A is for Other: Arabs, Race and Enslavement on the Early Modern English Stage

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COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

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Abstract

This paper seeks to contribute to the postcolonial shifts being undertaken in early modern literary studies, which explore developing racial and colonial identities in this historical period. In particular, this thesis considers the representation and racialisation of the Arab subject on the English stage at a time when the Ottomans, who, as I argue, form a part of this Arab identity, are superseding England in economic, cultural and intellectual production. Considering overlapping categories of religion, skin-colour, class, and nationality used to describe Mohammedan-Ottoman-Turk-Moor-type identities, this paper moves away from readings of such figures as Islamic-Others and argues instead for an Arab identity: a racial otherness that categorises this figure, rather than a purely religious one. Considering representations of what I contend to be a racial Arab in Christopher Marlowe's *Tamburlaine the Great*, Robert Greene's *The Tragical Reign of Selimus*, Robert Daborne's *A Christian Turned Turk*, and Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, this paper aims to illustrate how the Arab is racialised through of notions of power and enslavement aligned to early modern versions of this other. To this end, this dissertation hopes to test the anachronisms of the label Arab thus responding to a call made by early modern race scholars Kim Hall and Peter Erikson to bring historical identities of racial otherness into conversation with contemporary counterpart(s).

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Introduction

When Marlowe's Tamburlaine defeats his competitor, the Turkish Emperor Bajazeth, the Scythian tyrant declares his victory by describing his plans for future conquest:

> So from the East unto the furthest West,
> Shall Tamburlain extend his puisant arme.
> The Galles and those pilling Briggandines,
> That yeerely saile to the Venetian gulfe,
> And hover in the straightes for Christians wracke,
> Shall lie at anchor in the Isle Asant,
> Untill the Persean Fleete and men of war,
> Sailing along the Orientall sea,
> Have fetcht about the Indian continent:
> Even from Persepolis to Mexico,
> And thence unto the straightes of Jubalter:
> Where they shall meete, and joine their force in one,
> Keeping in aw the Bay of Portingale:
> And all the Ocean by the British shore.
> And by this meanes Ile win the world at last. (1.3.3.246-260)

In asserting his newly attained command over Turkish territory, Tamburlaine evokes an image of himself "extending" his "puissant arme" into the world, as though ready to grab a hold of territories spread from the "Venetian gulfe", the "Indian continent", the older world of Persepolis in the "East" all the way across to "Mexico" in "the furthest West" of the New World, eventually reaching "the British shore". What makes this image especially profound is the very real resonance it has with the political realities of this historical moment.

Marlowe's description of movement between these spaces tracks a new world order that is developing at a time when there are "no clear geographical or political barriers between east and west" (Brotton 33). Many of these changes

stemmed from new "international and cosmopolitan horizons" that were "opened" up through the "institutionalized […] international trade" established "by the middle of the fifteenth century" (Jardine, *Worldly* 436)[1]. Within these commercially motivated movements, significant material, intellectual and cultural exchanges ensued between the Ottoman Empire and the European countries to its West, especially England and Italy. These exchanges resulted in a breakdown of global barriers that would allow Tamburlaine's "plans to encircle and master the post-Columbian globe" to possess tangible meaning for an early modern audience (Burton, *Traffic* 76).

The breakdown of these boundaries was also significant for the emergence of colonial arrangements that would set the agenda politically and economically for centuries to come. I am referring particularly to the territorial expansion, highlighted by Marlowe's image of Tamburlaine "extend[ing]" his "arme" into the world as the Ottomans were doing in the 'Old World' of the East and as Europe was doing in the 'New World' of the West (Matar, *Turks* 9). These expansions were also accompanied by various trading in slaves happening on both sides of this world. Marlowe's reference to the "straights of Jubalter"(1.3.3.256) resonates with these practices, drawing attention to the geographic connection between the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea, which were also connected in this moment by their centrality to systems of buying, selling and transporting slaves.

Tamburlaine's speech therefore seems to express a "globally oriented quest" for power that is in line with England's colonial aspirations in this dynamic, historical period (Bartels, 'Race' 213). As Matar notes, England's involvement in early modern territorial expansion was limited, since it was "not [yet] a colonial power […] in the imperial sense that followed in the eighteenth century" (Matar, *Turks* 10). In an effort to fulfil these aspirations, the English engaged economically and diplomatically with what many critics have referred to as the

[1] As Jardine has noted, "merchandise passing through Constantinople went both from East to West and West to East" implying a heightened mobility of goods and bodies between the formerly distinct regions of the world (Jardine, *Worldly* 46).

'Islamic Other', a figure that is both exciting and terrifying to the English because of its various strengths and differences in the early modern period. My dissertation will explore English engagements with these others on the early modern stage, using representations of characters like Marlowe's Tamburlaine to articulate and scrutinise England's colonial aspirations.

While this thesis builds on the critical of work of scholars who explore how race, power, and slavery are relevant to early modern representations of this figure, it also moves away from a scholarly practice that identifies this other's difference primarily through Islam. Scythians, like Tamburlaine, are, for instance, one of many othered categories in early modern literature associated with Islam, whose followers are typically referred to as *Mahometan* or *Mohammedans*. Other groups include the *Turks*, *Tartars*, *Moors*, *Moroccans*, *Arabs*, *Egyptians* and *Persians*. This association has led scholars like Nabil Matar, Daniel Vitkus, and Jonathan Burton to label these groups as variants of an 'Islamic' or 'Muslim' other, given "the significance of Islam" as a marker of difference for these often-conflated others (Burton, *Traffic* 13)[2]. However, I contend that the singular identification of these figures with Islam falls short in describing the complexities of their otherness, which is developing at a time when the English are engaging increasingly with new experiences of racial difference in early modern projects of "expansion, exploration, and plunder" (Howard 15). Instead, therefore, I refer to this figure as an Arab other and assert that while this other is characterised and othered by Islamic identity, this is not always the only or the primary mode of racialising this figure in the early modern period.

[2] Nabil Matar, for instance, refers to the mostly Muslim inhabitants of "the Ottoman Empire, the Eastern Mediterranean, and the North African regencies of Tunisia, Algeria, and Libya, along with Morocco" with whom the English interacted as "Muslim Other[s]" (Matar *Turks* 3, 14). Daniel Vitkus similarly uses the term "Islamic Other" to describe such figures noting that while words like *Moor* and *Turk* for example, were sometimes used to refer specifically to the people of Morocco or Turkey[…]more often they signified a generalised Islamic Other" (Vitkus, 'Turning' 169). Jonathan Burton prefers the use of the term 'Turk", nevertheless locating this term in relation to Islam by noting that "Islam and 'Turkishness' were often considered synonymous in early modern English parlance" (Burton, *Traffic* 13).

As Jean E. Howard points out, the early modern theatre–as a popular, recreational, and public space–served as an effective site for channelling ideals of English supremacy, proliferating new systems of knowledge and observing foreign culture from a comfortable distance (312-313)[3]. Therefore, in analysing representations of Arab others in Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* (1587), Robert Greene's *The Tragical Reign of Selimus* (1594), Robert Daborne's *A Christian Turn'd Turk* (1612) and Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* (1605), my aim is to unveil how English anxieties about Arab otherness translate into colonial discourses that become useful to the English who are trying to establish their role and identity within a globalising moment. Specifically, I assert that the early modern English stage racializes Arab figures through tropes of power and enslavement, which are intrinsic features of Arab identities and realities in this moment. In doing so, I draw from and develop the literary and historical scholarship of Nabil Matar, Jonathan Burton, Daniel Vitkus, Jane Hwang Degenhardt, Ania Loomba, Kim Hall, Emily Bartels, Mary Floyd-Wilson, Lara Bovilsky and Michael Guasco.

In particular, this dissertation develops Matar's assertion that the English use a "strategy" on stage of "superimposing the discourse about the conquest of America" onto the Arab world, producing a "discourse of orientalism and the concurrent enterprise of empire" (Matar *Turks* 16-18)[4]. Specifically, a discourse of the Arab as Other emerges in the "imaginative territory" of the early modern

[3] Bartolovich has similarly noted that the "theatre is a compelling site for such exploration" since it became a part of the "*international economy*" that was growing in London and throughout Europe, especially by allowing "trans-national commerce to be conducted" through the representations of foreign lands and peoples (Bartolovich 17, author's emphasis).

[4] Barbara Fuchs makes a similar argument around "mimesis": "a powerful rhetorical weapon" that creates "intricate relations of imitation and contradistinction among the emerging European empires and would-be empires, as well as between them and their non-European others" (Fuchs 2-3). However, I have preferred Matar's approach here since mimesis works "by negating its singularity" (Fuchs 4). Superimposition contrarily suggests that "one thing" is positioned "over another, typically so that both are still evident" but still recognised together (OED). In other words, superimposition allows for subjective differences to remain singularly "evident" and distinguishable, and these aspects are in turn critical to my argument since I contend that the Arab is othered in a wholly *unique* way because it is a compound of various identities.

stage (Said 15). I argue that the Arab is racialised in "an uneven exchange of various kinds of power" on stage, especially in negotiating the power over enslaved and racialised bodies (Said 12)[5]. In this process of racializing the Arab, the English alleviate some of their anxieties around these empires while at the same time experimenting with creating their own empire.

These ideas of racial difference are shaped by denotations of race as a complex, unstable designation, which groups people together according to shared observable or 'phenotypical' qualities, such as skin colour or invisible social aspects like religion, national identity, or lineage. Even in contemporary discourses, race "does not carry a precise set of meanings" though it is frequently used as "shorthand for various combinations of ethnic, geographic, cultural, class and religious differences", making it difficult to define except in localised instances (Burton and Loomba 2)[6]. In early modern discourses, categories that give meaning to the differentiation of races are also blurred, clouding historical uses of this term further. As Loomba notes, early modern writers rarely use the term "race" to describe social differences, instead opting for "other terms to convey differences of religion, ethnicity, nationality, and colour" (*Shakespeare* 22). These terms are sometimes also used interchangeably, as when "nation" is

[5] In this dissertation I do not explore the semantics of this power as a theoretical concept. However, in observing the effects of interplay between power and constructions of knowledge, I rely on Foucault's definitions of power as "mobile" and dynamic resulting from "divisions, inequalities, and disequilibriums" in relationships (94). In the early modern period, these "divisions" and "inequalities" emerge in economic systems of material trade and slavery, resulting in positions of power and subordination. This power facilitates the production of new powers on stage, "exercised [by the English] with[…]a series of aims and objective" for epistemologically establishing colonial identities, even as they begin to put colonisation into practice in different geographic locations, whether one thinks of Ireland, Virginia, or the West Indies (Foucault 95).

[6] Robert Bartlett has discussed the distinctions and confusions between race, ethnicity and religion from the medieval period into the modern, observing that these terms are not "simple or uncomplicated" (39). In the "present generation" of scholarship the term ethnicity tends to be used as a substitute for race, because of race's "association with racism". However, since this paper's interest is in teasing apart early modern racist discourses, I have tried to avoid the use of the term ethnicity to prevent confusion across religious, ethnic and racial categories, preferring the term race instead to augment ideas about the racial Arab (Bartlett 39).

used to describe the Jews and the Muslims, while women and the nobility are understood as "races" (Loomba, *Shakespeare* 27,32). The imprecision of these categories creates convoluted identities that confuse these groups and discourses, while at the same time allowing liberties to be taken in generating more precise labels to better define and articulate these groups.

Thus, in trying to assess the racialisation of the Arab on the early modern stage, I rely on a conceptualisation of race as a 'sticky' category that attaches to "a range of ideologies, narratives, and vocabularies in ways both familiar and strange" (Hall and Erikson 12). I borrow this term "sticky" from early modern race scholars Kim Hall and Peter Erikson who use it to evoke an understanding of race, which counters recent trends of classifying early modern race as "fluid" or "unstable" (10-11). Theories of early modern racial fluidity, they argue, dialectically suggest that race in the contemporary moment is "stable, deliberate, and without contradictions, [presenting] a misconception" that undermines lived experiences of race and racism (Hall and Erikson 10-11). The stickiness of race opens up these channels between the past and the present by recognising "the powerful connections" of race "between 'then' and 'now'" (Loomba, *Shakespeare* 4)

Nevertheless, by referring to this figure as 'Arab', I encounter a primary limitation in the geographic constraints of the term, which, from the fourteenth century onward, denotes "one of the native people of Arabia and surrounding regions" in the English language ('Arab'). This is not dissimilar to the OED definition which refers to Arabs as a Semitic people, originally from the Arabian peninsula and neighbouring territories" residing in "much of the Middle East and North Africa" (OED)[7]. However, in this dissertation, I am stretching this term in light of the "geographical expansion" of the 'Islamic Others' and particularly the Ottomans, who in the early modern period are expanding their territories into much of what we know as the 'Arab' world today, including the Middle East and North African Maghreb (Harvey qtd. in Bartolovich 13). I propose that in the

[7] Of course, the term also refers to inhabitants of the area that is now Saudi Arabia, who are referred to by the abbreviated term 'Arabs'.

global "spatial reorganization" of the early modern period, where geographical borders are blurred, the label 'Arab' is able to take on a meaning that transcends its geographic limits (Harvey qtd. in Bartolovich 13).

Therefore, in responding to Hall and Erikson's call to early modern scholars to create dialogues between the past and present when analysing race, I will test the anachronistic qualities of the label 'Arab': a term that holds very real significance to contemporary world politics, economics, and culture in the twenty-first century, especially since events like 9/11, the *Arab*-Israeli conflict and the *Arab* Spring of 2010. Each of these instances from our recent history evokes the term Arab to a slightly different effect. At once, it is a localised national designation, denoting Palestinian refugees in Israel; in another moment, it is a term that connects regions geographically, as in the Arab spring that began in Africa and spread to the Middle East; and yet again it can signify Islam or religious 'extremism'. Given this sustained ambiguity, the Arab I argue, is inherently 'sticky' in ways that other others cannot claim to be, since Arab identity seems to exist in various permutations of black, white, brown, Muslim, Christian, Jew, Moroccan, Turk, African and Egyptian to name just a few.[8]

In spite of the sometimes-contradictory combinations that emerge from these groupings, the idea of an Arab as a singular, "authentic", and coherent identity seems to still exist in the contemporary moment (Sabry 2). If this is true of the Arab in the present, then in this dissertation I propose that this is also true for early modern versions of this figure. In fact, the early modern stage seems to revel in these contradictions within the figure of the Arab in order to explore notions of race, power, and enslavement. Therefore, by examining English racialisation of the Arab on the early modern stage, my aim is to provide a catchall category that can also allow the nuanced constructions of difference,

[8] As Sabry notes: "The history of the 'Arab' is a history of cultural encounters with others: in no particular order or chronology, the Greeks, Aristotle, Byzantines, Persians, Indians, Romans, Jews, Amazighs, Kurds, Africans, Turks, Chinese, Paganism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Sufism, Aramaic, Hebrew, Napoleon, Europe, European colonialism, Empire, Marxism, socialism, capitalism, liberalism, Rock' n' Roll and much more"(1-2).

which often work together in representing this figure, to appear. This is not necessarily to present a case for why the Arab should (or if indeed it could) be categorised as a race, but instead to explore the semantics of what seems to me to be very clear representations of a racial Arab. Therefore, I read this term 'Arab' backwards with the aim of trying to bring such constructions of this othered figure from the past into conversation with the present.

Terms of Difference

Arguably, the Arab categories most widely referenced by scholars are 'Turks' and 'Moors'[9]. However, these figures fit into a much larger network of othered identities, many of which form a part of the greater Ottoman Empire that stretched across into significant regions of Southern and Central Europe, Western Asia, and North Africa. Various peoples of different races and religions diversely populated this Ottoman Empire and could all theoretically be referred to as *Ottomans* or even 'Turks', highlighting the instability of this category[10].

The leaders of the Ottoman Empire were *Turks* and as a result "[this] term was used to signify the Ottoman sultan" (ruler) and "any of his subjects" (Burton, 'Tamburlaine' 152)[11]. However, aside from the Turk, other groups within this empire are also sometimes referred to distinctively, like the *Tartars* of Russia and the Iranian *Scythians*. Ethnographic sources from this period suggest that the *Scythians* and *Tartars* are interchangeable figures; Giles Fletcher explains that the *Tartars* are thought to be "the nation" from which "the Turks took their beginning" (qtd in Burton and Loomba 131). The often-confusing representation of Ottoman figures in this way creates overlapping identities that appear in Marlowe's *Tamburlaine.* These overlaps allow the Scythian Tamburlaine to be

[9] Matar explores Turks and Moors extensively in *Turks, Moors and Englishman in the Age of Discovery*.
[10] Loomba has noted, for instance, that "[a]t one time over 250000 Jews lived in the Ottoman Empire" (Loomba, *Shakespeare* 144).
[11] Thus all *Turks* were *Ottomans* though all *Ottomans* could not accurately be defined as *Turks* (Burton, 'Tamburlaine 152n2).

distinguished from the Turk Emperor Bajazeth on stage, while at the same time still paradoxically possess characteristics that the English align to the 'Turk'.

To elaborate, these are characteristics marked by the ambivalent views the English held of the Ottoman Turks, informed by their complex political and economic relations, as well as their religious differences. As Vitkus notes, the English identified the Ottoman Empire as a society "far more prosperous, sophisticated and powerful than theirs" ('Poisoned' 52). They were both fascinated by and fearful of this more powerful Ottoman Empire that was dominating the Mediterranean and conquering the East in the sixteenth century, in ways that the English could only dream of doing (Burton, *Traffic* 12-13). The English recognised the need for engagement with the Ottomans, which would allow them to enter into the "diplomatic arena of the Mediterranean" (Stanivukovic 9).

In the 1570s the English made "diplomatic contact with the Ottoman sultan", creating a surge of "overseas trade between England and the Mediterranean" that allowed this to happen (Vitkus, 'Poisoned' 47). Still, in spite of the economic incentives for co-operation, the religious difference of the Turks still permeated English perspectives of this figure. Since the 14th and 15th centuries, "the foremost enemy [to Europe] was identified as the Muslim" and this created problems for Anglo-Turk relations because the Turks were Muslim (Matar 13). That the word *Turk* was used, like *Mahometan* and *Mohammedan*, to signify "practitioner[s] of Islam" is telling of how inextricably Islam and the Turk were linked (Burton, 'Tamburlaine' 152; n2). To this end, "[I]mages of Islam" and of the Turk "produced by English authors of the early modern period ranged from the censorious to the laudatory", reflecting the characteristically ambiguous relationship the English had with this economic partner and religious opponent (Burton, *Traffic* 12).

