when the cause of Denny’s death was said to be “illness and the visitation of God” (Hillebrand 397). At the beginning of the seventeenth century, and “perhaps pursued by his creditors,” Percy moved to Oxford where he lived for almost forty years until his death (Nicholls 299). In his final years, as the manuscripts of his plays indicate, he was still copying and revising his plays (Dimmock 16).

Percy was not the only one in his family who spent time in prison. His father and older brother were both imprisoned, although for much more serious crimes than petty debt. From his birth in 1532 until he was knighted in 1557, Percy's father, Henry Percy, was Catholic. Brennan's description of Henry suggests that the eighth earl was disingenuous in professing his faith, since, "no sooner did Elizabeth ascend the throne, than he cast aside his youthful faith like a cloak that had served his turn and conformed (outwardly at least) to the new tenets" (2). Brennan questions Henry's sincerity as a new Protestant because of the "alacrity with which he returned to his former faith when he found further prospects of advancements barred" (3), but earlier in his life, between 1558 and 1571, Henry seemed to ardently profess Protestantism. Even when his own brother rebelled against the Queen at the outbreak of the Northern Rising (1569), Henry maintained his loyalty to Protestantism (6).

For his service, Henry believed himself to be in the Queen's favour, especially after receiving a letter from her on 17 November 1569 that acknowledged his loyalty: "We are very glad to understand . . . of your constancy and forwardness in our service, although . . . against your brother of Northumberland . . . Continuing your service and duty, we will have regard to . . . the continuance of such a house in the person and blood of so faithful a servant" (qtd. in Hasler, 3:203). But his good standing did not last long since he was sent to the Tower by November 1571 on the grounds that he was complicit in a plot to liberate Mary Stuart. According to Hasler, editor of *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1558 – 1603*, "Why, at this moment when he was in high favour with the authorities, [Henry] Percy should have become involved in the plot to free Mary Stuart and to marry her to the Duke of Norfolk, is not clear" (3:203).

However, records in *The History of Parliament* indicate that even though “He admitted discussing the matter of Mary’s escape with one of Norfolk’s friends ‘last Lent, in the parliament time,’ Mary to be freed ‘by six or seven tall men on horseback in the night,’” he nevertheless maintained that “he himself ‘would be no doer in anything to offend the Queen’s Majesty’” (qtd. in Hasler, 3:203). After eighteen months of imprisonment, Henry was brought to trial where he was persuaded to make a vague statement that he was somehow involved in the scheme to release Mary Stuart; he was fined “5000 marks” and was not permitted to be within ten miles of London (Brenan 13).

In 1575-76, Henry was made eighth earl of Northumberland but did not enjoy this position for long since he was again imprisoned on suspicion that he was complicit in the Throckmorton conspiracy. The actual conspirators happened to be friends of the earl, and Brenan suggests that this friendship was the extent to which the earl was connected to the plot. The earl was accused of being a ““traitor and relapsed Papist”” and was subsequently sent to the Tower. This would not be the only time he would spend in prison; again, and for the third and final time, Henry was imprisoned for holding “treasonable conferences” and by now was known to openly express Catholic views (21). Henry spent his last days in prison, in 1585, where he was found dead with bullet wounds (Dimmock 13); whether he committed suicide or he was assassinated is still unknown (Brenan 23). Percy’s exact response to his father’s death is not known, but according to Dimmock, the eighth earl’s death “must have had a profound effect upon his family” (13), for as Brenan writes, Percy went to France, where his older brother was studying, with “an account of the inquest and of the many highly suspicious circumstances connected with the death” (36).

Just around the same time that James came into power in England, Percy wrote all but one of his plays; the timing, according to Nicholls, is no coincidence (“Happy” 301). Likewise, Harold Hillebrand suggests that “it is worth considering that suddenly, in 1601, he turned dramatist There must be a cause” (397). So close were the ties between Henry and James I that in 1603, the new king was entertained at Henry’s residence at Syon House; Dodds and Nicholls have suggested that Percy’s *The Faery Pastoral* was written for this particular visit (Nicholls 301) and that his other plays were likewise written for specific occasions (Hillebrand 398). Thus Hillebrand suggests that Percy’s creative outburst aligns with the family’s new friendship with James I. That Percy wrote his plays with James in mind opens the possibility that he wrote to suit his taste: mocking Islam and Catholicism in *Mahomet* would certainly entertain a king who felt animosity toward both faiths. The Percys’ friendship with James I, however, was a brief one; in 1605 Henry was charged under the suspicion that he was complicit in the Gunpowder Plot (Nicholls “Happy” 297) and was consequently imprisoned for the next sixteen years (Brenan 123). According to Hillebrand, the ninth earl’s imprisonment marked the end of Percy’s career as a playwright (399).

The few scholars who have examined Percy’s writing, both drama and epigrams, and who have studied his family history, have offered differing opinions about Percy’s faith, if he believed in any at all. Nicholls neatly summarizes the spectrum: Hillebrand “detects a Roman Catholic voice” in some plays while Dodds and Burns notice a leaning toward Protestantism in some of his epigrams (476). It has also been suggested that Percy

“shared his brother’s relaxed religious beliefs” (Nicholls “Happy” 301), that might include atheism.⁵⁷

It is quite possible that Percy satirizes Catholicism in order to suit his audience’s taste (especially if he was writing to please the likes of King James I or others with the same anti-Catholic mindset). He might also have wanted to dispel any suspicion that he had ties to Catholicism. But the play intertwines Catholicism with Islam so that both are attacked at once as if they are one. In fact it is possible that Percy uses both faiths to represent religion altogether; “the general tone” of the play, Dodds suggests, is that it implies “a criticism of contemporary religion under cover of Islam” (193). Percy’s criticism (or cynical view?) of religion will become clearer when we consider how the Tankard of Tryal functions in the play.

As I stated earlier, Percy ridicules Islam, Catholicism, law, and the occult to varying degrees, and he does so primarily using the trope of alcohol and/or drinking. What follows is an analysis of how Percy satirizes Islam, Catholicism, and law in order to demonstrate how a consumable – alcohol – served as a means through which to perceive and denigrate other faith systems at least for this early modern playwright. The obvious and primary attack in this play is upon Islam, which is portrayed as a baseless religion whose prophet and followers are hypocritical, false, and foolish. The falsehood of Islam is expressed most clearly by the Muslim characters’ attitude to alcohol.

Over and over again Percy calls attention to the Arabs’ penchant for drinking: references are made to Bacchus, the god of wine (1.4.57, 2.6.5, 3.5.17), who, Dimmock

⁵⁷ Dimmock cites the “anonymous accusation reproduced in Dodds” (16) that the ninth earl was accused of being “an atheist, that, besides Raleigh’s Alcoran, admits no principles” (15-16).

notes, is closely associated with the play's Arabian world (201); Geber tries to woo Epimenide with a "Thousand Drom'daryes [camels] loade with charmed drinks" (1.3.46); Epimenide begs for the incantation to heaven in order to drink wine (4.3.58) and demands it as soon as she gets there (4.5.22-27); Fryar craves ale (3.1.9-11); when Fryar takes a sip from the Tankard, Belpheghor comments on Fryar's swollen veins to indicate that Fryar is a drunkard (4.9.69-70; Dimmock 226); and the curious Tankard of Tryal, filled with alcoholic drink, is almost deified by the Arabians. Dimmock alerts us to Percy's marginal note, in the later two manuscripts, next to the song for the Tankard, which refers to Sandy's travel narrative (1615) in which he observes that "Turks love our English beere better then wyne they doe" (qtd. in Dimmock 179). Dimmock thus notes another possible source for this play, Purchas's *Purchas his Pilgrimage* (1613), in which Purchas makes a similar observation: "Wine is forbidden them; but they will be drunk with it, if they can get their fill of it" (qtd. in Dimmock 226).

At the same time that Percy establishes the Arabians' affinity to alcohol, he also reminds his audience numerous times that Muslims, according to their religious law, are not permitted to drink: from the outset, just before Haroth and Maroth descend to Arabia, Mahomet instructs them to obey several commandments while they journey through earth. The second commandment, after instructing them to refrain from all interactions with women, is to abstain from "wyne and Pulse" (1.3.75); later, Belpheghor explains to Pyr and Whisk that according to Mahomet and his "Alcoran," "no humane creature should tast any sortes of wynes, as the heynousest crime that he could Imagine might be committed on Earth" (4.9 82-84). Percy underscores the hypocrisy and falsehood of Muslims, who desire alcohol or drink in stealth despite their religious laws prohibiting it.

The hypocrisy of these Muslim characters is thus emphasized when they acknowledge a religious tenet or engage in some religious worship and then immediately and deliberately disobey said rule or commit sinful acts.

This pattern of understanding religious rules and then breaking them occurs everywhere in the play, and is committed by the people on earth, the angels, and Mahomet himself. Of course hypocrisy in this play extends beyond the characters' love for alcohol. Tib, the Lawyer's wife, for example, is hiding from her husband an adulterous relationship with Fryar, and secures a meeting place with him, "behind your Meschit [mosque]" just around the time she will be there for "my Prayers" (2.5.61-62). Percy is painting a picture here of a Muslim woman heading to a place of worship with the intention to pray *and* commit adultery. Elsewhere, the angels Haroth and Maroth discuss Mahomet's instructions amidst their pursuit of Epimenide: "Mahomet severely punisheth, thou knowest, / Such appetites in men" (2.6.43-44), yet their lines immediately following indicate their persistence in seeking Epimenide's love. For these angels, temptation overrules obedience. The same is true for Mahomet, who breaks his own law of abstaining from women by lusting after Epimenide. But this pattern implies more than simply portraying Muslims as hypocrites. Demonstrating the Muslim characters' persistent desires to break their own religious laws suggests that Islam is a senseless religion with absurd, impractical, and baseless rules. In fact, in his soliloquy in 3.2, Fryar very clearly explains the foolishness of certain Islamic laws.