As I demonstrate in Chapter 1, the ambiguity that emerges on stage in Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* suggests that this dynamic is not specific to the Turk. The Scythian Tamburlaine embodies the same paradoxical dynamic of awe and fear that

categorises Anglo-Turk relations in this period. This ambiguity extends to other characters like the Turk emperor Bajazeth, the Egyptian Zenocrate, and the Persian Prince Cosroe. The latter two of these figures are politically and economically distinct from the Ottoman Turks. The Persian Empire existed as its own political and economic force, while Egypt was "a very malleable sign" that was treated in English discourse as a "separate continent" that "many writers of the Renaissance did not locate […] on the African continent" nor in the paradigms of the Ottoman World (Burton *Traffic* 38; Hall, *Things* 155). *Tamburlaine* brings these separate figures together through a shared ambiguity that appears unnatural to the English, thus turning ambiguity into a means for racializing the Arab in *Tamburlaine* and *The Tragical Reigne of Selimus.*

In Chapter 2, I continue to explore such ambiguity in Robert Daborne's *A Christian Turned Turk*, as it re-emerges in early modern English anxieties around Christian conversion to Islam that were intrinsically linked to the idea of captivity. Historically, the Englishmen were lost to Turkish and Algerian pirates in the Mediterranean: "tens of thousands of Englishmen were captured, enslaved, and chained to the oars of Mediterranean galleys" as they were "routinely incorporated […] into the same slave system that accommodated so many other Europeans" (Guasco 126). Many of these men were forced into Islamic conversion or converted to "end their enslavement" (Matar, *Turks* 9). Other Christians captivated by the "dangerous allure of Islam" became pirates or corsairs in the Mediterranean, and "seeking to improve their fortunes" converted to Islam (Matar, *Turks* 9). This included men like the Englishman John Ward whose story Daborne used to uncover ideas about "English national" and "religious" identity (Guasco 138)[12].

Conversion to Islam was therefore continuously advertised to the English, in the successful escapades of men like John Ward, but then correspondingly demonised on stage. The possibilities of conversion also presented the English

[12] This need is made especially desperate because of the social and religious "instabilities" produced by the English Reformation from the preceding century, which separated the English as Protestants from the rest of Catholic Europe in ways that challenged English identity (Degenhardt 7).

with new challenges in using religion to organise difference since religion was a difference they could not see visually. Chapter 2 therefore examines the way Daborne negotiates the problems of Islamic captivity, religious difference, and conversion on stage by engaging with early modern connections between Islam and the flesh[13]. Thereafter, considering the 'tropes of blackness'–to borrow Kim Hall's expression–that arise in the description of Ward's conversion through "black deeds" (8.28), I contend that in 'turning Turk', Ward does not simply turn Muslim but also turns into a complex Arab subject when his conversion blackens him in a way that visually signifies his difference.

While in Chapter 2, I argue that Ward's inward blackness racializes him outwardly, Chapter 3 reverses this reading by exploring the Prince of Morocco in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* whose outward blackness racializes him internally. Most literary critics have identified the Prince of Morocco as a *Moor*, which is arguably one of the most confused categories in early modern literature. The OED defines *Moors* as the "north-western African Muslim people of mixed Berber and Arab descent" who "conquered the Iberian peninsula" in the eighth century and were "driven out […] at the end" of the fifteenth century (OED). This region included areas of Morocco, Algeria, Libya and Tunisia on the Northern coast of the continent bordering the Mediterranean Sea that we now classify as the Maghreb (Matar, *Turks* 3).

The word *Moor* "could [therefore] mean both 'Muslim' and 'black'" or sometimes 'African', denoting dark colour and/or religion and/or the geographic identities associated with both (Loomba, *Shakespeare* 45). When the term *Moor* refers to Islam and especially to the Muslim Moroccans, it evokes an "anxious [economic and political] equality" for the English since the English received "military and diplomatic help" from Morocco in the early modern era, started by Elizabeth's diplomatic liaisons with the Moroccan sultanate (Matar, *Turks* 8-9). Moorish pirates from Algeria and Tunisia were also responsible for enslaving and trading

[13] As Vitkus, Hawkes, and Degenhardt have discussed, the early modern English related Islam to ideas of sexuality, sensuality and slavery ('Turning' 145; 150; 3).

English captives, making Anglo-Moor relations similar to Anglo-Turk ones. However, when *Moor* conveys physical darkness it refers to the "sub-Saharan Africans" whom the English held in relations of "power, domination and slavery" (Matar, *Turks* 8). Distinctions between the "North Africans and sub-Saharans" blur, producing an "indeterminate but distinctively colour-coded" category: *Moor* may denote a black, a North African Arab (one who is black or tawny), an identity that connotes to servitude, or even just a Muslim (Bartels, 'Battle' 107).

The Prince of Morocco is a Moorish subject who embodies some of these complex differences, being a Muslim nobleman of Morocco characterised by his physical darkness. In his first words on stage the Prince expresses a disclaimer for his sunburnt "complexion" recognising the problem of his physical difference, and then tries to negate this difference in a turn towards the inward similarity of blood. This reference to blood marks one of the central concerns the play has with blood-differences, following the early modern idea that "*hierarchy* between different bloodlines" is linked to notions of "racial purity" (Loomba, *Shakespeare* 23, 32). To this end, the Prince of Morocco evokes an inward-outward dialectic of skin-colour and blood difference, creating an ambiguity that becomes apparent through Portia's racism against him. Drawing from Janet Adelman's explorations of blood in the play and Kim Hall's arguments about England's economic anxieties, I argue that the Prince introduces an economic discourse of difference related to the flesh that inevitably consolidates his otherness.

The analysis of these plays will explore how racialisation of the Arab evokes economic-political realities and fantasies of otherness that form part of English efforts to identify themselves as players in the race for global plunder, in the emergent globalisations established by overseas trade, piracy, and settlements. By considering how the Arab Other takes up a productive role in discussions of colonial ideas in a technically pre-colonial moment on the early modern English stage, I unpack how complex representations and racialisation of the Arab have long been historically useful to political imperatives in Europe, England and abroad. Certainly, the indeterminacy of the Arab as a religiously and politically denoted other, still permeates contemporary ideas about this figure, as the

global barriers that began breaking down in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are continually diminishing in the present.

Chapter 1

Monstrous Powers: Arab Ambiguity in Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* and Greene's *Selimus*

The opening prologue of Marlowe's *Tamburlaine the Great* describes the pursuits of a "stately […] Scythian Tamburlaine" (1.1.Prologue.3-4), based loosely on the conquests of the Asian Emperor Timur. While the audience is at first invited to "applaud" the man who is "[…t]hreatening the world" (1.1.Prologue.5) with his "conquering sword" (1.1.Prologue.6), the prologue closes by cautioning the audience to "view[…]his picture" (1.1.Prologue.7) in a "tragicke glass" (1.1.Prologue.7). This warning seems to recognise the play's possibilities for creating excitement and awe, evoked by the "stately" and "astounding […] fortunes" (1.1.Prologue.5-8) of Tamburlaine, which it then tries to contain via tragedy. The prologue advises the audience to "view" the "picture" of *Tamburlaine* from a "tragicke glass", implying that a lens or perspective of sorrow should guide their "view" of the performance. In other words, though the play first promises "astounding" adventure, this promise is almost immediately followed by a reminder of the "tragicke" realities of this figure of the Arab.

The mix of often-contradictory sentiments presented in this opening excerpt of *Tamburlaine* informs constructions of a uniquely ambiguous racialised identity of the Arab on the early modern stage. By Arab, I refer to the various groups of people from Africa, the Near East, and areas of Northern Europe, who, like the Scythian, share some form of (perceived or real) connection to Islam. The combined sense of fascination and tragedy that Marlowe creates in the Scythian presence on stage helps to illustrate this complex set of perspectives that surround these figures in early modern England. First performed in 1587, *Tamburlaine* follows the tragic pursuits of the "valiant Tamburlaine, the man of fame" (1.2.1.2) on his rampage throughout the Middle East, Europe, Africa, and Asia. The Scythian Shepard" (1.1.2.155), a bandit who has built himself military

following, challenges and defeats the Persian King Mycetes; Mycetes' brother and political opponent Cosroe; the Turk Emperor Bajazeth; as well as the rulers of Arabia and Egypt, allowing Tamburlaine to assume control over their respective domains, which sweep across a large part of the globe.

The narrative therefore engages with notions of power, territory, national identity, religious affiliation, and economic status to produce a complex image of the Arab. However, this image tends to be ambivalent, classifying the Arab as either "admirable or fearsome" to the early modern English, who understood this figure to be undeniably powerful and ambitious because of its economic and political-military authority in this period (Matar, *Turks* 12). In other words, power proves to be the only certainty about the Arab, who is perceived ambiguously in all other aspects of identity[14]. In turn, the ambiguity that characterises the Arab subject resonates with the ambiguities of the term "race" as discussed by Hall and Erikson (12). Race, they argue, has a quality of stickiness that allows a racial subject to changeably attach and detach to other social categories while retaining its own tangible qualities of difference (Hall and Erikson 12). These categories most commonly include religion, nationality, culture, class, gender and ethnicity (Hall and Erikson 12). Therefore, when Arab identity forms as a compound of social categories on the early modern stage, it epitomises this understanding of race as something that is always on some level characteristically "[un]stable" but with very concrete effects (Hall and Erikson 12).

Given these parallels between the ambiguity of race and the ambiguity of Arab identity, the Arab becomes the ideal candidate for exploring early modern notions of race and racism on the early modern stage. Therefore, in this Chapter I argue that racializing the Arab on the early modern stage allows the English to experiment with pre-colonial discourses of power, otherness and territorial expansion aligned to the Arab in this historical moment. The first part of this

[14] Power here can be simply understood as "political or social authority or control"–a "capacity" which the Arab maintained throughout significant moments of the early modern period (OED).

chapter unpacks the notion of Arab ambiguity by exploring Tamburlaine's religious affinities, demonstrating how ambiguity ironically works to enhance Tamburlaine's "political force"–the one seemingly unequivocal feature of the Arab in this period (Burton, 'Five' 36). I then continue to demonstrate how this ambiguity proves to characterise other Arab figures in the play, namely the Persian Prince Cosroe, the Turk emperor Bajazeth, and Tamburlaine's concubine Zenocrate. The representation of these characters' unstable positions of power and geography sees each of them resisting singular definitions of identity. This operatively normalises the ambiguity of Arabs on the early modern stage. Thus, in the final part of this chapter I contend that the Arab falls into a framework of *unnatural* identity, since ambiguity for the early modern English is coterminous with imbalance, disorder and accordingly the unnatural. Exploring concepts of racial monstrosity, derived from the unnatural in *Tamburlaine the Great Part I* and *Part II* and Robert Greene's *The Tragical Reign of Selimus, Sometime Emperor of the Turks*, I consider how unnatural ambiguity transforms the Arab into an other that is "demonize[d], polarize[d] and alterize[d]" on stage (Matar, *Turks* 12).

Powerful Disunities

According to Andrew Duxfield, representations of unstable ambiguities are characteristic of Marlovian plays, which often seem preoccupied with notions of "unity" though inevitably find the "ambiguity […of] the indeterminate play worlds […] insurmountable" (8). This indeterminacy is in some ways true for the racialisation of the Arab in Marlowe's *Tamburlaine,* though with additional complexity[15]. For instance, this is shown in the first act of *Tamburlaine the Great Part II,* when Tamburlaine's men offer their allegiance, their "crown[s]"

[15] As Burnett has noted, "[f]rom the opening pages of *Tamburlaine the Great*", Tamburlaine himself presents a "challenge to the descriptive categories favoured by the forces of officialdom" (36). In this way Tamburlaine presents a "problem for contemporary representational practices" that try to "situate Tamburlaine in a traditionally restrictive classificatory paradigm" (Burnett 36).

(2.1.3.115) and "power[s]" (2.1.3.115) to him in war with the Turks. Here, Tamburlaine declares that he has "sworn by sacred Mahomet/to make" (2.1.3.109) the Turks part of his "empery" (2.1.3.110). He purports to a reverence of "Mahomet" thereby attaching himself to an Islamic system of belief. Shortly thereafter, however, in expressing his appreciation for the "presence […of his] loving friends and fellow kings" (2.1.3.151), he declares:

> If all the crystal gates of Jove's high court
> Were open'd wide, and I might enter in
> To see the state and majesty of heaven,
> It could not more delight me than your sight
> […]
> And after we march to Turkey with our camp,
> […]
> Such lavish will I make of Turkish blood
> That Jove shall send his winged messenger
> To bid me sheathe my sword and leave the field
> (2.1.3.153-167)

Hence, soon after taking a vow of war in the name of Islam, Tamburlaine moves to pagan discourses of classical mythology, referring to "Jove", the Roman god of thunder. In his second reference to Jove in this speech, he declares that he will make "[s]uch lavish[…]of Turkish blood" that Jove will send a "winged messenger" to "bid" him to cease fighting. The use of the word "bid" here connotes to a request, implying that Tamburlaine would not necessarily abide by the commands of Jove (*bid* OED). However, the (divine) command connotation of "bid" still holds to a degree and implicitly therefore Tamburlaine does not indicate an intention to refuse Jove[16]. Thus while his relationship to this deity is not wholly clear, Tamburlaine's active engagement with Jove suggests that the

[16] The etymology of the word "bid" indicates that it is derived from the Old English "bēodan" which means, "to offer, command" suggesting that there is some kind of authority embroiled in the use of the word.

"Scythian Shepard" (1.1.2.155) has some strong connection with Greco-Roman paganism.

Tamburlaine's references to Jove can be traced to earlier traditions of documenting Islam as a pagan religion. Tolan notes that "Latin chroniclers of the first crusade [of the 12th century…] describe Saracens as pagans", identifying their idols as "Jupiter, Apollo, or Mahomet" (98). This depiction, he argues, participates in justifying the crusade, by creating a mind-set that it was "pagans that the crusaders went off to fight […] to take Jerusalem back […] and to wreak vengeance on them for the crucifixion" (Tolan 99). Vitkus asserts that this mentality is carried into early modern discourses where "iconoclasm becomes idolatry […and] monotheism becomes pagan polytheism" (Vitkus, 'Orientalism' 207).

On the other hand, Bartels has considered how Tamburlaine uncritically alludes to Christian imagery such as "'angels', 'heavens', 'cherubins and holy seraphins', 'hellish' things' as well as the 'King of Kings' in his speeches ((*2Tamb*.2.4.15, 26, 14, 27) qtd in Bartels, 'Race' 217). Based on this argument, allusions to the "crystal gates of Jove's high court" (2.1.3.153) that open to the "state and majesty of heaven" (2.1.3.155) expressed in Tamburlaine's speech, might too be read as Christian tropes[17]. By evoking these religious references alongside one another, Tamburlaine inhabits a more complex religious identity. In referring to "Jove's high court […] of heaven" (2.1.3.153), Tamburlaine connects a biblical image to a Greco-Roman pagan deity seamlessly. To this effect, Tamburlaine seems to align himself to a kind of syncretic religion that draws on particular aspects of Islam, Christianity, and pre-Christian traditions.

[17] The image of the gates of heaven appears throughout the Bible, for example in Genesis 28:17, "this is the gate of heaven" or Revelation 21:21, "the twelve gates were twelve pearls[…]and the street of the city was pure gold, transparent as glass". Marlowe's reference to the crystal gates might be a reference to other biblical descriptions of the gates which refer to "a sea of glass, like crystal" (Revelation 4:6) or the "river of the water of life, bright as crystal" (Revelation 22:1-3) both of which are near to God's throne.

Complicating Tamburlaine's religious affinities further is the moment at the end of *Tamburlaine the Great II,* in which he denounces Islam by burning the "Alcoran" (2.5.1.171) (the holy book of Islam) proclaiming that he himself is a god. He challenges the authority of "Mahomet" by proclaiming that despite the many Turks he has killed, he remains "untouch'd by Mahomet" (2.5.1.180). Thereafter, Tamburlaine proceeds to test the power of "Mahomet" by burning the Qur'an, and eventually concludes that the latter is "not worthy to be worshipped" (2.5.1.187), since despite his great blasphemy "Mahomet remains in hell" (2.5.1.196) and Tamburlaine himself remains "untouch'd". This profound scene in the play, Battenhouse notes, marks the "epitome of blasphemy" where burning the Qur'an represents a "significant analogous to that of a Christian burning his Bible" (345 [nn29, 30]). At the outset therefore, this moment seems to illustrate a powerful denouncement of any kind of religious sensibility.

However, the scene arguably holds more enigmatic implications for the construction of Arab identity, given that this identity is often synonymous with some affiliation to Islam. As Burton has argued, Tamburlaine acts this "most anti-Islamic act" when his "repellent viciousness" is at its peak (150 'Tamburlaine'). In this way, he disrupts the definite associations that exist between the Arab and Islam. In other words, Marlowe challenges the early modern ideas about the evil Arab that typically stem from the fact that the Arab is understood as Muslim. By detaching Tamburlaine from Islam and joining Tamburlaine's evil qualities instead to the character's "anti-Islamicism", readings of Islam as sinister and readings of the Arab as sinister because of Islam are both problematized (Burton, 'Tamburlaine' 150). As a result, Arab ambiguity becomes abound in a renewed indeterminacy of Tamburlaine's identity:

> Tamburlaine thus continues to elude the grasp of both simplistic stereotyping and rhetorics of legitimation, typifying the aspiring mind of European selfhood even while he seems so threateningly Other. For the audience of the second play, it is impossible to assimilate Tamburlaine, impossible to fully distance Tamburlaine by attributing his actions to

> Islam, and impossible to see Christianity as an exemplary negation of Islam. (Burton, 'Tamburlaine' 150)

Even in denouncing his ties to Islam, Tamburlaine states that "Mahomet remains in *hell*" (2.5.1.196, my emphasis), acknowledging the existence of hell that is an icon of Christian faith. He continues, declaring that "another godhead" (2.5.1.198) should be sought, such as "[t]he God that sits in heaven, if any" (2.5.1.199), again invoking a Christian icon of heaven, just as he previously referred to hell. Thus while Tamburlaine's religious position is problematized by his eventual rejection of Islam, in the same moment he continues to trouble understandings of all of these religions. He does not specifically align himself to the God of Christianity but in recognising heaven and hell, he seems to allude to this God. Ultimately, as Burton suggests, Tamburlaine inhabits a non-space between various identities; he is neither a Muslim nor a Christian but someone complexly in-between or even outside of those identities entirely.