Fryar's soliloquy is particularly concerning for my thesis because it reveals what I have been arguing is typical of early modern English perceptions of faith: that religious conversion or apostasy is closely linked with, or readily understood through, food. In

2.5, the last scene in which Fryar appears before his soliloquy of 3.2, he is accosted and threatened by Lawyer and Lawyer's law clerk, the disguised spirit Pyr, who are seeking payment for the monopoly of water the Lawyer secured for Fryar and his mosque ("meschit"). Their dispute intensifies and Pyr reveals himself to be a devil that carries Lawyer off stage, to Fryar's astonishment. Fryar is left praying for God's mercy and feeling relieved, scared and threatened all at once (2.6. 48-54). Therefore, the next time we see him in 3.2, he anticipates another threatening encounter and prepares to meet his "enemy" (3.2.18). Fryar addresses the audience:

Gentlemen, was not he a Foole that went to a field, and
left his weapon behind him? But was not he a more Foule that
did bring his weapon with him to feild, yet had forgot first to tye his nose
to the grindstone? He was of Gotham verily. To prevent
the which obloquye I have not onely brought with mee, I say, 5
my weapon to field, with the which I never goe without, But
also, I have Metamorphosed my sayd weapon, with the which
I never goe without, into a whittle too, against this next en:
counter, *For against the expresse order of our Meschit, I have*
fully now fortified my Block-house with one loyne off 10
Pork, as also with one of veale, unto which also, If I could but
now get one draught of nappie Ale, I were then a Solider Amu:
notioned for the nonce. I sought and I sought for a soupe [sup], But
according the precise force of the statute made against him
this drye yeare, not any one soupe of him was to be had, either 15

for my coyne, or by my craft. Then since I could not well
 clenche my Throate with a cup of Ale, I have well clencht
 him, loe, with egges. As until my sweet enemye come, I will give
 you, now, a cleare Instance of the same. Come on. (emphasis added, 3.1.1-19)

In this metaphor Fryar likens a soldier's weapon and a blockhouse (or edifice) to his own physical body, and the "loyne off Pork," veal, ale, and eggs to fortification and ammunition. Only a foolish soldier would come to the battlefield without a weapon, or worse yet, without an effective weapon. Therefore, Fryar argues, he would be a fool to encounter Lawyer and the devilish spirit if he does not attend to his weapon, that is, to his body. The catch, however, is that some of his ammunition – pork and ale – is prohibited in his religion. In order *not* to be foolish, Fryar believes he has to abandon the rules of his faith. He thus comes dangerously close to, perhaps even slips into, apostasy for he deliberately chooses to disobey the tenets of his faith in the belief that if he were to adhere to them, he would be foolish. His insistence that "I sought and I sought for a soupe" of "nappie Ale" further indicates that his opinion, which is "against the expresse order of our Meschit," is not a momentary lapse; it demonstrates the length to which he would go – outside the fold of Islam – to serve his own purpose. The implication here, in this context, is that Muslims are as foolish as the unarmed soldier for following a religion that does not permit pork and alcohol when the body clearly needs it. The irony of course is that Fryar is nevertheless foolish for thinking that pork and ale will protect and strengthen him in the face of danger.

Fryar's hypocrisy borders apostasy (perhaps even conversion to Catholicism?) since he does not obviously believe in the tenets of his faith if he thinks they are foolish.

He alludes to his apostasy when he compares his body to a “Metamorphosed” weapon. The *OED* defines the adjective “metamorphosed” as something “That has undergone metamorphosis; changed in form, nature, or character,” and it cites Knolles’s *The General Historie of the Turkes* (1603) as a source for how the word is used to describe a change in character with undertones of religious conversion (“metamorphosed”). Knolles describes a group of Christians who imitated “Turkish fashions, as well . . . as in their manner of service” and thus called them “metamorphosed monsters” (sig. Cccccc). Knolles’s text, according to Dimmock, “was particularly influential, and provided a rich source for playwrights such as Thomas Goffe” (*Mahomet* 5), although we cannot be certain that these playwrights included Percy. Nevertheless, if, in Fryar’s metaphor, the weapon is his body, and the weapon is metamorphosed, then his body has also undergone a change in either nature or character, and this change, I argue, is not limited to the physical changes in the human body as a result of consuming nutrients.

Fryar’s explicit acknowledgement that he is deliberately going against the orders of Islam (“Meschit” here reads as a metonym for Islam), his swearing by the Catholic saint, “Sancto Domingo” (3.1.37), just moments after his song that follows the soliloquy, and his reference to his “Eucharisticall” soul in 5.6 (which I will discuss later), all indicate, at the very least, his apostasy from Islam even, perhaps, hinting at a conversion to Catholicism. However, I am reluctant to call Fryar’s “metamorphosed” body here an explicit and complete conversion because he continues onward in the play as a “Mahometan Fryar” (4.9.40), which is an amalgam of Islam and Catholicism. In other words he appears outwardly as a Muslim while his inner thoughts expose his disbelief in

the faith. As far as the audience knows, he is an apostate for renouncing tenets of his faith, and he is a hypocrite for feigning virtue in the presence of the other characters.

Fryar therefore perceives Islam as an inadequate religion in helping him fend off the Lawyer and potential devilish spirits. In his situation, a number of measures could have been taken to prepare for the encounter. He could have obtained a literal weapon, or recruited friends, or even sought help from God by offering prayers at the very mosque he leads. That he perceives the inadequacy of his faith by way of food is telling. Fryar believes that the only solution is to transgress religious boundaries. His perception of Islam, a religion of senseless rules and inadequate guidance, and his consequent turn away from it, is, significantly, framed by dietary principles. Food and drink, then, are used by the playwright as a yardstick to measure differing faith systems. In this play, the Muslim attitude to alcohol – that it is at once sinful and heavenly – contributes to the overall depiction of a senseless Mahomet and his false religion.

Like early modern English texts on Islam, Percy's makes it very clear that for the Muslim characters alcohol is forbidden on earth but permissible in heaven. Earlier, when Haroth and Maroth describe heaven to Epimenide, they first make mention of the law on earth: "whereas on Earth you be barred wyne" (4.3.56) before they describe the permissibility of alcohol in heaven in the next line, "There you shall quaff him off by the Firkin [quarter of a barrel]" (4.3. 56-57). The availability of wine in heaven comes up again when Belpheghor answers Pyr's question as to what Fryar and Lawyer will find in heaven: "in vessels of Gold, and of sylver all, Mylk and honey, also / wynes off all manner kind of grapes" (5.6.38-39).

As I have already shown, medieval and early modern English writers narrated the myth of Haroth and Maroth to explain why Mahomet prohibits wine on earth but allows it in heaven. One would expect that Percy's play, especially since its plot is based on the myth of Haroth and Maroth, would offer the same or similar explanation. But here, the episodes in which Haroth and Maroth drink and sleep with Epimenide – the very part of the myth that usually explains the evil consequence of drinking – are conspicuously absent. Instead, Percy has the two angels attract Epimenide by enchanting her with the promise of wine in heaven (instead of Epimenide luring the angels with alcohol). By removing that which other writers use to explain Islam's alcohol prohibition, especially when retelling the same myth, Percy depicts Mahomet and his laws as senseless and arbitrary.

In fact many early modern English writers argued that Mahomet's heaven was "based upon luxuriousness and lasciviousness" (Dimmock 231), and always included wine. In Thomas Heywood's *Hierarchie of the blessed angels* (1635), he describes the Mahometan paradise as one in which "Rivers of Milke and Hony each where wander, / And some of Wine, in many a crook'd Meander" (286). These descriptions depict a very physical kind of pleasure almost, if not completely, devoid of spiritual bliss or nearness to God. In the play, however, these descriptions of the physical pleasures of heaven (explained by Haroth and Maroth in 4.3 and by Belpheghor in 5.6) turn out to be a lie. On these two occasions, in 4.3 and 5.6, where the two angels and Belpheghor describe heaven's riches to Epimenide, and Fryar and Lawyer, respectively, they do so in order to convince or bribe them to either go up to heaven (Epimenide) or to wait at heaven's door until the day of judgement (Fryar and Lawyer). Of course none of the joys of heaven is to

be had for these mortals; Epimenide is denied the drinks she was promised and is held prisoner by Mahomet's executioners; Fryar and Lawyer, likewise, are punished for their knavery. In fact, Whisk clearly calls Belphegor's earlier descriptions of heaven in 5.6 a lie: "That's a Lye with a Latchet, Mr Belphegor" (5.6.62); Pyr concurs, saying "Too much is too much ... For they [Fryar and Lawyer] be not / worthy such Incomprehensibilitye" (5.6.64-66). Ironically, everything about Mahomet's heaven is anything but heavenly. Mahomet himself falls physically ill from lovesickness (5.1.1-33) and is rejected and humiliated by the woman he desires (5.3). Muslims are therefore foolish to believe in Mahomet's lies that heaven is a place of eternal pleasure.

Even the incantation to reach heaven undermines the truthfulness or sanctity of Mahomet's religion because the characters necessarily have to refer to the "Alehouse door" in order to ascend to heaven. Part of the incantation that Haroth and Maroth teach Epimenide alludes to drinking: "With wings all painted ore, / As is an Alehouse doore, / To heaven so and so / Round, as St Beade, I goe" (4.3. 68-71). Dimmock's only comment on the reference to the alehouse door is that it is "deliberately irreverent, and further links with the remarkable variety of alcohol procurable in Percy's Islamic heaven" (45). The alehouse door would have been familiar to audiences who either frequented the many available alehouses or who inevitably heard about legislation and sermons reacting against them. The 1606 Act (among other legislation) aimed to reform alehouses because of the "inordinate and extreme vice" (4 Jac. I c.5; qtd. in Martin 25) that resulted from their promotion of alcohol. Thus a simile likening heaven's door to an alehouse door renders Mahomet's heaven a secular rather than spiritual place, one that is associated with vice rather than virtue.

Percy's satirical attack on Catholicism is not as obvious. Dimmock has noted a few Catholic moments such as when Muslim characters swear by Catholic saints or when he generalizes that there are "a range of Christian devotional practices" (29). However, Catholicism in the play is not limited to these few references. The fact that the Dervis is continuously referred to as the "Fryar," a member of the Catholic order, indicates that Catholicism is carried through the play via a character rather than simply by references. In other words, although whatever Fryar says and does is primarily a reflection of a Muslim, to a certain degree, he is also a reflection of a Catholic. Fryar's Catholic identity – and Percy's attack of it – culminates in 5.6 when Fryar and Lawyer have ascended to the gates of heaven and are asked to sip from the Tankard of Tryal.