This is complicated further when Tamburlaine asserts that the god he prefers over Mahomet is one "full of revenging wrath,/From whom the thunder and the lightening breaks" (2.5.1.181-182). This description is not dissimilar to one of Jove or Jupiter–the god of the sky, lightening, and thunder whom Tamburlaine earlier acknowledges. This reference is affirmed when shortly after the blasphemous scene, Tamburlaine is overcome with his illness and asks his companion Theridamas to:

> […] haste to the court of Jove;
> Will him to send Apollo hither straight,
> To cure me, of I'll fetch him down myself. (2.5.3.61-63)

Tamburlaine reverts to his earlier dynamic with Jove, looking to the deity's "court" for a "cure" but also audacious enough to threaten to "fetch" Apollo himself from Jove. Considering the conflation of Greco-Roman religion and Islam noted earlier, this final religious stance continues to trouble understandings of Tamburlaine's blasphemy. The complex treatments of his religious loyalties

produce an altogether fractured view of Tamburlaine's religious identity, which heightens the ambiguity of his racial identity at large. He does not denounce Christianity in the same way that he denounces Islam, even though he never explicitly articulates an allegiance to Christianity. No longer Mohammedan and not quite Christian, Tamburlaine is eventually located somewhere in between being pre-Christian, sacrilegious, irreligious and agnostic.

Interestingly, the early modern ethnographic writing of George Abotts mirrors Marlowe's renditions of Tamburlaine's religious sensibilities on stage. Abott's *A briefe description of the whole worlde* was first published in 1599, some ten 10 years after the first performance of Tamburlaine (Burton and Loomba 145). Describing the Scythians, Abott observes, "[…they] are men of great stature, of rude behavior" and include "no Christians but gentiles; neither do they acknowledge Mahomet" (qtd in Burton and Loomba 145-6). Thus, a correlation becomes apparent in the narrative of Tamburlaine and Abott's later documentation of the Scythian, demonstrating how Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* is intrinsically relevant to the ethnographic ideas circulating in early modern English discourses about Arab otherness. This is not to suggest that Abott's writing draws directly from Marlowe, but rather that when the Arab is attributed with such a confounded identity on stage, as Tamburlaine's religious identity is, these ideas are not far removed from early modern social-intellectual discourses.

The trajectory of Tamburlaine's religious sensibilities accordingly illustrates how his identity forms through "a series of inconsistent and contradictory impressions" that move between the roles of "barbarous villain" or "awe-inspiring hero" (Bartels, *Spectacles* 60). Such oscillation is visible when he burns the Qur'an and denounces Islam: both sacrilegious to faith but 'redemptive' of his otherness. Bartels contends that Tamburlaine seems to inhabit these "contradictory self-constructions in the service of [English] empire" (*Spectacles* 60). In other words, Tamburlaine's "elusive" and ambiguous identity becomes a site for his political "self-fashioning" into a role of imperial supremacy that helps the English to contemplate on such power (*Spectacles* 61). These ideas engage with David Thurn's argument that the play "creates a delusional space in which

absolute sovereignty becomes possible", resulting in Tamburlaine's dismissal of "indeterminacy" (Thurn 5, my emphasis).

In keeping with this line of thought, Floyd-Wilson reads Tamburlaine as a reflection of English ethnicity, suggesting that his 'self-fashioning' is related to his "northern origins" (Floyd-Wilson 91). Grounding her arguments in geohumoralism–Wilson's reading of the climatic-humoralism racial theory–she suggests that it is Tamburlaine's resonance with other "northern tribes, including the Irish, Scots and Britons", which complicates his racial identity (Floyd Wilson 90)[18]. It is his "northern constitution", she argues, that causes him to disrupt "established hierarchies" (Floyd-Wilson 91). To this end, "the exotic alienness of his Scythian identity" serves as a platform for exploring notions of Englishness, while his "inherent strength" as a "northern warrior" keeps Tamburlaine away from "a stable standard" (Floyd-Wilson 91).

Common to each of these arguments therefore, is first the observation that Tamburlaine resists singular and coherent definition; second, the underlying certainty of Tamburlaine's power *on stage*; and third, the belief that this power is in the service of English imperial advancement. Both Bartels and Thurn posit that Tamburlaine's agency in his rhetoric and actions allows him to locate himself in a role of majestic authority and "absolute" power that matches English initiatives in this period. Floyd-Wilson on the other hand explains Tamburlaine's power as a projection of Tamburlaine's inherent white/English-ness from his northern identity. Hence, these scholars seem to suggest that the "indeterminate" Tamburlaine is eventually "unified" by an aspect of power that works favourably for the English (Duxfield 8). Therefore, even though he retains what Duxfield refers to as 'insurmountable' ambiguities as other, because these features unify him, and particularly unify him in a way that is beneficial to the

[18] Floyd-Wilson presents an argument for "geohumoralism" from the early modern humoral theory, which links the environment to physical and personality features of individual groups. Floyd-Wilson observes that inhabitants in the North and South experienced the natural elements differently which in turn made people living in the north temperamentally different to those in the South (2).

English, the early modern English stage ultimately 'contains' and overcome these insurmountable ambiguities of his identity.

However, what these arguments do not acknowledge is the fact that the characteristic of absolute power, which enables the English to 'overcome' Tamburlaine's ambiguities on stage, is directly related to Tamburlaine's Arabness. In other words, while the stage allows the English to vicariously experiment with the discourses of imperial authority and national identity, these experiments do not position the English supremely, nor do they minimise the powerful threat of the Arab. As Burton argues, Marlowe's writing is an "awareness of the Ottomans' actual expansionist power and controlling influence", rather than a "mirror for burgeoning English imperialism" which has not been fully realised at the time of the play's performance (Burton, 'Tamburlaine' 127). Thus, when Tamburlaine's religious state rhetorically frames the Arab as multifarious, without a clear or decided identity, I am arguing that this serves to heighten anxieties and interest around this figure.

This diversity, as I will shortly demonstrate, is not only characteristic of Tamburlaine but also of other key Arab figures in the play, who assume different versions of this ambiguity. This indeterminacy correspondingly lends itself to representations of the Arab as unmanageable and uncontainable, reflecting on some of the realities of England's relationship with the Arab world in the early modern period. This eventually leads to new attempts at managing Arab authority on stage, by replacing Arab power and authority with a more definite position of alterity, a position that links racial otherness to behaviours and traits deemed unnatural in early modern English discourses of race.

Affixing Arab Ambiguity

The ambiguity of Tamburlaine's religious state is one of the many moments in *Tamburlaine*, when the Arab figure is linked to multiple, often indeterminate,

qualities. The frequency of this ambiguity creates a pattern that allows such ambiguity to become characteristic of the Arab. Perhaps the most striking mode of this kind of patterning in the play arises in Marlowe's use of lists to illustrate geographic and political authority. Descriptions of national identity in Arab spaces of the play regularly take the form of lists, rather than an overt designation of empire. For instance, pre-empting Cosroe's "desir'd success" (1.1.1.160) over his brother Mycetes, Cosroe is crowned:

> Emperor of Asia, and of persea,
> Great Lord of Medea and Armenia;
> Duke of Assiria and Albania,
> Mesopotamia and of Parthia,
> East India, and the late discovered Isles,
> Chiefe Lord of all the wide vast Euxine sea,
> And of the ever raging Caspian Lake:
> Long live Cosroe mighty Emperour! (1.1.1.162-169)

In this list, Marlowe seems to recognise early modern realities of the political power of the Arab as well as the expansiveness of Arab control in Africa and Asia. Cosroe is given the titles "*Great* Lord", "Duke", "*Chiefe* Lord" and "*mighty* Emperor" (my emphasis). Each of these titles attributes him with a different role of power, though these authorities are spread across various territories, which are not described as a single domain or empire. Medea and Armenia, for instance, are both a part of a greater Asian territory but this region is broken down into separate spaces. The effect of this is ultimately to confuse not only Cosroe's authority but also his national identity; there is no fixed designation as he is simultaneously recognised as a "Lord", "Duke" and "Emperor" in each of the respective domains.

Moments of rhyme, with the repetition of the "ea" or "ia" sound, as in "pers*ea*", "Med*ea*", "Assir*ia*", "Alban*ia*", "Mesopotam*ia*", "Parth*ia*" and "Ind*ia*", connect these disparate spaces phonetically, through the shared sound (1.1.1.162-169, my emphasis). In other words, these spaces are "delineated [independently] but

not otherwise differentiated" (Bartels, 'Race' 216). In this way, Cosroe is defined by a group of separate geographies that resonate with each other, rather than a single collective. As such, the Arab is represented as having a definitive authority that is dispersed across a range of different but connected nations. While Cosroe is undeniably powerful, his power cannot be pinned down to a single type or a single area: his nationality is unclear and undecided (OED).

While these lists are not always the same, they often work to the same effect, painting a picture of complex geography that is in some way tied to the Arab. Another example of this appears at the opening of *Tamburlaine the Great Part II*, where Orcanes (the King of Natolia) compares his authority to Tamburlaine's:

> My realm, the centre of our empery,
> […]
> Sclavonians, Almains, Rutters, Muffs, and Danes,
> Fear not Orcanes, but great Tamburlaine;
> […]
> We have revolted Grecians, Albanese,
> Sicilians, Jews, Arabians, Turks, and Moors,
> Natolians, Sorians, black Egyptians,
> Illyrians, Thracians, and Bithynians,
> […]
> Yet scarce enough t'encounter Tamburlaine.
> He brings a world of people to the field,
> From Scythia to the oriental plage
> Of India, […]
> All Asia is in arms with Tamburlaine,
> Even from the midst of the fiery Cancer's tropic
> To Amazonia under Capricorn;
> And thence, as far as Archipelago,
> All Afric is in arms with Tamburlaine […] (2.1.1.55-76)

Here again, even though some unity is embedded in the grouping of "empery", "All Asia" and "All Afric", distinct geographies are implicit in the array of different geographic spaces and nationalities in this speech. Both Orcane and Tamburlaine are shown to have either commanded or challenged an array of different people. Floyd-Wilson has argued that by "reducing expansive kingdoms to the space of a stage" in this way, Marlowe's play is essentially working to "participate in the production of ethnographic knowledge" that was expanding at the time (89). By this process, however, the Arab on stage becomes associated with these "expansive kingdoms" in different ways. To this end, the Arab seems to be ambiguously–and perhaps ominously–located everywhere.

Correspondingly, when stripped of this geographic ambiguity the Arab seems to be found wanting of meaning, as is evidenced by Bajazeth who becomes the caged captive of the "Scythian Shepard" (1.1.2.155). Following a clash between Bajazeth and Tamburlaine, Tamburlaine imprisons the Turkish emperor by keeping Bajazeth in a cage. Suffering in the "*obscure* infernall servitude" (1.5.1.53, my emphasis) of captivity, the Turkish emperor kills himself by beating his "braines out" (1.5.1.286) against the bars of his cage. Prior to this captivity the emperor maintains a compounded identity that connects him to various geographies and political authorities. He is the "the *Turkish emperor*, Dread *Lord* of *Affrike*, *Europe* and *Asia*, Great *King* and *conqueror* of *Graecia*" (1.3.1.22-24, my emphasis) (134). Yet when caged, he is stripped of his authoritarian identity, becoming subject to "servitude" as he loses his "names and titles and […] dignities" (1.4.2.79) of "emperor", "Lord", "King" and "conqueror". Bajazeth proves to be frustrated in this site of clarity (of space) and position of powerlessness. He therefore resists single national identities and absences of power in a very literal way by killing himself, when he is confined to the "obscure" and hellish fixity of his cage (Bartels, 'Race' 215). Inferably, because he is both defined by and dependent on his ambiguous identities and his ambitions for conquest, without these he is driven to suicide.

Like Bajazeth, Tamburlaine's concubine Zenocrate also finds herself in positions of powerlessness, void of national identity in *Tamburlaine the Great Part I*.

However, for Zenocrate the promise of such national-political identities is never far, though it is also never quite realised in the first part of the play. Zenocrate is first introduced to the audience as a Princess, daughter of the Souldan of Egypt, when she meets Tamburlaine. Enticed by "fair Zenocrate" (1.3.2.25), Tamburlaine keeps her as his concubine with a promise of eventually wedding her, and she in turn falls in love with him despite warnings from her travel companion Agydas who asserts that Tamburlaine has turned her into a "worthless Concubine" (1.3.2.29), and is holding her back "from the honors of a Queene"(1.3.2.28) by preventing her marriage to the Prince of Arabia. Thus, Zenocrate appears as an Egyptian noble woman, who is on her way to becoming an Arabian Queen, but instead has become a Scythian concubine with the prospects of becoming a Princess or Empress of the world.

The unfolding of this indeterminate quality in Zenocrate's identity is especially interesting to observe as it seems to be driven, to some degree, by male figures in the play that hold political authority over her. Zenocrate's father, the source of her royal lineage, promises Zenocrate to the King of Arabia who will make her his Queen and Tamburlaine prevents this from happening. Tamburlaine refuses to "crowne" Zenocrate until he has received the "greater honors" of ruling titles of Egypt and Arabia to which Zenocrate had previously been entitled (1.4.4.137-138)[19]. Here, she exists at the precipice of a defined identity that she should have assumed earlier in the play, illustrating her unstable position of power and nationality as she vacillates between unrealised promises of identity that can only materialise for her through her relationships with male, Arab figureheads. So while Tamburlaine has already morphed from "Scythian Shepard" (1.1.2.155) to the "king of Persia" (1.3.1.56) to the "lord of Africa" (1.3.3.245), Zenocrate's identity remains unfixed. Keeping Zenocrate in this unstable position arguably continues to affirm the power-roles of Arab males in the play, extending political

[19] Burnett suggests that Zenocrate, correspondingly, locates Tamburlaine "in a class limbo because of her uncertainty" about his identity as a "shepherd" (1.1.2.7) or a "lord (1.1.2.33)" (36). To some degree therefore, Zenocrate's confusion of Tamburlaine's identity seems to echo her own, affirming that the two characters share ambiguity - specifically an Arab ambiguity.

powers to more social and domestic ones via domination over a woman[20]. More importantly however, Zenocrate's identity demonstrates an extension of Arab ambiguity to Arab women thereby reinforcing ambiguity as a characteristically Arab trait, rather than just something typical of powerful Arab men. By inference, ambiguity appears to be true for the racial Arab at large rather than just the Arab ruler.

Scattered throughout the play, these moments of ambiguity work together in a collective way to form an image of the Arab as a volatile figure. In other words, by repeatedly characterising the Arab as unstable–connected to multiple nationalities, split between territories, constantly between positions of power–a view of the Arab as unstable is consolidated. These states, moreover, are all in some way or the other tied to positions of political power. To an early modern English audience, therefore, the Arab is marked as indeterminate in all aspects of identity outside of economic and political success. This indeterminacy, the inability to delineate and qualify particular aspects about the Arab, makes an already superior competitor even more difficult to "grasp" (Burton, 'Tamburlaine' 150).

Thus, if as Matar has argued the stage becomes a site for the early modern English to use the Arab as an imperial inferior, this is only made possible by the way in which early modern playwrights are able to problematize this figure. More specifically, this means problematizing both the power and the ambiguity that determines Arab identities. That Arabs are an ambiguous people, characterised to some extent by their relationships to (political) power and

[20] In her book *Women and Islam in Early Modern English Literature*, Andrea considers the positions and agencies of women in Anglo-Ottoman exchanges of the 16th century. Studying the letter correspondence between Queen Elizabeth and the Ottoman queen mother Safiye, Andrea observes how these interactions form a "negotiated subject position" that explores the "paradox of women's rule within […the] respective patriarchal cultures" (Andrea 13). She argues that Arab/Ottoman culture was "patriarchal" and that the rule of women was "paradox[ical]", implying that these women were construed as inferior to men. Perpetuating Zenocrate's ambiguity here might therefore illustrate a resistance towards locating an Arab woman in a position of power, given that the authority of an Arab woman is perceived in this moment to be a paradox.

confused geographies, is a sensibility that seems to emerge across a range of figures in *Tamburlaine*. This paradox of 'definite ambiguity' entrenches some of the fundamental anxieties the English have about their contact with the Ottoman Empire. These are anxieties that the English are not able to overcome in reality, being politically and economically inferior to the Arab. However, the stage presents a way to address this force, by replacing Arab ambiguity, as I will reveal, with a more concrete idea of the Arab as *unnatural*.

Monstrous Ambitions

In his *Method for Easy Comprehension of History,* published in 1566, early modern French philosopher Jean Bodin uses humoral theory to identify savagery in men. He notes how "savagery comes partly from […] a vicious system of training and undisciplined appetites […] but much more from a lack of proportion in the mixing of humors" (qtd in Burton and Loomba 95-97). This invocation is similar to one made by Cosroe who is betrayed by Tamburlaine in the first part of Marlowe's play, after the latter aids Cosroe's attack against the Persian King Mycetes and then proceeds to declare war on the newly crowned King Cosroe. Observing similarities and differences between him, his companions and Tamburlaine, Cosroe states:

> And since we have all suckt one wholesome aire,
> And with the same proportion of Elements
> Resolve, I hope we are resembled,
> Vowing our loves to equall death and life.
> Lets cheere our soldiers to incounter him,
> […]
> That fiery thirster after Soveraigntie
> And burne him in the fury of that flame,
> That none can quence but blood and empery. (1.2.6.25-33)

Here, Cosroe identifies having the "same proportion of Elements" as a premise for being "resembled", and this resemblance seems to be in contradistinction to the more "fiery" proportions of Tamburlaine. Cosroe calls Tamburlaine a "fiery thirster" declaring that he will "burne" him in "the fury of that flame" of his own ambition, implicitly finding in him a "[dis]proportion of Elements", with the overpowering of fire. Fire, for Cosroe is connected to Tamburlaine's ambitions, his "thirst[…] after Soveraigntie" which in turn establishes the rhetorical distinction between Cosroe and Tamburlaine.

To this end, balance and fixed "proportion[s]" appear as fundamental tenets for qualifying racial sameness (or perhaps superiority), while a lack of proportion signifies "savage" otherness. While in this moment of the play balance is evoked by humoral theory, balance and features of stability like "harmony" and "order" also represent some of the "humanist ideals" that preoccupied creative thinking–like that produced on stage–in early modern England (Stanivukovic 12). The English stage finds the Arab wanting in these values; the Arab is an unbalanced figure with a general instability that appears to render this figure other to an early modern English audience. Thus, the representation of the Arab in this way evokes ideas of intrinsic difference between the English and the Arab.

That is to say that the portrayal of these differences on stage serve as a way of developing and exploring ideas of racial otherness that feed into imperial discourses of the sixteenth century. Burton has argued that the nature of diplomatic engagements between the Arabs, the Ottomans specifically, and the English falsifies criticism that "imagine[s]" the Arab as an "Other" (Burton, 'Tamburlaine' 131). However, I would argue that rather than seeking to represent the Arab as an other who is "denied subjectivity" in itself, the ambiguity of the Arab allows this figure to be used on stage to explore new, more general, concepts of otherness in-tune to the imperial-cum-colonial ideas circulating in this period (Burton, 'Tamburlaine' 131). Representations of the Arab on stage are ideal for this type of experimentation, given that this subject is juxtaposed as a disordered other against the ideal 'Renaissance' man, who seemingly prides himself on such attributes of order and proportion. Moreover,

the racial, ethnic, religious and geographic features of Arab identity are in reality just as ambiguous as the English dispositions towards this figure, since this subject's stickiness allows it to attach to various other(ed) forms of identities. Thus, the Arab on the early modern English stage can become a sticky proxy figure for difference, allowing the English to explore mechanisms for denying the subjectivity of racial others.

To achieve this othering, I contend further that the powerful volatility of the Arab, produced by the combination of power and indeterminacy that frame this figure as uncontainable, is replaced by a more sinister version of ambiguity: the *unnatural*. I refer to two different denotations of this term. First, unnatural may be defined as "contrary to the ordinary course of nature" or a human nature that would be familiar to an English audience (*unnatural* OED) [21]. Alternatively, unnatural might also be understood as "not existing in nature" or as "artificial" (*unnatural* OED). This latter definition, one that features more predominantly across *Tamburlaine*, is highlighted by portrayals of Tamburlaine as simultaneously supernatural–existing beyond "scientific…laws of nature" like a deity–and monstrous, like a "large, ugly and frightening *imaginary* creature" (*monster* OED, my italics)[22].

This unnatural arises early on in *Tamburlaine the Great I*, when Cosroe and his men consider the scope of Tamburlaine's ambitions after he betrays them. Disgruntled by the absence of Tamburlaine's loyalties, Cosroe, Meander and Ortygius agree that he is unnatural. Cosroe terms him "divelish" and "monstrous" (1.2.6.1,7); Meander states that Tamburlaine comes from "powers divine, or els infernall, mixt" (1.2.6.9) because he could not have been "sprong of humaine

[21] This is evident for example in animal-labels given to Tamburlaine such as "beast" (1.4.3.57), "Lion" (1.1.2.22) or "Boare" (1.3.4.198), suggesting that he is unnatural insofar as he possesses animalistic qualities. These animal qualities hold connotations of being uncivil, inhumane and perhaps ruthless without codes of moral conduct; they are not framed as anthropomorphisms but used as direct titles suggesting that he *is* an animal, and not like other more 'human' humans.

[22] The word "imaginary" here suggests a type of unnatural that is "artificial", being literally made-up (*imaginary* OED).

race" (1.2.6.10); and Ortygius calls Tamburlaine a "god or feend, or spirit of the earth" (1.2.6.15) and a "monster turned to a manly shape" (1.2.6.16) either from "earth, or hell, or heaven"(1.2.6.23). These denigrations seem to imply that Tamburlaine is not human, being either "monstrous" or transcendental, with allusions to "heaven", "hell" and "powers divine". Thus, whether through a "heavenly disruption or the extraordinary rise to greatness of a commoner", Tamburlaine is definitively unnatural and unnaturally powerful (Burnett 34).

In the midst of this unknown, "monstrous[ness]" (1.2.6.7,16) arguably comes to the fore of the unnatural ideas that surround Tamburlaine. Park and Daston have noted that monsters up to the 16th century "had straddled the boundaries between natural and supernatural" and to this end work somewhere between the bounds of nature and the worlds beyond (25). As such, when Ortygius deems Tamburlaine, "god,[…]feend, or spirit of the earth", he illustrates a similar confusion about Tamburlaine's unnatural identity. Ortygius sees Tamburlaine as a "spirit" from either "earth, or hell, or heaven" suggesting that he does not fit into any of the three spaces but instead represents a confused combination of "powers…mixt"(1.2.6.9). Like a monster, Tamburlaine is located on the "boundaries between the natural and the supernatural" (Park and Daston 25).

Mark Thornton Burnett has explored how in the early modern "social imaginary", Scythians and Tartans were thought of as groups of "mythic 'monstrous'" beings (Burnett 43)[23]. However, the specific resonances between Tamburlaine and the monstrous that emerge on stage suggest that monstrousness is more widely characteristic of Arab identity. As the "more 'artificial' of nature's works", monsters align with both two definitions of the unnatural: they are "imaginary" (and therefore "artificial"), as well as being "contrary to the course of [human] nature" (Park and Daston 44). Yet, as Park and Daston contend, monsters were still considered as part of "nature's works" in the early modern period (44). The monster is therefore, like the Arab,

[23] Burnett expands on the "[b]odily differences" and descriptions of the "'monstrous' inhabitants peopling Scythia and Tartaria" in greater detail in the chapter 'Manufacturing 'Monsters' in Tamburlaine the Great' of his book *Constructing Monsters in Shakespearean Drama and Early Modern Culture* (43).

ambiguous: he is natural and supernatural, "artificial" and "part of nature's works", and is simultaneously categorised by "[aspects of] fear, desire, anxiety and fantasy" that parallel to the mixed perspectives of the Arab (Cohen 4)[24]. Considering this "liminality or in-betweenness" of monsters, Uebel even traces the representations of monstrous ambiguities in Islam–categorised as a "monstrous sect […] inspired by the evil spirit"–back to European literature from the crusades (266; Lille qtd. in Uebel 274). Hence, when "monstrous" tropes appear in descriptions of Tamburlaine's ambiguity, I am arguing that these tropes augment the idea that the Arab is unnatural (*unnatural* OED).

Robert Greene's Selimus is another Arab figure on the early modern stage whose unnatural identities and ambitions affirm this connection between the racialised Arab and the unnatural. First published in 1594, about 6 years after the first performances of *Tamburlaine*, Greene's *The Tragical Reign of Selimus, Sometime Emperor of the Turks* follows the fight for the Turkish throne between emperor Bajazet and his living sons: Corcut, Acomat and Selimus. The play follows the bloody pursuits and ruthless ambitions of Acomat and Selimus who vie for the throne of their father Bajazet who is hesitant to relinquish his powers[25]. The narrative concludes with the victory of Selimus over Acomat and their father, where Selimus assumes the role of emperor and promises to continue his pursuits for power across the world.

Unlike *Tamburlaine*, the unnatural receives a more direct treatment in *Selimus*. Observing Selimus' political strategies at the beginning of the play, Bajazet tries to "chastise his son" (1.3.46) by giving him the area of "Samandria" (1.3.64) to rule. An unhappy Selimus scorns his father and the appeasement gift by labelling

[24] In his book *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World*, Stephen Greenblatt argues that monstrousness is one of many tropes that function to produce a "complex system of representation", that is used and replicated in constructions of otherness from the early modern, and early colonial period (22). This aesthetic system of the 'marvelous' is characterised by "indeterminacy" that evokes dual senses of fear and fascination (Greenblatt 22-24). Monstrousness therefore affirms the location of Tamburlaine and the Arab within a bigger discourse of otherness.

[25] The play's subplot follows their brother Corcut's conversion to Christianity, before being murdered by Acomat.

the act and feeling as "unnatural" (1.4.24). He promises to reciprocate this behaviour stating: "Since he is so unnatural to me/ I will prove as unnatural as he" (1.4.24-25). Selimus implicitly finds his father to be "unnatural" insofar as he is 'un-fatherly'–attempting to restrain his son and withhold power from him. Selimus might also be suggesting that his father's greed, ambition, and disloyalty (in his unwillingness to part from power for Selimus) are unnatural. Hence, just as in *Tamburlaine*, qualifications of the natural appear to be dependent on aspects of morality or humanity. To be unnatural is therefore delineated as void of certain moral, humane qualities and Selimus vows to reproduce these same "unnatural" characteristics that his father holds. Selimus does not resist these unnatural ambitions but seeks to actively engage with them.

The play continues to develop this resonance in Selimus' closing speech, where the monstrous and the natural come together to illustrate unnatural ambition. Pleased with his victories, Selimus proclaims his satisfaction with his role as "king alone" (1.29.32), declaring his triumph over the "monster-guarded paths that lead to crowns" (1.29.42). Inferably, he sees his father, brother and their followers as "monsters", creating obstacles in his "path" to victory; Selimus considers himself the Ibis that has overcome these monstrous-snakes:

> Ha! Ha! I smile to think how Selimus
> Like the Egyptian Ibis hath expelled
> Those swarming armies of swift-wingèd snakes,
> That sough to overrun my territories.
> …those flying snakes
> Do band themselves in troops, and take their way
> To Nilus' bounds; but those industrious birds,
> Those Ibises […]
> Preventing such a mischief from the Land.
> But see how unkind Nature deals with them;
> From out their eggs rises the basilisk.
> Whose only sight kills millions of men.
> When Acomat lifted his ungracious hands

Against my agéd father Bajazet,
They sent for me, and I like Egypt's bird
Have rid that monster, and his fellow-mates.
But as from Ibis springs the basilisk.
Whose only touch burneth up stones and trees;
So Selimus hath prov'd a cocatrice.
And clean consuméd all the family,
Of noble Ottoman, except himself (1.29.43-66)

As Şahiner explains, Selimus "likens himself to the legendary 'ibis', a bird that was believed in popular legends to eat up poisonous snakes" (143). This bird would then "lay eggs from which basilisk would hatch" ; a basilisk is a "mythical reptile with a lethal gaze or breath, hatched by a serpent from a cock's egg" (OED) (Vitkus *Three* 147). Therefore, while Selimus assumes the role of saviour, as an Ibis that destroys "the swift-wingèd snakes" in his family who cause "mischief" in his empire, his role also gives way for the monstrous "basilisk" in whom "[t]here is no sign of humanity" (Şahiner 143). He has destroyed Acomat the "monster and his fellow mates" and in the process Selimus emerges as a new kind of monster, a "cocatrice", "[w]hose only sight kills millions of men" and "[w]hose only touch", according to Selimus, "burneth up stones[26] .

By this analogy, Selimus is truly located somewhere between the "natural and the supernatural" just as Tamburlaine is in Marlowe's play; Selimus is at the same time a bird of nature, and the mythological monster that this bird gives life to. Stating that he has "prov'd a cocatrice" (1.29.64) by killing off "all…[his] family" (1.29.65), Selimus echoes his earlier promise to "prove" himself "unnatural" to his family and his father in particular (1.4.24-25). Thus by presenting himself as a "cocatrice", Selimus leans on the monstrous to define his political ambitions in usurping the Ottoman throne, actively aligning himself to this kind of unnatural identity.

[26] A "cocatrice" or cockatrice is "another term for basilisk": a "mythical animal depicted as a two-legged dragon (or wyvern) with a cock's head" (OED).

Interestingly, Selimus demonstrates his powers and ambitions through an image of monstrous rebirth. Proving himself the "unnatural" son of an "unnatural" father, a lineal sense of the unnatural is created as Greene shows unnatural ambition moving from one generation of Arabs into another. The unnatural qualities of the Arab are accordingly shown to proliferate rather than subside or be suppressed across a generation, and the means of this proliferation is an inheritance. This image of inherited unnaturalness is enhanced when Selimus uses the image of the Ibis egg hatching into the basilisk to convey his greater ambitions. The egg, as a symbol of reproduction, is the source of the monstrous basilisk who in turn marks the "unkind[ness]" (1.4.55) of nature by killing "millions of men" (1.29.57). The egg here mirrors Selimus, as the offspring of Bajazet, who murders his family and their companions for his position of power. This recurrence of the unnatural contributes to framing the Arab as uncontainable, making the fear factor of this figure more resolute. Not only does the Arab have unnatural aspects and ambitions, his unnaturalness is also genetically programmed resulting in an inheritance that creates a web of unnaturalness.

The representation of otherness as monstrous or begetting unnatural offspring frequently emerges in ethnographic literature from the early modern period. Sometimes these discourses link to Arab geographies though they tend to locate monstrous figures more generally in "Asia and Africa" (Park and Daston 23). For instance, a fifteenth century re-publication of medieval literature by the Roman St. Augustine (Bishop of Hippo) considers the possibilities of "monstrous kinds of men" by describing a figure from the "East" who "had two heads, two breasts, four hands, one belly and two feet" (qtd in Burton and Loomba 59-60). Loomba additionally identifies a description of "'the Fiends of Hell' coupling with Babylonian women to produce 'Monsters'" in *Mandeville's Travels* (*Shakespeare* 51). Such ideas, she notes, were extended by "Bodin [who] suggested that 'promiscuous coition of men and animals took place, wherefore the regions of Africa produce for us so many monsters'" (Bodin qtd in Loomba *Shakespeare 62*). A similar connection between the monstrous and Africa appears in *Histoires Prodigieuses,* which was translated (from French) and published into English in

1560 (qtd in Loomba and Burton 100). Herein, French writer Pierre Boaistuau describes a "maid, rough and covered with hair like a bear" of "so hideous and deformed a shape", which he compares to a "child black like an Ethiopian" that was curiously born to a Princess (qtd in Burton and Loomba 100).

Therefore, I would argue that the monstrous representations of the Arab on stage link this figure to other others in this moment, like those from Africa. To this end, the Arab is racialised not only in the immoral, demonising descriptions attributed by monstrosity but also by virtue of the connections established between this figure and other racial others. For an early modern English audience, these performances might affirm the fears of Arabs, as both a political threat but now also as a racial other. The general ambiguity characterising the Arab is replaced by a more concrete sense of the Arab's unnaturalness.

* * *

Recognising the Arab as an indeterminate racial figure that is undeniably powerful in this moment, the early modern English stage seems to magnify this power, presenting it in a way that seems volatile, sinister and non-normative. The stage frames the Arab as undeniably dangerous, as this figure continues to undertake territorial conquests, expanding its empires in the East. This representation of expansion is ironic coming from a historical moment in which the English themselves are initiating projects of expansion in the New World. As Matar has noted, "as the conquest of the Americas was enlarging Christendom in the West, the thrust of the Ottomans was diminishing it in the East" (Matar, *Turks* 10). To this end, by problematizing the practices of expansion on stage, the English seem to create channels to both critique and celebrate their own pursuits of expansion. Following in Ottoman footsteps, the English might be reassured of their methods for trying to attain the absolute supremacy and invincible sovereignty of Arab rulers like Tamburlaine and Selimus. At the same time, these Arab men serve as warnings against ruthless ambitions that can turn men into monsters. To this effect, the racialisation and othering of the Arab on stage helps to engage with debates on English expansion while at the same time endorsing a

more absolute distinction between foreign and local figures, perhaps to remind the English that while they might try to mimic similar expansionary practices of the Ottomans, they are fundamentally different.

Chapter 2

Beguiling Bodies: Flesh and Conversion in Robert Daborne's *A Christian Turned Turk*

In Shakespeare's *Othello*, the Moorish General reprimands a group of his brawling men by posing to them the question: "Are we turned Turks?" (2.3.133). In this moment, Othello draws on a complex matrix of ideas that both define and problematize what it means to be "Turk". The term Turk in the context of 'turning' or 'turned Turk' as scholars such as Jonathan Burton and Daniel Vitkus have noted, is generally understood to be synonymous with Islam (Vitkus, 'Turning' 161). To this end, when Othello groups himself with his companions here, asking whether they have all become Muslim by behaviour, he confuses his own identity to an audience since the term Moor, like the term Turk, also translates to Islam. If by this association Othello is already part Turk, what does it mean for him to join his men in turning Turk still?

In his statement, Othello presents denotations of Turk that seem to bear a more complex meaning than Islamic conversion. Recall that the Arab, as I demonstrated in Chapter 1, is a dynamic racial category that in the early modern period is characterised by different groups who are in some way thought to be affiliated to Islam, such as the Turk and the Moor. As a racial subject, the Arab is conjoined to various classes, religions, skin colours and ethnicities, thereby constantly resisting a unified identity. Thus, I classify this figure as 'sticky', borrowing the term from Hall and Erikson who use it to describe how racial qualities attach to other aspects of identity to produce conflations (Hall and Erikson 12). By this definition race remains a very tangible, albeit unstable, part of identity. I am arguing, therefore, that as an Arab figure, the Turk or rather the label of 'Turk' inevitably exhibits this kind of instability on stage, especially when it is used in the phrase 'turning Turk' to identify the act of conversion to Islam.

This chapter therefore turns to Robert Daborne's *A Christian Turned Turk* to explore how conversion to Islam is treated on the early modern stage at a

moment when anxieties about turning Turk were high, because the number of Englishman converting to Islam was growing in numbers (Matar, 'Renegade' 490). For the English and "Christian Europeans of low social and financial rank", the Muslim world offered "ample opportunity […] to gain power and wealth" and therefore "multitudes [of Englishman] willingly renounced their faith in pursuit of such goals" (Matar, 'Renegade' 489). The significant "losses of both essence and identity" this created for English "Christendom" had already been presented to the English during the Christian "Reformation"; "[p]ost reformation anxiety about conversion produced a discourse" about religious difference that was "applied to those who turned Turk" (Vitkus, 'Turning' 146, 152)[27]. Evidently central to this discourse was a concern with the manifestation (or lack thereof) of religious difference on the body (Degenhardt 7). Therefore, in this chapter I contend that the stickiness of the Arab in *A Christian Turned Turk* allows Islamic conversion to assume a visual signification of blackness, extending the religious denotations of this famous phrase and responding to anxieties about being able to observe religious difference on the outward body.