Before we get to act 5, however, a few quick references earlier in act 4 set up the satire: Belpheghor swears by "St. Anne" just before he has Fryar and Lawyer approach the Tankard, which is then followed by Pyr, who swears by "St. Mary" as he urges them to draw a "Refectory draught" (4.9.61, 67-68). Dimmock's gloss prompts us to refer to the *OED* which he uses to define "refectory" as "refreshing" ("refectory" 2). However, the *OED* cites only one example of this meaning, and it is dated in 1693, which makes the other definition (whose first use is dated c.1451) – a room used for meals frequently found in monasteries – more likely. Fryar is the first of the two mortal men to take a sip, and as he does so Belpheghor observes, "It seems Dervis hath beene at the wyne before, loe, the / villaine, how his vaynes swell" (4.9.69-70). Dimmock's gloss tells us that the swelling veins are a "proverbial sign of drunkenness" (226), which implies that Fryar has taken many "Refectory draughts" before. The image of Fryar drinking in a refectory supports the notion that he is to be identified at this point in the play with Catholicism.

Establishing Fryar's Catholic identity here allows Percy to strike at the Catholic belief of transubstantiation (the literal conversion of consecrated bread and wine into Christ's body and blood, respectively) in the next act.

Because the Tankard is sacred and almost deified, its contents – different types of wine – are likely to be holy too. Once the wine is consumed, its contents have the power to expose the consumer, which means the wine is no ordinary wine; it facilitates the process of finding the truth about the moral character of the one who sips from it since the “Tankard cannot lye” (5.6.21, 101; 5.13.100). This allusion to transubstantiation and the Eucharist might not be obvious in 4.9 when Fryar and Lawyer drink from Tankard for the first time, but it is certainly made clear when, in Act 5.6, Fryar swears by his and the Lawyer's “Eucharistical soules” (5.6.94) when agreeing to remain with Belpheghor until Mahomet's judgement day.

In Catholicism, transubstantiation is an important means through which to attain Salvation. But nothing about Fryar, after he drinks from the tankard, shows that he is virtuous; in fact, the tankard has exposed him to be a knave as equal to Lawyer. In order to convince Belpheghor to allow him to return to Arabia, Fryar makes it seem as if he suddenly, “by Gods grace,” cares for his followers and must therefore return to earth: “I have such a sudden / remorse falln upon mee; for those soules I left behind, / that it is a cauter to my conscience” (5.6.15-17). But when Belpheghor describes all the riches of heaven, Fryar changes his mind, and his (false) remorse for leaving his followers behind is replaced with his desire to enjoy heaven at least for a while before he returns to Arabia (5.6.85-87). At this point, almost immediately after we witness Fryar's hypocrisy yet again, he swears by his “Eucharistical” soul, an obvious incongruity. Here is a man of

the Catholic (or Muslim) order, who has taken a sip of sacred wine and will evoke the Eucharist a few scenes later, yet he is anything but truthful. By highlighting Fryar's hypocrisy, Percy strikes at a specifically Catholic tenet and one that is all the more poignant considering that transubstantiation was a hotly debated topic of his day.⁵⁸

Fryar's Catholic identity is not lost on Mahomet either. In the last scene of the play where Mahomet presides over the final judgment, he calls upon each individual, states his crime, and delivers a specific punishment. When it is Fryar and Lawyer's turn, he calls them together and reproves Fryar for being a "Trust:/lesse Patron" of the mosque and Lawyer a "Trustlesse client" (5.13.94-95). In the later two manuscripts, Percy adds to Mahomet's judgement of Fryar and Lawyer: they are "both equall knaves ... Gen'rally and Catholiky to boote" (manuscripts 509 and HM4, qtd. in Dimmock 180). Not only are they punished for their faults on earth – adultery, greed, dishonesty – but they are punished also for being like Catholics. According to the *OED*, "The general sense" of the suffix -y "is 'having the qualities of' or 'full of' that which is denoted by the noun to which it is added" ("-y, suffix 1"). That Mahomet calls the two knaves "Gen'rally and Catholiky to boote" indicates that collectively, as a group (Fryar, Lawyer, and by extension friars and lawyers in general), they "have the qualities" of Catholics in addition to their stated crimes ("to boote"). This line implies two things: the first is that Mahomet confirms the notion that the Fryar (Lawyer is included here also) is seen as a Catholic; the second is that Catholicism, like adultery and greed, is a punishable crime in Mahomet's court. From Mahomet's perspective, Catholicism is entirely a separate and sinful religion,

⁵⁸ For an in-depth study on the contested nature of the Eucharist and transubstantiation see Lee Palmer Wandel's *The Eucharist in the Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006).

but from Percy's perspective, both Islam and Catholicism are on the same plane insofar as they are both false religions.

In fact, both Catholics and Protestants would accuse each other of being like or even worse than Muslims in an effort to emphasize their opponents' deviance. One of the implications of the amalgam of Islam and Catholicism is that whatever characterizes Islam can also be said for Catholicism. This argument has also been taken up by Dimmock in his first monograph, *New Turkes* (2005), in which he devotes a chapter to tracing the ways Catholics and Protestants employed the Turk metaphor in order to argue that their opponents were, like the Turks, deviating from the true religion. To accuse a Christian of being a Turk meant that the Christian was failing to conform to the true faith. The Turk was a marker of depravity used against either Protestants or Catholics depending on who was doing the writing. In this play, Islam is characterized as an utterly false religion, and its conflation with Catholicism suggests that Catholicism is equally false.