In the first part of this chapter, I expand on this discourse of religious difference and conversion that the play produces by first establishing and then dismantling links between a person's inner spiritual state and outer, visible body. This becomes apparent, for instance, in the character of Benwash the Jew who retains his outward Jewishness in spite of having turned Turk. Thereafter, part two moves towards more specific English concerns around the historical realities of conversion to Islam. I assert that the play's subplot reflects on the flesh-associated temptations to convert to Islam in a cross-cultural affair between an Arab woman and an Englishman, which results in an erotic captivity that demonises flesh as a basis of Islamic evil. This link between Islam and the body, as I demonstrate in the final section of this chapter, becomes a way for the English to blacken the fair, Muslim convert John Ward through a series of "black

[27] The Reformation refers to the historical moment and "crisis […] produced by England's break from Catholicism" that started in the 16th century, which troubled ideas about Christian identity (Shapiro 134). During this time "local […] conversions within Christianity, between Protestantism and Catholicism" were commonplace (Burton, *Traffic* 128).

deeds" (8.28) described in the play's famous conversion scene. To this end, I suggest that conversion in *A Christian Turned Turk* seems to result in a racial difference rather than a religious one, offering an explanation for the uncertain evocations of turning Turk in plays like *Othello* and in other instances on the early modern stage.

Inward State/Outward Shape

Discussing correlations between race and religion in early modern plays, Ania Loomba notes that because religion and conversion break the "correspondence between inner and outer being", religion has limitations as a way of organising otherness since the invisibility of religion makes it impossible to determine a person's religious alignment by their appearance (Loomba, *Shakespeare* 55). This idea is explored on stage in *A Christian Turned Turk* through the play's non-English characters. Awaiting the arrival of the English and Dutch pirates, the Arab sisters, Agar and Voada, and their Jewish companion, Rabshake, compare aspects of appearance and behaviour across Muslim (Turk), Christian and Jewish identities:

> 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? […]
>
> Voada: Setting aside your nose, you should turn Christian. Then you calf swells upward mightily.

> Rabshake: How? I turn Christian? They have Jew enough already amongst 'em. Were it but three qualities they have, I'll be none of their society. […] First, they suffer their wives to be their masters. Secondly, they make men thieves for want of maintenance and then hang them up for stealing. Lastly they are mad four times a year, and then they are purged by their physicians […] (6. 8-23)

Here, Agar challenges Rabshake in his observation that the "newcomer […] is a handsome […] Christian", by questioning whether "religion move[s]" the physical "shapes of men". The association she makes between religion and physical attributes–the "shapes" of the body–is initially affirmed by Rabshake, who validates this link by drawing on features of the body such as "gouty legs" and a "fiery nose" that are outwardly visible.

However, the connection Agar and Rabshake try to establish begs the question, how can the outward "shape" (6.9) of the body be affected by religion when religion is an inward state? While a man might lose his penal foreskin in the circumcision that Islamic conversion entails, this less obvious change on the body does not signify difference in the same way that "inherited phenotypical difference[s]" like "gouty legs" (6.11) or a "fiery nose" (6.11) might (Degenhardt 11). Faced with the prospect of his own conversion, I would argue that Rabshake humorously recognises this problem with connecting the outward body to the inward state. When he asks "How?" (6.16), he seems to challenge the logic and then proceeds to divert attention away from his inability to change his nose and become a "reasonable, handsome man"(6.7-8) like "a Christian" (6.8). Thus, the logic of changing religion to alter appearance is found wanting as Rabshake inferably recognises that a person's internal state and outward appearance do not always coincide.

The discussion between these characters, which at first seems to assert that religion is an aspect that translates physically on the body, is a line of thinking that was being problematized in the early modern moment. The mutability of

religion made possible by religious conversion was a "vexed issue in England" because of the "culture of conversion" that resulted from the reformation and the conversions of Englishmen to Islam (Degenhardt 7). Therefore, the ability to change religious identity proved to be a "crisis" for the English, and because this religious mutability "shatters the correspondence between inner faith and outer" appearance, religious difference was of course not easy to discern (Loomba, *Shakespeare* 55). The English were therefore unable to effectively identify Christian hypocrisies, or to use religion meaningfully as a way of organising otherness (Loomba, *Shakespeare* 55).

In the play, the difficulty associated with trying to detect religious identity through physical aspects of the body extends to outward behaviour, when Rabshake explains his rejection of Agar's suggestion that he become Christian. Identifying that the Christians have "Jew enough already amongst 'em" (6.16-17), he argues that there are "enough" overlaps between Christians and Jews to render his turning Christian pointless. Explaining these overlaps, he criticises Christians for their Jewishness: in a domestic setting; as 'slaves' to their wives; for their corrupt socio-economic practices; and for their judicial systems (6.20-24)[28]. Accordingly, Rabshake seems to assert that religion determines not only the "shape" of a man but also his practices. He describes certain actions as being specific to Jews, implicitly suggesting that social practices of religious groups offer another way to distinguish these groups. Yet, by overlapping Christian and Jewish behaviour, Rabshake again challenges the use of outward signs as markers of difference: if religion determines the behaviours of a particular group, and these behaviours are commonly practiced by different religions, it becomes difficult to distinguish these groups based purely on observing behaviours.

[28] On the last point he notes that the Christians become mad "four times a year" which Vitkus identifies as the times when "the London law courts were in session (*Three* 174). In this moment, the early modern overlap between faith and nation emerges as Rabshake comments on social, economic and judicial systems of the English to reflect on Christians. See Loomba, *Shakespeare, Race and Colonialism,* 24-27

The audience experiences this confusion first hand in the character of Benwash the Jew, who embodies some of these "living contradiction[s]" (Loomba, *Shakespeare* 56). Benwash resides in Tunisia, is married to the Muslim woman, Agar, and lays claims of having "renounced […t]he law of Moses" to turn Turk (6. 75). It is possible that he even bears resemblance to a Turk (at least within the world of the play) since Rabshake argues that the Arab and the Jew share physical features. Yet, as Burton argues, Benwash "is presented as a Jew in the *dramatis personae*, his speech tags are "Jew", and he is regularly addressed as 'Jew' instead of by name" ('Traffic' 199). Thus, despite calling himself a Turk–a convert to Islam–Benwash remains distinguishable to others as a Jew, accordingly confusing his inward and outward religious dispositions.

As Burton has noted, Benwash's "unseen Jewish essence[…]trumps the meaning of [his] conversion to Islam" as he retains his Jewish identity ('Traffic' 199). This is evidenced especially in Benwash's slave-trading, where true to the historical function of the Jew in the early modern Arab world, he plays the role of the "middle man" in the "cross-cultural trafficking" between the Arabs and the English: Benwash purchases slaves from the English Christian Ward while working under Arab sovereignty in Tunis (Burton, 'Traffic' 199). In one such transaction on stage, the slaves being sold appeal to Captain Ward and Benwash for compassion. Ward's companions, in turn, try to find this sympathy in him:

> Ferdinand: Do not they move you, sir?
> Ward: Yes, as the Jew. Art thou not moved, Benwash?
> Benwash: As a hangman at an execution makes no other holiday in the year.
> Raymond: Inhuman dog! Oh I could tear thee, villain!
> Benwash: I'll give thirty crowns for this old beast to be revenged on him. (6.258-262)

Benwash's "Jewish essence" is made apparent here, "manifesting itself in stiff-necked obduracy, greed and bloody-mindedness" – features typical of Jewish

figures on the early modern English stage (Burton, 'Traffic' 199-200). When Ward questions Benwash's feeling, the Jew responds by evoking a bloody image of "an execution", explaining that his resolve is just like that of a "hangman" who enjoys this killing more than any "other holiday" in the year. Being "[un]move[d]" in this way, Benwash proves to be 'stubborn' or obdurate in his undertaking to buy the slaves (*stubborn* OED). For this, the Christian slave Raymond jeers at Benwash, calling him an "[i]nhuman dog" and a "villain", to which Benwash responds by offering "thirty crowns" to Ward for the slave so that he might "be revenged". His "bloody-mindedness" from the hangman image spreads into his "blood-thirsty" desire for "revenge", as he offers a price for the purchase of Raymond's flesh and blood.

Thus in trading slaves, Benwash's inner "Jewish nature" becomes more pronounced, complicating the Turk aspects that he outwardly aligns himself with (Shapiro 36). As such, Benwash challenges the extent to which religion is useful as an indicator of otherness. His complex religious identity is illustrative of the difficulties of conversion: even though Benwash seems largely integrated into Tunisian society, he does not wholly see himself as Arab, nor is he seen this way by others. Moreover, Benwash's confused character serves as a testament to the difficulties of discerning religious identity, particularly through aspects outwardly apparent to an early modern audience. Benwash's Jew-like behaviours remain intact in spite of his having turned Turk, demonstrating how unclear appearance can be as a sign of faith[29].

Daborne's play therefore navigates through "relationships between sight and belief, […]outward difference and inner faith" that exist as very real problems for the early modern English (Degenhardt 50). Moreover, seeing that the stage has a "visual reliance on the spectacle of bodily movement and object", I would argue

[29] Shapiro explains that this idea of Jewish conversion is typical to discourses of the Jew from the period (Shapiro 156). Shapiro here cites the "travel diary" of Frenchman Pyrad de Laval, who in 1601 relates a narrative he hears about a Christened Jew from English travellers, noting of the Jew "that with 'the English he was of their religion; with the Mahometans, of theirs; whereas he was all the while a Jew'" (Laval qtd in Shapiro 156).

that it serves as the most fitting site for considering how inward religious difference works tangibly and outwardly on the body (Degenhardt 26). This is especially pertinent when considering that English Protestants "attempted to emphasize a more spiritualized and intangible notion of Christian faith that was not driven by bodily or material expression" (Degenhardt 7). In contrast, such links to the body are characteristic of definitions of Islam in the early modern moment. To this end, the stage proves to be a useful site for asserting similarities and exploring differences that arise across the inward faith and outward state of religious identity.

Erotic Captivity

Exploring ideas around the sensuality of Islam in the early modern period, Hawkes has noted that "[f]or Daborne as for many other early modern English people, the journey from Christianity to Islam is the same as the movement from the spirit to the flesh or from the soul to the body" (146). Hawkes' assertion here about conversion draws on an early modern premise held by the English that Islam was, unlike Christianity, intrinsically connected to notions of the flesh. Like Hawkes, I contend that this connection between Islam and flesh is portrayed in Robert Daborne's *A Christian Turned Turk,* where flesh signifies the sensuality and enslavement that are resonant with English perceptions of Islam in this period (146).

This connection is evidenced in the play when Benwash and Crosman (his Arab brother-in-law) are plotting the Englishman John Ward's conversion to Islam. Benwash proclaims that "if the flesh take hold of [Ward]" (6.442), then "[h]e's half a Turk already; it's as good as done", implying that the grasp of flesh will ensure Ward's conversion (6.443). Benwash's use of "flesh" might be read as an allusion to Ward's infatuation with Voada, an Arab woman who is the sister of Crosman and sister-in-law to Benwash. Here, flesh connotes to sex and lust and thus, as Degenhardt has argued, Benwash's assertion involves "the collapsing of conversion itself onto an act of sexual intercourse" (15). However, given the

setting and economic backdrop of the play, Benwash's reference to flesh might also be read as a reference to slavery. That is where the "flesh" that "holds" and controls Ward signifies the "flesh" of enslavement that allows him to generate profit. It is therefore this aspect flesh, I am asserting, which creates the ambiguity that makes Islamic conversion exciting and ominous to the early modern English.

Ideas about Islam's erotic links to flesh were widely held in the early modern period, circulating in both "popular and learned texts" throughout Europe (Vitkus, 'Turning' 145). As Vitkus notes, "published reports" on "Islamic sexuality" described Ottoman palaces as "site[s] for sexual excess, sadistic entertainments, and private pornographic spectacle" ('Orientalism' 223). Similarly, "Muslims and Africans" (and therefore the Moor who is often an amalgamation of these categories) "were also imagined as hyper-sexual" and were noted for being "given to same-sex practices"(Loomba, *Shakespeare* 32*).* Collectively, these ideas contributed to establishing a "European understanding of Islam as a sexually loose religion" that was associated with ideas of flesh and desire (Burton, *Traffic* 105). Thus, as a "licentious religion of sensuality and sexuality", Islam seemed both exciting and evil to the early modern English (Vitkus, 'Turning' 156).

On the other hand, Islam's connections to slavery similarly frames the religion as both appealing and terrifying to the English, involving as it did the capture, buying, selling, and exchanges of flesh, which often included English bodies (Hawkes 148). One experience of this enslavement was the "Galley slavery in the Mediterranean," wherein Christian Englishmen were captured and enslaved by the Arabs and then "forced [into] conversion" to Islam (Guasco 137). Britain was "at one time reported [to] have numbered over five thousand [captives] in Algiers alone", demonstrating the extent of this occurrence and the number of turned Turks enslavement might have produced (Matar, *Turks* 43). Yet for many other Englishmen, Islam's connection to enslaved flesh had more exciting implications linked to profit and economic prosperity. These men were the renegades, pirates and corsairs, like John Ward, who "willingly forsook their

homes and faiths" to join the "[Muslim] privateering communities in Algiers, Tunis, Tripoli, Sallee, and other North African ports" that offered them access to Arab slave-trafficking (Burton, *Traffic* 103; Vitkus, *Three* 13). Hence, while for some Englishmen Islam resonated with the loss of control over their bodies, for others it presented an opportunity to attain wealth through buying and selling flesh and other commodities.

Evidently, the various connections between Islam and flesh in early modern discourses are ambiguous insofar as they demonise and fetishize the Arab in different ways[30]. In *A Christian Turned Turk*, the effects of this ambiguity are arguably most apparent in the play's subplot, which follows the illicit sexual encounter between Gallop, one of Ward's companions, and Agar, wife to Benwash the Jew. Gallop is seduced by Agar in a way that seems to mirror the seductiveness of Islam, which tempted Englishmen with "easier access to sexual pleasures and monetary wealth" (Degenhardt 3). Agar offers similar opportunities to Gallop who accordingly gives in to the temptations they present. In doing so, Gallop relinquishes himself to a mode of enslavement that proves to be more injurious than profitable to him, and which, notably reflects on the discourses around turning Turk in this early modern moment.

Sensuality and economic ideas around the body are brought together from the first encounter between Agar and Gallop, where Agar takes a fancy to him. Gallop

[30] Hawkes has suggested that these ties were interrelated "because slavery and sensuality were intimately connected in Christian and Aristotelian traditions", which informed early modern European perceptions of Islam and the Arab (Hawkes 150). He locates the idea that "[s]laves are purely sensual beings" in Aristotle's comparison of "the master/slave relation to that of the mind and body" (Hawkes 150). To elaborate: the slave is to a master what the body is to a mind, creating a kind of equivalence between base physical labour, the sensual body and the slave. Moreover, Hawkes notes how in the New Testament "slavery [is used] as a figure for sensuality, as in St. Paul's lament: 'I am carnal, sold under sin'" (Hawkes 150). Implicitly therefore, slavery and sexuality seem to be conceptually joined by shared connections to the body, to physical work or activity, and to notions of power. However, in the early modern period these two 'uses' of the body coincide more profoundly as they are brought together by the perils promised by Islamic power and conversion.

in turn, like his fellow Englishman Ward, is enticed by the attentions of this Arab woman, stating that he would happily spend "half a ducat on her" (6.64). Troubled by Gallop's "looks" (6.71) directed at Agar, Agar's husband Benwash voices his concerns about this flirtation to his manservant, Rabshake. In response, Rabshake challenges Benwash's "man[hood]" (6.82), asking why the Jew does not supervise his wife properly and here Benwash explains that "[f]or [the sake of] commodity" (6.83) and his profit, he allows her to engage in flirtations that entice customers and bring in sales[31]. Here, Benwash locates his wife in an economic framework that brings together notions of flesh, profit and sexuality in the flirtations that enable Agar to 'seduce' customers for economic gain.

Accordingly, I would suggest that Agar's role as a flirtatious salesperson that draws in business makes her comparable to the Arab who seduces Christians into conversion. While Agar is not seducing Gallop for conversion, to some degree she demonstrates the same kind of enticing approach as she schemes to get into bed with the Christian. She humorously tricks her husband into inviting her potential lover into their home, presenting herself as a "licentious" Muslim figure, true to early modern English beliefs (Vitkus, 'Turning' 156). Agar deceives Benwash by giving him a purse of "thirty thousand ducats" (6.356), letting him believe that Gallop has paid her in exchange for the hope of sex. She instructs her husband to "give" (6.368) the gold "back" to Gallop and to warn Gallop not to try his luck with her. Agar's intention in this seems to be to offer the gold to Gallop as a way of luring him to her "chamber" (6.371). To this end, Agar uses her Arab sexuality and money to entice Gallop, giving him enough gold to "*buy*…[him] out" of all feeling from his "five senses" (6.445-446; my italics).

Agar tempts Gallop with the same features that arguably make the prospect of turning Turk enticing to an early modern English audience. Gallop cannot believe his good fortune: he proclaims he has nothing to "fear" (6.447-448), believing his

[31] He knows that she will promote his "wares" (6.84) but will herself remain "untouched" (6.85) since he, ironically, "turned Turk" to prevent himself from being "cuckold[ed]" (6.78).

fate to be the work of "good angels" (6.448) that surround him. Herein, he actively rejects any anxieties he might have, perhaps including those grounded in fears of interacting with Arabs. He muses that it is his "destiny" (6.454) that awarded him with "this crown" (6.454) of wealth and pleasure. Giving in to his lust and greed, it becomes apparent that Gallop is drawn in by the fantasy of the Arab world. Furthermore, by reading Agar's enticements as a blessing (rather than a sin), he draws attention to the pleasures and prosperities that the early modern English associate with Islam.

Yet, while the offer certainly speaks to these English fantasies, it also seems to point to the hazard involved in engaging with the Arab. As much as the affair is presented as a blessing to Gallop, it also seems to possess an underlying economic element that essentially prostitutes him. To elaborate, through Agar's instructions to Benwash she sets in motion a transaction in which her husband becomes a middleman in the sale of flesh; Agar offers payment as a kind of bond which Gallop will later pay out in sex, a 'fleshy-labour'. Benwash seems to recognise this format of the exchange when he confronts a very confused Gallop and 'returns' what he believes to be the latter's gold. Benwash spurns Gallop, asking him: "What made you, sir, take my wife for a flesh-seller, a whore?" (6.413). That is to say that by referring to his wife as a "flesh-seller", Benwash conveys the idea that this exchange of money for body is a commercial one involving a sale of flesh.

Implicitly, Benwash uses the term "flesh" here synonymously with sex. He is deceived here in thinking that Agar has been wrongfully accused of being a "flesh-seller" when she is actually a 'flesh-buyer' who is giving money for Gallop's flesh. It is Agar who pays gold to Gallop, via Benwash, as an advance payment for sex. Still, the rhetoric Benwash evokes in his oblivion frames this exchange as a commercial transaction in an interesting way. That is, a transaction in which the body, Gallop's body, is objectified–since the body's 'worth' is paid for in enough "crowns" to "buy" it–and used for sexual labour, much like a "whore" (7.413), or perhaps even like a slave. This objectification and purchase of Gallop's flesh by Agar arguably evokes images of Christian enslavement by Arab dealers.

Indeed, Agar does not possess Gallop's body in the same way that a slave might be possessed (*slave* OED). However, I want to contend that the North African context of this transaction arguably attributes a slave-like identity to him, since this region, in the play-world and in the reality of the moment, is a hub of commercial activity that primarily involves the trading of slaves[32]. For an early modern English audience, slavery might be an obvious connection to make in this exchange of money for flesh. Moreover, Benwash–whose role in this Arab space is to buy and sell slaves–brokers this transaction between Agar and Gallop. Since it is a slave-trader who makes payment on behalf of Agar to Gallop in exchange for the latter's flesh, Gallop is framed as a slave-like figure[33]. At one point, while assuring Gallop of his wife's constancy, Benwash ironically even refers to Gallop directly as a "slave"(6.432). Accordingly, I suggest that while Agar does not own Gallop, she certainly seems to purchase him in a way that frames him as a slave-like captive.

Further still, the power dynamic that ensues from this transaction sees Gallop emasculated and therefore continues to locate him in this framework of slavery, given that anxieties about "emasculation" were typically embroiled in early modern ideas about captivity and enslavement (Guasco 137). Gallop's emasculation is foreshadowed when Agar consults her sister Voada for guidance on how to act out her lusts; Voada offers to "prick […] forth a lesson" (6.198) that will show "men that all art 'gainst lust and women's vain" (6.199). Here, Voada insinuates that all men are subject to the authorities of desire and "lust" as well as "women's" self-interest and entertainment, implying that women hold a position of power over men. The word "prick" emphasises this idea, as this

[32] Moreover, for the English, sex-slaves or concubines were also associated with the "Islamic world" and while these concubines were always female slaves, this link might allow a conceptual connection between sex and slavery to develop against the backdrop of Arab slave trade (Guasco 55).
[33] As Burton has noted, Benwash is "fundamental to [the] economic life" of the play, and he "demonstrates this centrality as he lends money to one Christian pirate, purchases the booty of a second" and now again "arranges the courtship of a third" for the exchange of gold (Burton 212).

"bawdy pun" indicates Voada's female control over the penis[34]. Inferably, to be able to "prick" something, she must either possess a "prick" or have the ability to control someone else's. Therefore, in the act of "pricking" Voada is seemingly placed on par with or superior to the masculinity symbolised by the "prick".[35] In developing a ploy to satisfy Agar's "lust"–a ploy which Gallop and Benwash both fall for unknowingly–the sisters demonstrate how men are indeed at the mercy of women's desires[36].

Being subject to Agar's instruction, body and money, I would argue that Gallop begins to assume the role of a slave when he immerses himself into the thrills of the Arab world. In other words, by completely giving in to Agar's seduction–a seduction that reflects on both the sexual and economic temptations presented by the Arab–Gallop falls into an erotic captivity. This exchange produces what Guasco refers to as an image of the "world turned upside down, or a hell on Earth" for the English (137). This is a world where men are enslaved by the Arab and further emasculated by this enslavement. Accordingly, what starts off seeming like an exciting bout of good fortune gives way to an enslaved Englishman, and I am therefore asserting that the play seems to present Gallop as a warning against the "temptations" of the Arab world (Degenhardt 3).

This warning is realised when the subplot draws to a close and Gallop's willingness to be bought and enslaved takes a less fantastical, more ominous

[34] Vitkus notes that the word "prick" implies writing or laying out something, especially relevant to music but also embodies a "bawdy pun" for penal penetration (Vitkus, *Three* 180).
[35] Patricia Parker identifies this female power in her "Pauline" reading of the play, where she asserts that Daborne demonstrates "preposterous reversal" or a backwardness in the world of the Turk, which involves disrupting the traditional "ascendency of male over female" to which the early modern English are presumably accustomed (14).
[36] This is not only true for the relationship between the Arab woman and the Christian Englishman, but also in the dynamic between Arab men and Arab women (Burton, *Traffic* 135). As Burton argues, "Voada is already beyond the control of Muslim men" and this is demonstrated in the way that she repeatedly "acts upon her own selfish motives", especially when she seduces Ward (Burton, *Traffic* 135). In this scene, she encourages her sister Agar to do the same, when she advises her sister to act "in women's vain" (6.199) (Burton, *Traffic* 135).

turn as he is trapped and then killed by Benwash. These events occur later in the play, when after finding out about his wife's affair Benwash takes revenge on his "dear precious villain" (16.7) and her lover, Gallop. Aided by his manservant Rabshake, Benwash traps Gallop and Agar, and Rabshake proceeds to kill Agar. Fearing that the same fate is about to befall him, Gallop pleads to Benwash by stating: "Save my life, sir, and I will be your slave, sell myself in open market, brand me" (16.89-90). In the moment that his former 'owner' is killed, Gallop becomes available for purchase again and his final words in the play present an ironic appeal to be enslaved, reflecting on a desire for enslavement that is far more tragic than his titillating captivity under Agar. Gallop's good fortune is inverted here as the once exciting invitation to be bought by the seductive Arab woman, turns into Gallop's begging to be sold to live. As such, the exciting connection between Islam and slavery evoked at the start of the affair is replaced by a darker, more sinister version thereof.

Interestingly, throughout this narrative Gallop does not actually turn Turk. Yet by simply allowing himself to be seduced by the temptations of flesh that are connoted with Islam, he is–as Benwash suggests–"half a Turk already" (6.443) which is perhaps why the ending is so dire. The play must punish him for subjecting himself to the Arab body and its desires. If this section of the play serves to warn the English against engaging with the Arab, then this warning materialises specifically by demonizing the aspects of flesh connected to Islam that otherwise entice Englishmen into turning Turk. Islam's linkage with the flesh, specifically the sexual delight and commodification of the flesh, proves to be especially sinister and problematic in this play.

Turning Racial – Blackening the Turk

Arguably, the focal point of *A Christian Turned Turk* is the play's conversion scene in which the Captain-Pirate John Ward commits apostasy when he

converts to Islam[37]. This anxiety around Englishmen converting from Christianity to Islam is perhaps most apparent in the chorus's narration of the scene, which draws on a rhetoric of blackness to frame Ward's treachery. This blackness, as Kim Hall argues, features widely in early modern literature, often as a contrast to a purer opposite of whiteness[38]. The scene begins with the chorus stating that "the [preceding] deeds […] presented hitherto are white" (8.3) in comparison to the "black ones" (8.4) to follow. In this prelude to the conversion ritual, the chorus asserts that all the "deeds […] presented" thus far in the play, including Ward's sale of Christian slaves and Gallop's erotic enslavement, have been virtuous by contrast to the evil about to ensue. Apostasy and the act of converting to Islam are, in this way, presented as the worst and "black[est]" kinds of evil[39].

This idea that turning Turk is "black" by early modern standards is reaffirmed at the end of the scene when the chorus proclaims that conversion has produced a "black end":

> …Last, oh be he last,
> Foreswears his name! With what, we blush to tell,
> But 'tis no wonder, black's the way to hell;
> Who though he seems yet happy, his success
> Shows he exchanged with it, and wretchedness.

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[37] Ward's infatuation with Voada leads to his conversion, where he undergoes a dramatic ritual that involves being blessed by the muftis alongside a pagan idol of Mahomet (Scene 8). The chorus narrates this ritual for the audience in Scene eight, with an interlude in the middle of the scene that takes place as a 'dumb show'. After being brought in on a donkey, Ward is made to lie "bare-headed" or naked on the table. Here he is circumcised; made to denounce Christianity by rejecting a glass of wine given to him by a Christian; and adopts "the habit of a free-born Turk" (8. 18). This includes for instance the "turban and long robe traditionally worn" by the Arabs (Vitkus, *Three* 199).

[38] Hall notes that in their "traditional" symbolisms, blackness "stood for death, mourning, baseness, evil, sin and danger" while whiteness connoted to "purity, virginity, [and] innocence" (Fryer qtd in Hall *Things* 9).

[39] As Guasco notes, "[f]or many people in England, the enslavement of their countrymen was tragic, but it *paled* in comparison to the apostasy of Christians who voluntarily converted to the Muslim faith" (135; my italics).

> Give patience to our scene, which hereto tends
> To show the world black deeds will have black ends. (8.23-28)

The chorus states that the "scene" has demonstrated how the "black deeds" of conversion produces "black ends" which, in this instance, is literally Ward's "Turk" or Muslim "end". This correlation between Islam and the sin signified by blackness on stage is held in place by the chorus's categorisation of Islam too as unequivocally evil: the "Prophet" (8.16) and the "accursed priests" (8.11) of the Arabs and "their pagan tribes" (8.17) are described as unambiguously "damned" (8.16). Therefore, if "black deeds" are the route "to hell" and "Turk[ish]" identity is the "black end", then I would argue that "black deeds" refer to the acts and processes of apostasy that result in this "black end" of a turned Turk (*damned* OED).

Identifying the gravity of converting to Islam in the early modern period, Vitkus has argued that the early modern English stage serves as a site for exploring "imaginary resolutions" for "real [English] anxieties about" Islamic "might", including concerns around the conversion of Englishman to Islam (*Three* 7). This seems to be the case for *A Christian Turned Turk* since, as Matar notes, while the real Ward "was flourishing in the Barbary", Daborne's Ward was dying on stage (Matar, 'Renegades' 495). Burton asserts that this 'imaginary resolution' in the play is presented through Ward's redemption, given that "Ward is transformed back into the Christian polemicist" before he is "reckoned" (Burton, *Traffic* 136). The play therefore "rescripts Ward's life […] to find small Christian victories embedded in the resistance of Englishman to Islamic temptation" (Burton, *Traffic* 13). Matar, on the other hand, argues that the play magnifies "the heinousness of apostasy to the English audience" by using the stage to punish Ward, thereby actualising the "retribution" that Christians believed ought to accompany apostasy ('Renegades' 495, 501). As each of these scholars observe, because men like the real John Ward were prospering without consequence after committing apostasy, the English saw the need to rescript narratives about conversion to Islam.

Extending these arguments, I want to suggest that the "imaginary resolution" presented in Daborne's play, addresses early modern anxieties around the inability to identify religious difference, and therefore apostasy, on the external body (Vitkus, *Three* 7). I contend that when Ward undergoes the rites of conversion, he is also blackened by the descriptive function of "black deeds" (8.28) and "black ends" (8.28) in the scene. While blackness might do work to emphasise the religious sin associated with Islam, Islam in the early modern moment is already characterised in this way without the use of blackness. Therefore, I'm arguing that the rhetoric of blackness used in this moment has less to do with criminalising the Turk as a religious other and more to do with colouring this figure to establish a tangible marker of otherness. This is not to say that Ward is physically blackened after his conversion, but rather that Ward becomes associated with blackness, he becomes black without actually turning black, and this blackness in turn concretises his otherness as a visual marker of difference.

The semantics of this blackening become clearer by analysing the "black deeds" (8.28) or sins that work to produce the penultimate "black end" (8.28) of the Turk Ward. Evoked in the act of Ward's conversion, these "deeds" distinctively align to the notion of flesh, since the play designates flesh as a primary impetus for Islamic conversion, and therefore a primary cause of sinful apostasy. Namely, these "deeds" are: Ward's lust for Voada (the cause of his apostasy), the captivity or enslavement that is produced as a result of these lusts, and his corresponding emasculation that emerges from both of these. Effectively, from the correlations between Islam and flesh, as well as Islam and the religious evil signified by blackness, a connection arguably arises between blackness and flesh in the moment of Ward's conversion. To this end, when Ward turns Turk he is blackened in a way that suggests his conversion is racial rather than a purely religious one.

The first "black deed", Ward's lust for Voada, certainly resonates with the idea that "[c]onversion to Islam was considered a kind of sexual transgression" (Vitkus, 'Turning' 146). However, what seems to blacken Ward's desires particularly is the play's portrayal of Voada as a Muslim woman allied to "devils"

(7.87). This becomes evident when Crosman presumes to rely on Voada's sensuality to convince Ward to turn Turk, after his attempts to do so prove unsuccessful. Speaking aside, Crosman states: "What devils dare not move/Men to accomplish, women work them to" (7.87-88). The "work" in this instance is to seduce Ward into conversion, which for the early modern English is an inherently criminal and sacrilegious act. Hence, in conjoining his sister's enticement of Ward to the work of "devils", Crosman blackens Voada in terms of her "unruly female sexuality" (Hall *Things* 90).

This reading of Voada is not dissimilar to Bovilsky's reading of Desdemona in her book, *Barbarous Plays.* Building on the critical work of Kim Hall and Lynda Boose, Bovilsky argues that a particular kind of blackness emerges when gender and morality conflate on the early modern stage, producing a complex form of racial identity. Bovilsky suggests that Desdemona's "blackening" arises because she is an "unruly woman" and this is not least because she is having sex with the black Othello, a racial and implicitly religious other (409). Hence, like Othello Desdemona is also black, but because she has an internal blackness that connotes to ideas of immorality she is "racialized differently" (Bovilsky 473). Accordingly, Bovilsky asserts that blackness demonstrates a "coincidence of two meanings in a single word", where Othello signifies a visual, phenotypical blackness while Desdemona embodies a less tangible, inward, moral blackness (440).

In line with Bovilsky's argument, Voada like Desdemona seems to be blackened by her representation in the play as 'unruly' and "devil[ish]" (7.87). This blackness in turn emphasises the "black deed" of Ward's unholy motives for unholy flesh. Arguably, however, Voada embodies this blackness even more profoundly since she is, physically, not white. Though the play never categorises her as black, as a Muslim woman living in the Barbary she is by some definition a Moor like Othello. Therefore, where Bovilsky suggests that blackness takes on two different meanings for Othello and Desdemona, I would argue that both of these meanings are relevant for Voada who is racialised internally as black because of her "illicit sexuality", and externally as a darker Arab (Bovilsky 123).

Furthermore, her racial stickiness as an Arab enables her to attach to ideas of racial and physical blackness, presumably in a very convincing way for an early modern audience. Consequently, Voada's seeming blackness literalises the blackness in the "black deed" (8.28) of lust, representing black flesh as characteristic of Ward's motives for apostasy.

More than being infatuated with the "black" Voada, Ward declares that he is her "captive, by heaven" and "by [...his] religion" (7.111). Thus, when Ward turns Turk he actively relinquishes the "religion" he earlier swears by to willingly enter into captivity under a black, "devil[ish]" (REF) woman. This is in keeping with the play's assertion that when the Englishman succumbs to (Islam's) temptations of flesh, the dynamic produced is coterminous with English enslavement by the Arab. Moments after Ward decides to forsake his religion for lust, Alizia, a woman disguised as servant boy who accompanies Ward to Tunis, articulates a warning of this enslavement that affirms the connection between conversion and slavery. She tries to dissuade Ward from "renouncing […] God" (7.208) and "[t]aking the abhorred name of Turk" (7.209)[40]. When Ward resists her warnings (7.216), she responds by saying that if her words are not enough to "move" (7.217) him, then the "contempt" (7.218) of the "Turks themselves" will convince him to "fly *this slavery*" (7.220; my italics). Therefore, in this dialogue Aliza implicitly recognises Ward's desire to convert and his according submission to the Arabs as "slavery" (7.220).

It is perhaps no surprise to the audience thereafter when Ward is depicted as an English galley slave, as he undergoes the rites of conversion in Scene eight of the play. For example, this is apparent when Ward is about to undergo circumcision, and he lies on the table "*in his Christian habits, bare-headed*" (Scene 8 sd). The set-up of the ritual here is not dissimilar to the description Guasco gives of Englishman just enslaved in the Mediterranean:

[40] Degenhardt has referenced Alizia amongst other Christian woman as an illustration of how "[f]emale sexuality" in the (often fair)Christian woman on stage "is the sign of Christian resistance" to Islam temptations (176).

> […] Muslim masters stripped the newly captured slaves naked as a part of the search for hidden valuables, but the stripping and re-clothing of new bond-men was also a way to break the man and make the slave. (131)

The image of Ward being stripped from his "*Christian habits*" and re-clothed into the "habit of a […] Turk" (8.18) by the *Mufti* performing the ritual, presents an image similar to "break[ing] the man" to "make the slave" (Guasco 131). Ward's penis too is conceptually undressed from its foreskin when he undergoes circumcision. In this moment of his conversion, when Ward loses his "*Christian"* clothing for the "habit of a […] Turk", it is almost as though he also adopts the habit of a slave, suggesting that the format and process of the conversion ritual affirm his position as a captive.

Further still, the chorus's description of Ward, after he has turned Turk, suggests that Ward has been emasculated in a way that reflects on the experience of Englishmen enslaved by the Ottomans. Possibly, the more obvious emasculation implicit in Ward's conversion is the loss of flesh from his penis by which he physically loses a part of the physiological feature of his manhood. As Vitkus notes, for early modern Christians, circumcision in turning Turk was "imagined both as a kind of castration or emasculation" involving as it did the physical "reduction of the phallus" (Vitkus, 'Turning' 174).