As Fryar embodies the falseness of religion, so too does Lawyer embody the falseness of law. Both religion and law are satirized in the play, and the conflation of the two is embodied in the figure of Mahomet, who serves as both a religious Prophet and a justice of the peace. The lawyer's monopoly of water in a time of drought and his consequent trial at the "Prophets Quarter Session" (5.6.81) is reminiscent of the contemporary legal system of which Percy personally ran afoul (such as when he was imprisoned for debt in 1598 [Nicholls 298]).

Dodds has found a letter written in London and dated 16 September 1600, in which the writer indicates that London was suffering from a drought about a year before

Percy began writing *Mahomet*: “Fother [fodder] is scant and the foyges [foggage, grass] burnt up with drought this sumer” (qtd. in Dodds 191). The drought, coupled with the monopoly on water, would have rung familiar to Percy’s audience. Christopher Brooks, in *Law, Politics and Society in Early Modern England*, has shown how the “Elizabethan practice of granting courtiers monopolistic powers...was generally seen as a legal abuse, and at least in the minds of some, such royal grants were associated with a dislike of monopolies of any kind” (387). The protest against monopolies in the House of Commons in 1601 forced Elizabeth to cancel many patents; she “admitted that her grants concerning salt, salt upon salt, vinegar, aqua vitae, aqua composite, the salting and packing of fish, train oil, blubbers of livers of fish, poldavis and mildernix, posts, brushes, bottles, and starch had not proved to be beneficial to her subjects ... [and] had injured many of the poorer sort of her people” (Thirsk 98). When a list of monopolies was read out in the Commons, as Dodds has pointed out, a member shouted, “Is not bread there?” (192). That Percy has the lawyer monopolize water, Dimmock notes, is “indicative of the black satirical humour” in the play (50).

Percy mocks the legal system by portraying the final quarter session and moments leading up to it as a complete farce. He has Belpheghor and Whisk, for instance, use legal terminology to refer to the Tankard and the two short studded glasses as the “Benchmen” and his “yeomen” (4.9. 65-66). Belpheghor speaks in a magisterial, pompous fashion; in mock legal language he itemizes the pleasures of heaven, “First and Imprimis...Item and againe” (5.6.35, 44). The pretentiousness of Fryar and Lawyer’s trial continues into the quarter session of Act 5.10 and onwards, where Mahomet sits on the tribunal, in the company of his “heavenly senators” (5.12.1) ready to serve at the oft-repeated “Quarter

Session” (5.6.2; 5.6.27-28; 5.6.81; 5.12.102). (In early modern England quarter sessions were local courts that were traditionally held four times a year and were notoriously corrupt). The pomp and ceremony of this court is made all the more laughable when Belphegor, in all seriousness, beseeches Mahomet to crack “this most hard and most difficult Nutt” (5.12.104) in order to determine the bigger knave. And since we have already witnessed Epimenide humiliate Mahomet, thereby undermining his authority (4.6.36-37; 5.4.5), one cannot take his judgement seriously.

Percy thus satirizes contemporary quarter sessions and justices of the peace (JPs), both often reputed to be corrupt.⁵⁹ Anthony Fletcher’s research on seventeenth-century quarter session files demonstrates that the attacks on JPs ranged from general name calling (“a knave and a bad justice of peace” [qtd. in Fletcher “Honour” 112]), to accusing JPs of dishonesty, sexual misbehaviour, favouritism, corruption, “excessively ardent behaviour, busyboding and interference” (“Honour” 112). It was also common for justices to take small bribes for alehouse licenses (*Reform* 40). It might be possible that Percy has this in mind when he includes an allusion to the alehouse door in the incantation to enter heaven (4.3.69) and when he depicts a Muslim heaven filled with all kinds of drinks. Mahomet is the corrupt justice of the peace who has the power to grant a “licence” to operate a place where alcohol is served.

Susan Amussen has shown that a “large overlap” existed “between the jurisdictions of the quarter sessions and ecclesiastical courts; both dealt with scolds and

⁵⁹ See also Mary Polito and Jean-Sebastien Windle’s essay, “You see the times are dangerous”: The Political and Theatrical Situation of *The Humorous Magistrate* (1637)” in which the authors discuss the anonymous play (*The Humorous Magistrate*) that satirizes corrupt JPs and through its satire, “condemns legal corruption in country jurisdictions in the Caroline period” (96).

drunkards, domestic disorder, and sexual offences” (215). The overlap can also be seen in *Mahomet* where judgement for secular and religious offenses occurs in the same court. Interestingly, a couple of lines in the earlier manuscripts have been revised to sound more legal than religious: when Belpheghor introduces the Tankard, he says, in the earlier manuscript, “*by express / wordes of his Alcoran*, [Mahomet] hath established that no humaine crea: / ture should tast any sortes of wyne, as the heynousest crime” (emphasis added, 4.9. 81-3). In the later manuscript, Percy revises the line to read: “*by express words of his statute* for this dry year hath enacted, in pennaunce and full atonement of their deadeley and undying service to God, that no humaine creature should tast any sortes strong drinks this now drye yeare...” (emphasis added, 4.9.81-3). The difference, of course, is that the law prohibiting alcohol in the earlier manuscript comes from the religious book, “Alcoran,” while the word “statute” in the later revision suggests the law is enacted by legislature. A similar revision is made when Mahomet explains Belpheghor’s punishment in the final scene: in the earlier manuscript, Belpheghor is punished because he “caused them taste whott wyne, / Against the express Tennets of our Lawe” (5.13.108-9) but in the revised edition, he is punished because he “sold them strong drinks, / Against the words of the statute for this drye yeare” (5.13.108-9). The latter seems to be a legislative act limiting the alcohol prohibition only to that particular year.