However, Ward is additionally emasculated by the power dynamic he enters into, as a slave to Voada. The effects of this emasculation are made more apparent when the chorus states that Ward the "rider" (8.15) "[d]ismounted from" (8.14) his "steed" to finalise the conversion. The innuendo on "rider" (8.15) highlights a "curtail" of Ward's sexual prowess suggesting he is no longer riding and therefore no longer having sex (Vitkus, 'Turning' 174). Similarly, when the rites are completed, the chorus observes that:

> Now [Ward] wears the habit of a free-born Turk,
> His sword excepted, which less they should work
> Just villainy to their seducers, is denied

Unto all runagates […] (8.18-21)

Here the "sword" takes on a dual meaning, reading as a sign of strength but also as a phallic symbol of sexuality. Therefore, when his "sword […] is denied", Ward's masculinity diminishes as he loses his capacity to fight, rendering him unable to attack his Arab "seducers" in "villainy" (8.20). At the same time, being "denied" his penal "sword" would suggest a decline in his sexual prowess after circumcision, preventing him from satisfying his "seducer[…]" Voada. The denial of his "sword" in captivity therefore costs Ward a part of his physical self and aspects of what the English would understand as his masculine ontology: his capacities for war and sex.

After his conversion therefore, Ward finds himself in what Burton refers to as an "emasculated degeneracy" (Burton, *Traffic* 141). Given that, as Loomba notes, "European, Christian identity is increasingly expressed in terms of masculinity", in his post-conversion emasculation Ward is arguably reaffirmed in his position of difference–he loses aspects of his sex and gender just as he loses aspects of his Christian identity (Loomba, *Shakespeare* 31). To this end, emasculation is presented as another "black deed" (8.28) connected to Ward's flesh, which stems from the other "black deeds" (828) that magnify its effect. Ward's desire for the black Voada and his willing submission to her captivity locates him in a power dynamic in which he is subject to her will. This erotic captivity promotes a representation of Ward as slave and brings together the idea of emasculation as it arises in enslavement. Ward seems to experience a "total loss of self-determination, dehumanization and emasculation" in a way that a galley slave might (Guasco 42). To this end, lust and 'enslavement' operatively enhance Ward's emasculation, which in turn becomes a marker of his "black" apostasy.

Suffice it to say that the "black deeds" described by the chorus that express Ward's sinful blackness in his apostasy are, indeed, directly connected to notions of flesh. Seeing that, as Degenhardt asserts, "Islamic conversion is compelled and manifested through the body", it is fitting that the flesh becomes the site for marking the evils that the English associated with Islam (5). Moreover, because

"the Islamic threat" seems to translate through flesh, I contend that Islamic conversion on the early modern stage enables the English to navigate through the disjuncture of inwardly invisible and outwardly apparent aspects of the body that are being interrogated in religious discourses of this historical moment (Burton *Traffic* 98). As Degenhardt suggests, the "early modern stage responded to the problem of faith's invisibility by embracing more tangible religious models […] of […] Islam" (26). In this scene, this model seems to intertwine blackness, a tangible, colour-coded feature emblematic of sin, into descriptions of Ward's conversion. Because Ward's internal change when he converts to Islam is invisible, blackness creates a visual marker of difference that can effectively convince an early modern audience that such a change has indeed occurred. Accordingly, when the white Ward is internally blackened, his difference becomes more convincing, and "[a]nxieties about conversion and its resistance to verification" are minimized as Islamic conversion evokes a more tangible change in the body (Degenhardt 24).

Furthermore, since the play has already established the evils of Islam through bodily transgressions, the use of the term "black" in this scene appears to take on a different meaning. Specifically, this is a meaning that is racial rather than religious. Extending Bovilsky's argument that the early modern period produces "*internalized* racializations" in representations of white "unruly" women on stage, Daborne's play seems to reproduce such a racialisation in the licentious Ward who is internally blackened when he turns Turk (Bovilsky 34; author's italics). While in Bovilsky's argument "racial difference is coded and produced by sexual difference", for Ward it is religious and perhaps moral difference which gives meaning to his internal blackness (41).

Further still, because conversion to Islam in the early modern period is seen as a "movement from the spirit to the flesh", I'm asserting that the internal blackness racializing Ward's Muslim spirit might also be imagined as blackness on his body (Hawkes 145). In other words, where Ward's conversion to Islam manifests as an outward, more physically detectable difference, rather than an intangible, spiritual one. To reiterate, this is not to assert that Ward's skin colour turns black

but rather that his internal blackness is coded by a visual difference of otherness that does manifest physically in other othered bodies. Where spirituality is invisible it is also, in some sense, visually ineffable, materialising outwardly only through features like the clothing "habit" of the Turk, which Ward adorns. However, when Ward's internal, black, race 'moves' onto his flesh, Ward's difference can be imagined or connoted to a physical change of colour that allows religious difference to be conceptually imagined on the body.

Therefore, after turning Turk Ward appears to exist as a confusion of categories when he is inwardly Muslim, inwardly black, and outwardly Turk (based on his clothing), all while his skin-colour remains white. In this moment therefore, when Ward turns Turk he seems instead to turn Arab, since Arab identity is often an amalgamation of various national and phenotypical categories that somehow align with Islamic difference. As Bovilsky argues:

> […] the most dynamic sites of racial production will occur at moments when racial boundaries are permeated or indistinct, since especially exercised discursive effort will result in order to reinforce blurry boundaries […] (388)

At the moment of Ward's conversion, these "boundaries" seem to become "indistinct" as he becomes Muslim and black but remains physically white in colour. Therefore, I propose that "racial production" occurs when different, aspects of his racial and religious identity overlap. Ward becomes Arab insofar as he is now tied to Islam but also because he is an ambiguous racial figure and that ambiguity means that whiteness, blackness, Turkishness, and other forms of identity stick to him.

* * *

Throughout this chapter, I seek to expand on the complexities of the act of 'turning Turk' which seems to be gaining momentum at a time when England was undergoing significant 'turns' of its own (Vitkus, 'Poisoned' 53). Not least of these is the turn towards the so-called 'New World', which in some ways, like the

Arab world, was associated with promises of new wealth and opportunities to prosper. These opportunities often presented themselves in the idea of flesh, and especially in the beginning stages of the transatlantic slave trade that involved English trafficking and transporting of black bodies from Africa into new territories. It is no surprise then that blackness and flesh as signs of otherness begin to dominate on the early modern stage, since these forms of otherness are a vested point of interest for the English in this pre-colonial moment.

The particular use of the racialised Arab to explore these connections between blackness and flesh by transforming religious into racial difference, seems to respond to changes in the English Self arising from the development of this English colonial identity. Whereas conflations between England and Christianity might have at some point been perceived as innate, these connections between national and religious identity were troubled by the Reformation and Englishmen converting to Islam. Thus extra discursive efforts might have needed to go into re-joining the English to Christianity, which meant that it was no longer enough to position the Englishman against the Muslim as only a religious other. This connection between the English and Christianity was necessary because it enabled the English to sustain certain aspects of cultural superiority embodied in the notion of Christian blood, which I will explore in the next chapter. More importantly, however, Christianity opened gateways to imperial and colonial projects that would allow the English to expand, conquer and enslave in an official capacity under the auspice of Christian faith, like the Arabs whose English captives converted to Islam.

Chapter 3

Stampéd in Difference: Blood, Skin, and Body Commodities in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*

Before the Prince of Morocco appears on stage in *The Merchant of Venice*, Portia states that if he is of a good and pious character, having "the condition of a saint" but the "complexion of a *devil*"(1.2.124, my emphasis), she would prefer to engage religiously with him rather than romantically: he should rather "shrive" her "than wive" her (1.2. 123-125). By the 15th century, the word "complexion" is recorded as a reference to the colour, nature, or texture of a person's skin, and it stands to reason thus that for Portia, the Prince of Morocco appears devilish because of his skin colour, even as she links such darkness to evil, which indicates her racism[41].

However, as a Moor the Prince's "complexion" is not the only characteristic that defines his otherness. Loomba and Burton have both asserted that the Prince of Morocco is presented as a Muslim, and Burton goes so far as to suggest that the Prince is a "subject of the Ottoman Sultan" who he references in the play (*Shakespeare* 136-134; *Traffic* 208). Morocco, as a state, is not under Ottoman control in this period, therefore this alignment between the Ottoman and the Moor arguably points towards early modern English conceptions of their shared Islamic identity. Thus, by aligning the Moroccan Prince to the Ottomans, Shakespeare certainly affirms a connection between the Prince and the Arab world, allowing him to be read as an Arab Other. Given that he is Moroccan, African, dark skinned, noble and presumably a Muslim who is affiliated to the Ottomans, I would argue that the Prince is characterized as a 'sticky' Arab Other who attaches to "a range of ideologies, narratives, and vocabularies" of identity (Hall and Erikson 12). This Arab identity paints a far more complex picture of the Prince of Morocco's otherness in Shakespeare's comedy.

[41] See Kim Hall, *Things of Darkness.*

This chapter accordingly explores how these constructions of the Prince's Arab otherness, which are connected to ideas of power and enslavement, work alongside Shylock's otherness in *The Merchant of Venice* to unveil hypocrisies embedded in early modern English hierarchies of identity[42]. Specifically, the play disrupts the semantics of sameness and difference that are central to discourses of otherness, by turning polemics of sameness presented by the Prince and Shylock into ways of evoking differences that create superiority for the fair, English or European Christian. These polemics are framed around manifestations of sameness and difference marked by the inside and outside of the body. Hence, the prioritizing of visual difference that I explored in Chapter two re-emerges in Shakespeare's play through negotiations of skin, blood and morality.

In the first part of this Chapter, I consider how the Prince's Arab, and specifically Moorish, ambiguity frames him as definitively other to Portia who "laughingly dismisses [him as] her dark-skinned suitor" even though he sustains "nobility throughout" his interaction with her (Shapiro 172; Burton, *Traffic* 208). Thereafter, part two explores how the Prince replicates Portia's racial logic when he undertakes the casket test. This borrowed logic proves to be less forgiving to the Prince who creates a complex link between outward appearances and economic value that enables this moment of the play to mitigate the threats of Arab enslavement it evokes. In the final section of this chapter, I argue that this link develops into a mode for framing the fair, Christian, and European body as invaluable, as supreme, and therefore unable to be enslaved when it reappears in the play's famous court-scene as Shylock claims his bond of flesh.

[42] In his book, *The Jew, The Arab: A History of the Enemy* Gil Anidjar explores these shared narratives of difference embedded in discourses of anti-Semitism and Orientalism that arise from a history of active European participation in constructing and promoting enmity between the Jew and the Arab.

Same Blood, Same Difference

Literary scholars have tended to read the Prince of Morocco in Shakespeare's play as a dark or black reflection of Shylock's otherness. Exploring racial constructions of the Jew in the early modern period, Shapiro has noted that amongst other features, "Jewish racial otherness" incorporated a central "belief that Jews were black" (Shapiro 171). Because of this link, he argues, Morocco's darkness helps to locate Shylock in early modern conversations about alterity, by highlighting racist ideologies and European anxieties of others "threaten[ing] to sully the purity of their white, Christian commonwealth" (Shapiro 173). Adelman has argued similarly that the Jew is "blackened" by Salerio, when he asserts that Shylock's "flesh" is a "jet" black, far from his daughter Jessica's "ivory" white (3.1.35-36) (Adelman 15). Salerio therefore turns Shylock into "a Moor, to secure the permanence of his invisible" difference, and these differences are later mirrored in the "visible ground of [the Prince's] skin-colour" (Adelman 14). To this end, the Prince of Morocco has been framed as a physical embodiment of Shylock's less tangible difference.

The Prince seems to be aware of the primacy of his skin-colour as a site of difference, when he acknowledges Portia's anxieties around darkness in his first words of the play:

> Mislike me not for my complexion
> The shadowed livery of the burnished sun,
> To whom I am neighbor and near bred.
> Bring me the fairest creature northward born,
> Where Phoebus' fire scarce thaws the icicles,
> And let us make incision for your love,
> To prove whose blood is reddest, his or mine. (2.1.1-7)

Identifying his skin as a barrier to his courtship, the Prince describes his "complexion" as a "shadowed livery of the burnished sun" that he calls his "neighbor". Here, the Prince draws on racial principles of climatology to explain

his colouring, referring to his skin-colour as a shadowy darkness accounted for by his geographic location. Specifically, he points out the "southern origins [and] native climate" that account for his dark colouring (Floyd-Wilson 42).

Reading this exchange through her argument of geohumoralism, Floyd-Wilson suggests that in his "bid for Portia's affections", the Prince endeavours to address concerns that he is "temporally incapable of heated action" by trying to remove himself from the "humoral corollary" that sees Africans as having less blood and therefore being less sexually driven (42) [43]. In other words, Floyd-Wilson argues that Portia's disdain for Morocco based on his "dark skin" points to Portia's awareness that he "lacks sexual heat" (43). Embedded in her dislike of physical darkness is therefore the possibility that she will find Morocco sexually unsatisfying. The Prince accordingly distances himself from the sun, which serves as a literal signifier of his dark skin-colour as well as an indicator of his poor sexual prowess.

Evidently, this collective anxiety around his external darkness leads Morocco to turn inward towards the less visible and (seemingly) less variable aspect of blood. As Adelman observes, the Prince evokes ideas of sameness when he "gestures powerfully toward the common blood just beneath the skin of difference" (Adelman 15). The Prince challenges his "fairest" (2.1.4) competitors for Portia to "make incisions" (2.1.6) on their skin for Portia's "love" (2.1.6), to "prove whose blood is reddest" (2.1.7). He confronts difference by linking the superlative "reddest" (2.1.7) to its earlier counterpart "fairest", perhaps suggesting that it is not possible for him nor for his competitor to have the "reddest" blood in the same way that it is possible for one of them to be the "fairest" since blood is fundamentally the same. Blood is intrinsic to humanity and its dependencies are common amongst all people; blood is also monochromatic and inside of the body making its variations more difficult to detect, unlike outward differences of fair and dark skin. The Prince therefore

[43] Floyd-Wilson's conception of "geohumoralism" draws from Hippocrates' humoral theory that was abounding during the early modern period, which connected climate, to the four humors and accordingly to a person's temperament (2).

makes a "claim to the universality of blood" to enforce an argument about his identity (Adelman 15).

However, reading blood as a site for sameness in this way does not acknowledge the symbolic functions of "reddest" blood in the early modern moment, when blood serves as a way of organizing social differences. With these symbolisms, the superlative enables Morocco to prove that he is *most* worthy of Portia, given that "reddest" blood can translate as the "best" blood (Spiller 150, 160n31). In an early modern romantic narrative "blood would be […] a mark of reproductive potency as [well as] a sign of valour" and therefore having the "reddest" blood would be a competitive advantage for the Prince, framing him as chivalrous and fertile (Spiller 152). Spiller observes that Morocco evidently "understands 'red' blood according to romantic codes as a mark of bravery and nobility" and uses this to his advantage (152). His allusion to "reddest" blood might therefore be a claim that his blood is the "best" among suitors of different (lighter) complexions, presenting a convincing case for his courtship.

Moreover, the idea that the "reddest" blood will have some bearing on the Prince's potency, as Spiller suggests, recalls the important function blood has a basis of lineage in this period (152). Bloodlines, which are continued through lineage, marked identities and differences of wealth and inheritance as well as religion, nationality, and race in the early modern moment (Adelman 18-19). Race and class categories, in particular, develop from a notion of "purity" that is contingent on pure or uncontaminated "bloodline[s]" (Loomba, *Shakespeare* 23-32). Bloodlines are therefore "dependent upon the strict control of lineage" and so is inextricably linked to reproduction and corresponding determinants of "sexuality", gender and matrimony (Loomba, *Shakespeare* 32). Ultimately, a "*hierarchy* between different bloodlines" of various groups emerges and not only distinguishes but also ranks these classes and races (Loomba, *Shakespeare* 23-32, author's emphasis)[44]. To this end, having the "reddest" and therefore the

[44] For example, Loomba notes that the concept of blue blood, an idea that connotes to class rankings and wealth, developed in "several aristocratic families who declared they had never been contaminated by Moorish or Jewish blood,

'best' blood would signify that the Prince's blood is also "noble" through his ancestry (Burton, *Traffic* 207).

This makes Portia's knowledge of Morocco's blood–specifically his best, fertile, "noble" blood–a key point of persuasion for the Prince who is trying to win Portia in marriage (Burton, *Traffic* 207). Blood is useful for demonstrating to Portia that they are essentially the same via shared nobility, while also quelling anxieties that he might taint bloodlines because of his "complexion" (2.1.1). As Burton notes, Morocco seems to be aware that his "noble blood" and his darker skin colour present a hierarchical "contradiction" in terms (or rather in body), and therefore acknowledges this problem in his interaction with Portia (*Traffic* 207). The prospect of like and like blood (of nobility) helps the prince to negate the unlikeness (of fair and dark) skin colour. Hence, blood serves as a way to aid the Prince as he seeks to persuade Portia of his suitability as a suitor by engaging with aspects that makes them the same.

What transpires through the Prince's engagement with blood here, is a complex and incoherent dynamic in which the Prince uses the difference of blood to lay claims for sameness. Even though his assertion that blood is "reddest" seems to evoke a difference that works in his favour, where his blood is "reddest" and therefore better, this arguably does not take away from the fact that his rhetoric relies on a system of difference. His blood, in other words, still appears different. Moreover, when blood reflects on the Prince's 'noble' identity as Loomba and Burton recognize, such nobility makes him the same as Portia and perhaps better than his better competitors. Yet, this reasoning for sameness mobilizes a discourse that draws attention to his racial difference just as much as it highlights his nobility since his darker "complexion" can suggest impure blood and therefore otherness to an early modern English audience.

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and hence had fair skins through which their blue blood could be seen" (*Shakespeare* 7).

Adelman has argued that it is "perhaps because his skin is so reliably different" that the Prince of "Morocco is allowed to articulate" his "blood-sameness" (15)[45]. In other words, Morocco's "signs of difference" are "visual" and therefore "reassuring" in a way that other others in the play are not (Adelman 15). To this end, the Prince is 'allowed' to use blood as an essential part of physical make-up to emphasize his sameness because his definitively different "complexion" will always negate the possibility of his sameness. Thus, Adelman posits that the Prince's argument for internal sameness ends up being in vain, since it is subject to the authority of external difference (15). This in turn highlights the undeniable links between the narratives of external and internal differences and how they work in this moment (Adelman 14-15). Even when sameness is presented in the racial other, this sameness is still framed by an overarching difference.