Based on these revisions, Mahomet is a parallel character with both Lawyer and Fryar. He is a religious, womanizing leader (like Fryar), and he has established a law to prevent Arabians from drinking alcohol; withholding drinks from people parallels Lawyer’s monopoly that withholds water from the Arabians. Law, personified in Lawyer,

and religion, personified in Fryar, culminates in the figure of Mahomet, a corrupt justice of the peace and a false prophet that implies that both law and religion are equally untrustworthy and corrupt.

Amidst all the falsehood that is found everywhere in the play, there stands one conspicuous source of truth: the Tankard of Tryal. The tankard is a miraculously infallible source of truth. Repeatedly, it is described as a tankard that “cannot lye” (5.6.21, 101; 5.13.100). If we can get past the absurdity of a tankard miraculously filled with infallible alcohol, the tankard could be read as an embodiment of truth, or a literal representation of the proverb, “in vino veritas” (5.6.67): “in wine is truth” (Dimmock 233). But how can it be that the tankard’s alcoholic contents are a source of truth when alcohol is forbidden to Muslims? One might argue that since alcohol is permitted in heaven the tankard’s existence poses no problem. But technically, the tankard is not in heaven since it sits next to Belpheghor’s lodge, which we know is certainly outside the gates of heaven. Furthermore, in the final scene, Mahomet chastises Belpheghor precisely because he had Fryar and Lawyer “tast whott wyne / Against the express Tennets” of Mahometan law (5.13.109-10), indicating that the tankard’s alcohol is not permissible to Arabians.

Considering alcohol is not permitted to the play’s Muslims on both religious and secular levels - that is, alcohol is “outside” Islam based on Qur’anic prohibition, and alcohol is likewise “outside” law based on the “statute” for that dry year - it is curious that Percy not only associates the tankard of alcohol with truth, but that he also associates truth with drunkenness. Why is the truth associated with something forbidden and sinful? Both religion and law oppose drunkenness, and yet drunkenness is how we get to the

truth, according to Percy. I argue that in rendering alcohol the only source of truth and denying it to the realms of religion and law, Percy suggests that the truth is found outside the parameters of religion and law, a cynical, even dangerous assertion, but one that is understandable considering his own personal experience and family history.

Although the play obviously lampoons Islam it is also a reflection of Percy's resentment of contemporary religion and law. When Belphegor concludes Act 5.6, he speaks directly to the audience, creating a metatheatrical moment in which it almost seems as if Percy is speaking to the gentlemen himself: "I might but demon:/ strate unto you, faire Gentlemen, whither is the / arraunter villaine of the two, or the crump-fisted / chiause, or the scab-coaked Dervis, For assure your / selves, Gentlemen, Tankard cannot lye" (5.6.97-102). Belphegor's address to the audience is reminiscent of a lawyer speaking to the jury, which renders the spectators as participants who must reflect the case: which of the two, law or religion, is more corrupt?

From the early modern English point of view, the approach to alcohol (specifically wine) seems to differentiate Islam, Catholicism, and Protestantism. Although early modern Christianity in general treated wine as a sacred drink only to be consumed in moderation and for the intention to heal (medically and spiritually), the physical or symbolic property of consecrated wine was a key differentiating factor between Catholicism and Protestantism. On the other hand, early modern perceptions of Islam's views on alcohol were doubly troubling: not only was it believed that Muslims drank to inebriation despite their own law, but the law against alcohol meant that Muslims believed in a faith that prohibited a crucial aspect of Christianity – consecrated wine.

In Sandys' *Relations* (1615), he describes a scenario that exemplifies how wine differentiates between two faiths, this time from the perspective of Jews: the Grecians "have a ceremony of baptizing of their wines, which is the reason that the Jewes will not drink thereof: performed in the memory, and on that day wherein Christ converted water into wine" (sig. H3v). Later, in his chapter "Of the Jewes" he recalls this ceremony by explaining how "their [Jews'] wines, being for the most part planted and gathered by Grecians, they dare not drinke of them for feare they be baptized: a ceremony whereof we have spoken already" (sig.O2v). We learn from Sandys that wine suspected to be consecrated for Christian consumption (even though it might not be) is enough for Jews to observe abstinence; their consuming of the Grecians' wine would threaten their own faith. Here, wine stands in for Christianity, and it also draws a boundary between the Jews and Christians. Similarly, Sir Willfull Witwoud's refusal to visit the Turkish land of "infidels" because they "believe not in the Grape" (where "Grape" functions as a synecdoche for wine and wine functions as a metonym for Christianity) indicates that wine marks the boundary between Christians and Turks.

The play's satire, which might be inspired by Percy's personal experiences, recycles a common tendency by early modern English writers to conflate Islam and Catholicism so as to exaggerate or highlight the evilness of the latter by using Islam as a marker of depravity. For example, in his *Faerie Queene* (1590), Edmund Spenser has three Saracen brothers (understood to be Muslims), Sansfoy, Sansjoy, and Sansloy, oppose and fight the protagonist, Redcrosse. These brothers, who represent figures lacking true Christian faith, are grouped together with other (Catholic) enemies of the (Protestant) kingdom. In this poem, like in Percy's play, Catholic and Muslim characters

belong in the same category of the false and corrupt religion. Even though Catholics and Muslims have differing views on alcohol, Percy nevertheless conflates the two through the trope of drinking. Thus, the play demonstrates, once again, the significance or usefulness of foodways in articulating religious negotiations in early modern England.

Conclusion: The “Goodness” of Food and Faith

“I’ll stand to’t, that in good hospitality, there can be nothing found that’s ill. He that’s a good house-keeper, keeps a good table; a good table, is never without good stools; good stools, seldom without good guests; good guests, never without good cheer; good cheer, cannot be without good stomachs; good stomachs, without good digestion. Good digestion keeps men in good health, and therefore, [*to the audience*], all good people, that bear good minds, as you love goodness, be sure to keep good meat and drink in your houses, and so you shall be called good men, and nothing can come on’t but good, I warrant you” (Roger the Clown in Thomas Heywood’s *The English Traveller* 1.1.201-210).

In his monologue, Roger the Clown explains the key ingredients that comprise good hospitality. His explanation, which connects food and drink, host (self) and guest (other), stomach and digestion, physical and mental health, and “goodness” or virtue, encapsulates the key themes of this thesis and their connections. Food and drink were not simply material means by which the early moderns survived, nor were they simply the way to maintain physical health. Food and drink raised questions of morality and faith, or what Roger calls “goodness.”

Immediately before Roger speaks these lines, his master, old Wincott, ushers his guests toward supper. Wincott says to his gentlemen friends, “we would rather / Give you the entertainment of household guests / Than compliment of strangers. I pray, enter” (1.1.198-200). The “compliment” of strangers is glossed in Paul Merchant’s edition as a “formal courtesy” (116), which indicates that there are degrees of hospitality offered to

guests depending on their relationship to the host. According to Roger, this kind of hospitality, wherein the host treats Geraldine and Dalavill as “household guests” rather than “strangers,” is “good hospitality” that consequently bears “goodness” in “good men.” Roger’s initial premise, that “in good hospitality, there can be nothing found that’s ill,” especially its implication that a “bad” ingredient would have ill-effects (mentally, spiritually, and physically) on the people involved, has propelled the arguments I have made in this thesis.

To the early modern English, “good” food meant the quality, quantity, and specific kind of food that was appropriate for one’s humoral body. Thus in Chapter One I explored the early modern English conception of the porous body, understood as it was on the basis of humoral theory, and consequent fears of religious and cultural assimilation and/or conversion. Based on such fears, as I have shown in Chapter Two, the English looked to religious others, especially as they increasingly came into contact with them both at home and in the Islamic world, with various degrees of trepidation, judgment, curiosity, and respect. The English used the stage to explore ways of negotiating their place in relation to religious others, and assuming control during scenes with shared meals and religious others can be interpreted as a mechanism to maintain religious identity while simultaneously maintaining diplomatic ties. Yet, however open some of these Englishmen were to business interactions with religious others, fears of apostasy and conversion were nevertheless tied to these mercantile relationships. Therefore, in Chapter Three, I investigated this anxiety of conversion as a result of engaging in a business partnership in *Merchant of Venice*, and explored how the threat of conversion is conveyed in terms of dietetics. In the same chapter I looked at anxieties about conversion

with an emphasis on the insincerity of the convert; I showed how dietetics are used as visual markers of faith, yet also function as a crucial means by which the Protestants defeat the Catholics in *A Game at Chess*. English attitudes to Catholicism were brought up again in Chapter Four, in which I argued that Percy conflates Catholicism with Islam in *Mahomet and His Heaven* so as to satirize both religions through the theme of alcohol and drinking. This chapter offers the exciting prospect of an early modern dramatist who uses drink to demonstrate similarities rather than to focus on differences between Christians and Muslims. My analysis of this play reveals that the food trope, which is often used to articulate differences, also allows dramatists to reveal degrees of sameness or commensurability between self and other.

What I have hoped to make clear is that studying the way food operates – whether as an essential “non-natural” to the humoral body, in shared meals, as gifts to maintain diplomacy, as metaphors of eating, as visual markers of internal convictions, or as a yardstick to measure sameness and/or difference – in the drama and in actual encounters, brings to light more nuanced relationships between the English and religious others in the period. To look at interfaith relationships from the perspective of foodways widens the possibility that the early modern English did not always look to the Turk, Jew, or Catholic in contempt. Rather, studying these interfaith encounters in tandem with humoral theory and food establishes that the early modern English were conscious of their sameness with others, and responded to this awareness with attitudes ranging from outright resistance to compassionate acceptance.

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