Consequently, Morocco simultaneously occupies positions of sameness and difference yet still remains conclusively other. His difference in complexion seems to dominate these positions, championing over other features of sameness like nobility or the humanness of blood. This value placed on outward difference is true at least for Portia, whose lasting impressions of the Prince are characterized by his skin-colour. When his "labour [is] lost" (2.7.74) and the Prince takes his "tedious leave" (2.7.77) of Portia, she closes the scene conveying relief at the "gentle riddance" (2.7.78) of the Moroccan Prince. Portia proclaims her hopes that "all of his complexion choose me so" (2.7.79), shunning her suitor and all others that share his physical darkness by wishing that they too would pick incorrectly. Grouping together "all of his complexion", she very directly expresses her distaste for suitors who are physically other.

[45] Adelman puts Morocco's assertion about sameness in conversation with "Antonio's assumptions that only gentiles can be Christian", by presenting blood as a site for sameness. Morocco undermines difference, she argues, "by evoking Paul's great refutation of biological particularism in Acts 17:26: God ''hathe made of one blood all man-kinde, to dwell on all the face of the earth'' (15).

The Arab's Economies of Difference

The dialectic of the inside and the outside of the body that surfaces in the first dialogue between Portia and Morocco continues to emerge in the casket game that the Prince undertakes in pursuit of Portia. Explaining the rules of the "lott'ry"(2.1.16) to the Prince, Portia explains that of the "several caskets" (2.7.2), the one containing a picture of her is the correct choice. In this game of fate, the suitor's " "judgment" (2.7.13) (in this case, Morocco's) must help him to determine which external form of lead, silver or gold holds Portia image within. I would argue therefore that in drawing on a similar negotiation between the internal and the external, this moment mirrors the racial ideas around the inside and outside of the body generated in the discussions between Portia and the Prince. As I demonstrate below, the Prince of Morocco reads the caskets as though they are analogous to Portia's body – the outside of a casket serves to him as a reflection of Portia's outward features and particularly her "heavenly" (2.7.48) beauty, while the inside of the correct casket bears Portia's image and therefore can be read as 'embodying' her.

By this parallel, the Prince seems to follow a system of thinking in which the appearance of the outer, external body directly informs the inner, invisible features and vice versa. This becomes apparent in the way that the Prince of Morocco bases his assessment on both the beauty and value of each of the casket metals, which he presumes to be an accurate representation of what these metals contain:

> One of these three contains her heavenly picture.
> Is't like that lead contains her? 'Twere damnation
> To think so base a thought; it were too gross
> To rib her cerecloth in the obscure grave.
> Or shall I think in silver she's immured,
> Being ten times undervalued to tried gold?
> O sinful thought! Never so rich a gem
> Was set in worse than gold. They have in England

A coin that bears the figure of an angel
Stamped in gold, but that's insculp'd upon;
But here an angel in a golden bed
Lies all within. Deliver me the key:
Here do I choose, and thrive I as I may! (2.7.48-60)

In order to ascertain which of the "three contains her heavenly picture", the Prince considers the value of the outside of the caskets, the values of lead, silver and gold, to determine Portia's worth. His assessments create a direct link between Portia's appearance and the general value associated with each commodity. Disregarding lead as too "base" and "worthless" to keep her image, and silver, as "ten times undervalued to tried gold", he labels Portia a "rich [...]gem", which he sees as compatible with nothing "worse than gold". Therefore, in trying to determine the correct casket, the Prince of Morocco uses a logic that positions the outside value against Portia, based on a premise that the outside of the correct casket (a metal) will reflect Portia who is embedded inside that casket.

In reading Portia and the casket metals in this conflated way, the Prince of Morocco seems to blur the lines between subject and object in this scene, by treating the metal caskets as though they are literally rather than symbolically indicative of Portia as a human subject. Arguably, the caskets themselves invite the Prince to make this kind of connection between bodies and objects. Each casket label begins with the phrase "[w]ho chooseth me"(2.7.16,23,37), eerily enlivening the metals by personifying each with the pronoun "me". Because of this, the lead, silver and gold caskets are brought into the dialogue with the suitors as though they exist as their own subjectivities, explaining what each represents. Resultantly, the lines between human and object are narrowed as Portia is objectified and the caskets personified in a way that makes them seem human.

Moreover, because the outside of each casket is made up of a metal commodity, I am asserting that the logic that the Prince uses in this respect–interpreting these

metals as Portia–evokes an economic discourse. By this I mean a discourse connoting to money, especially through "trade, industry and the creation of wealth" (*economic* OED). This discourse is possibly most evident when the Prince tries to determine the casket material he matches in value, while simultaneously thinking about how much Portia is worth. Considering the lead casket, he argues that his "golden mind" could not "stoop[…]", could not be devalued to the worthlessness of lead's "dross"[46] (2.7.20). He claims that he will not "give" (2.7.21) or 'risk' for lead since it is too "base[…and] too gross" (2.7.50) a metal to emblematize Portia. Silver promises "as much as he deserves" (2.7.31) and thus the Prince calls on himself to evaluate, to "weigh" (2.7.25) and measure his "value" (2.7.25) with "estimation" (2.7.26); he "deserves enough" (2.7.27) but that "enough" (2.7.27) might not "extend…to the lady" (II.7.27-8) since Portia is worth more than "enough". Thus in conflating the value of the outside of the casket with Portia, the Prince wields a range of terms and comparisons that take the form of an economic logic

Because both Portia and the caskets lend themselves to being assessed through an economic discourse, this makes the Prince's logic an effective rhetoric. Being made of metal commodities, the caskets (as the Prince identifies) correspond to particular values that allow them to be quantified and ranked such that lead is more 'worthless' (*dross* OED) than silver, which in turn is "ten times undervalued to […] gold" (2.7.53). Portia too falls neatly into such a discourse given that:

> …in early modern England[…]marriage, among the elite at least, was primarily a commercial transaction determined by questions of dowries[…]land ownership and inheritance[…]Marriage contracts and settlements, familial letters and wills, conduct books and sermons alike recognize in marriage an economic transaction based on the exchange of gifts – women, cash, annuities, rents, land. (Newman 6)

[46] Dross is defined as both the "scum[…]on the surface of molten metal" as well as "something worthless" (OED).

In other words, the Prince's courting of Portia in his pursuit to marry her may be understood as "an economic transaction" in which Portia is operatively a "commercial […] gift" or a winning. Portia herself seems to acknowledge this framing of her fate when she describes the casket game as a "lott'ry" (2.1.15), positioning herself in this "commercial" framework as she compares her "destiny" (2.1.15) to a money prize[47]. To this end, the Prince's economic approach in his descriptions of Portia, particularly in his attempts to determine her value through the value of the metals, is fitting as it draws on economic attributes.

The economic logic that the Prince develops here facilitates a blurring of Portia as a subject and the casket as objects, allowing these to collapse into one another. This collapse is especially realized when the Prince connects the gold of the gold casket to gold money, which is a more direct indicator of economic worth. When the Prince decides that Portia corresponds to the value of gold, he explains his thinking by conceiving of her first as "so rich a gem" (2.7.54) fitted in gold and then as "an angel in a golden bed" (2.7.56) of a coin. In the latter comparison, the Prince compares Portia to the "figure of an angel" (2.7.56) image "[s]tampéd" onto a "gold[…]coin" (2.7.56-57) in England. He expects to find Portia in the gold casket just as the angel is found on a coin, literally conceptualizing her as a part of money. The idea of gold as currency and accordingly as an object is invigorated by the allusion to the coin, creating a link between Portia's objectification, gold, and money. In other words, the value of the metal–here gold–is not simply being projected on her, but now becomes her as she is envisioned as money: an object and a tangible measure of this economic value.

[47] The use of the term "lott'ry" in the early modern moment is similar to contemporary use, referring to a "means of raising money by selling numbered tickets and giving prizes […]to the [ticket] holders[…]at random" (*lottery* OED). This term arguably frames the way in which the Prince of Morocco and Portia's other suitors proceed to assess the caskets. The concept of the "lott'ry" as a game that requires participation to be purchased and promises the chance of receiving a grand prize of money, is familiar to English by the 16th century (Willman 1999). Interestingly the word "lott'ry" itself does not feature again in Portia's reflections on her father's dictates, suggesting that this mode of language is reserved specifically for the Prince of Morocco.

Newman makes a similar argument for Portia's objectification in a later moment of the play where Portia gives her ring to Bassanio as a figurative embodiment of herself (and her estate) after he correctly selects the leaden casket (25). Newman suggests that in this gifting to Bassanio, Portia objectifies herself thus affirming her role as a product for exchange since the gold ring, like currency, is continually passed on in the play (25). Hall similarly recognizes Portia's objectification, expanding on this as part of a bigger argument about the play's reflection on English anxieties around colonization and miscegenation ('Guess' 97-98). She argues that Morocco represents a bigger racial and cultural threat, and so when he objectifies Portia as "a coin [that can] be circulated among strangers" he demonstrates "the peril [of] international competition for wealth (and beauty)" (Hall, 'Guess' 97-98). Therefore, when the Prince fails at the casket test, she suggests that the play works to minimize the threats of this international encroachment and 'impure' bloodlines (Hall, 'Guess' 98).

Building on these arguments, I would suggest that Morocco's role as a 'stranger' here who is interested in Portia's body as an "object" has a much more direct resonance with the 'colonial' threat of enslavement he presents as an Arab figure. Arabs, particularly those from North African regions like Morocco, were actively involved in the buying and selling of bodies for slave trade (Matar, *Turks* 36). As Matar notes:

> In this period, countless merchants and sailors, gunners and soldiers, cabin boys and preachers, lords and commoners, men and women, from England and the rest of the British Isles, were captured by pirates and taken to the slave markets in North Africa and the Atlantic coast of Morocco (71)

With this centrality of Morocco to such slave markets, and the reality of these markets for the "men and women, from England and the rest of the British Isles" who were sold in them, the Prince of Morocco might easily fall into the identity of a slave trader, or at least evoke the fear of Muslim slave trade from North Africa. The Prince's role in this scene might therefore extend beyond generally

signifying 'foreign otherness', being instead more profoundly aligned to roles and practices that objectify the body in an economic setting. Therefore, when the Prince creates overlaps in the value of the casket materials and Portia's body, I am asserting that he begins to vocalize a logic of enslavement, since his economic logic breaks down lines of distinction between Portia as subject and the object caskets. As a result, when the Prince is unsuccessful in the casket test, not only are threats of colonial expansion and miscegenation rebuffed but also possibilities of Arab enslavement.

Amanda Bailey's observations about the casket game tie in with this idea, when she explores the colonial rhetoric that might be used to describe Portia's marital set-up. She notes that an early modern English audience might receive "such directives about a woman's martial choice […as] extreme" since in this historical moment "more liberal attitude[s]" were socially recommended (Bailey 20). Qualifying this, Bailey refers to "household manuals" printed by Dod and Cleaver who compare "paternal control in matrimony to the 'most unnatural and cruel' demands of slave owners" (qtd. in Bailey 20). Here Bailey points out an interesting association between a "slave-owner" and practices of "matrimony" characterized by "paternal control" as Portia's is. In some sense, the kind of polemic against power used in this early modern publication frames the idea that when her father predetermines a woman's marriage, she might be likened to a slave. Therefore, inasmuch as the Prince fits into the role of a slave-trader, Portia might also appear enslaved because of her powerlessness in the casket test.

The Prince's logic of course is disproved when it directs him towards the gold casket. Deciding that Portia cannot be "set in worse than gold" (2.7.55), he incorrectly chooses the gold casket for which he is chastised by the "written scroll" (2.7.64) that he finds in place of Portia's image:

> *All that glitters is not gold;*
> *Often you have heard that told.*
> *Many a man his life hath sold*
> *But my outside to behold:*

Gilded tombs do worms in enfold.
Had you been as wise as bold,
Young in limbs, in judgement old,
Your answer had not been inscrolled. (2.7.65-72; editor's italics)

The scroll's message chides the suitor for having been beguiled by the outward "*glitter*" and splendour of gold. In the description of risk taken to get sight of this golden "outside", the personification of the object (either the casket or the scroll) is extended with the pronoun "my". In this moment, where the object and subject continue to blur, the idea of slavery again emerges in the image of a "man" or "life[…]sold". The scroll's message connects gold to money (in the act of selling) and then links these in turn to a "sold" body. These ideas become embroiled in a criticism against the Prince's decision to opt for gold, beguiled by the appearance of the casket.

Ironically, for choosing the gold casket the Prince falls short in his "judgment" (7.2.71) since he relies on the casket's appearance to determine its true value. Reading this interplay of the inside and outside of the caskets alongside Portia's racial attitudes from earlier in play, this moment effectively reveals some of the underlying hypocrisies present in the play's treatment of race. To expand, the casket game seems to condemn judgments that privilege a "*[g]ilded*" (2.7.69) appearance over considering a truer, internal reality. However, Portia's image is located in the lead casket, which seems to the Prince of Morocco to be the "base[st]" (2.7.50). It is certainly the most unassuming casket, promising "hazard" (2.7.21) rather than "gain" (2.7.37) or "desire" (2.7.37); the casket is physically dull, grey, and therefore darker in colour, yet proves to be the most treasured since it contains Portia within. The Prince is found wanting here because he is not able to see past the "hazard[ous]" exterior of lead and therefore cannot attain the prize of Portia.

Yet, this criticism does not hold in the discourses of otherness that Portia seems to subscribe to. Portia is disdainful towards the Prince because of his darker "complexion" (2.7.79)–a difference that manifests in his appearance. This site of

difference that is external and visible is the one she prefers over the Prince's inner reality, the noble and human blood signifying his sameness. Her assessment is not dissimilar to the one the Prince makes of the caskets, where the surface of the object informs the way he interprets and is disposed to a specific choice. Yet, while the Prince of Morocco is admonished for imposing the value of the outside onto the inside, Portia is able to follow the same line of thought in her views of the Prince without censure. She acknowledges Morocco's inner sameness, the nobility of his invisible blood, but persists in measuring him by the skin-colour on his surface suggesting that for Morocco, the latter outweighs the former.

Loomba recognizes this irony observing how "only an insider [like Bassanio] can win Portia, because only an insider can recognize the difference between inner and outer selves, appearance and reality" while "Portia […] refuses to make this distinction in the case of Morocco" because she is "[un]able to overlook his blackness" (*Shakespeare* 136). It is this very "rejection of difference in the golden world of Belmont" which helps to "offset" the anxieties presented by Antonio's (and therefore a fair-Christian-European's) "mercantile involvement with foreign Others" (Hall, 'Guess' 96). It is also this rejection of difference that prevents Portia's body from being "rendered [as] one more commodity in the Mediterranean traffic" of slaves. Withholding Portia from the "perils" of the Arab presents a small victory to Venetian and accordingly English economic and political authority (Burton, *Traffic* 207)[48].

Thus, the Prince's Arab ambiguity sheds light on some of the ethical and economic inconsistencies that develop in the play, the most apparent emerging in the reprimand he receives for having the same mentality about the outward

[48] As Howard has suggested, Shakespeare's repurposing of foreign geographies often lends itself to experimental narratives of time and space (310). The Venetian figure, being both European and Christian, bears close resemblance to the Englishman, especially in light of the commercial hub that Venice represents for Europe, and the desires that the English have for becoming a similar economic authority. Thus, Venetian figures are simultaneously indicative of the English, while also removed enough from them to prevent the full effect of Venetian hypocrisy to resonate with the English.

body as Portia does, for which she is not called to task. Still more complex are the implications of the Prince articulating value of the outward form using an economic vocabulary that allows the play to explore the dynamics of attributing value to the body in the context of 'enslavement'. As Guasco has noted:

> Europeans were familiar with the commodity value of [...] peoples from their dealings with North Africans who had facilitated the trade in sub-Saharan Africans into the Mediterranean and southern European worlds for several centuries before Europeans began [...] (66)

This 'learning' continues to occur on English stage, as the North African, Arab Prince explores the notion of the "commodity value" of bodies. The Prince's logic extends the racializing link between value and the *outward* features of the body that Portia develops earlier in the play, using it in a way that is distinctly marked by economic assessments of the body. As a result, the commodification and evaluation of the body falls into line with difference-making methods that evoke connections between race and enslavement.

Duplicities in Difference

The Prince's argument that I presented in the first part of this chapter is not dissimilar to the one conveyed famously by Shylock in his speech for a universal humanity:

> Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? Fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his

> humility? Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? Why, revenge! The villainy you teach me, I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction. (3.1.53-66)

In the same way that the Prince refers to blood in what seems like an evocation of sameness, Shylock's speech, at first glance, can appear to be an anti-racist polemic that draws on aspects of the body common to all people. He makes a claim to human commonness by drawing on biological aspects that are outwardly visible and indistinguishable across races or religions: "eyes […] hands, organs, dimensions, affections", the need to eat, the capacity for physical pain, physical sensations of temperature, containment of blood and the facticity of death. However, he adds to the list of his similarities (to Christians), "[a]nd if you wrong us, shall we not revenge?" creating a link between unquestionable human faculties of embodiment and the act of "revenge", of inflicting harm on another. At this moment, Shylock makes a move from the undeniable features of a human being to less visible aspects of morality, which are not outwardly apparent on the body in the same way as "eyes" and "hands" are or the manifestations of "hurt" and "diseases".

Just as the Prince of Morocco's sameness is disrupted when he turns inward–to the less visible and more complex value of blood–Shylock troubles his polemic for sameness when he makes this move, promising to adopt the "villainy" (3.1.65) he learns from the Venetians. While offering "wrong" and "revenge" as critiques of Christian behaviour, he uses these aspects to continually evoke similarity, stating: "If we are like you in the rest/we will resemble you in that" (3.1.61-62). Then, like the Prince of Morocco who claims his blood is not just red but is also "reddest", Shylock promises to "better the [Christian] instruction" to make it more severe (3.1.66). The Jew asserts difference by claiming that his "villainy" will be "better" than the Christian(s), which in turn frames him as more villainous. Thus, the sameness he just previously evoked in referring to "the rest" of the body is problematized, and his argument for sameness is transformed into

an argument for difference as Shylock suggests that he will in fact prove himself more villainous than the Christians.

Shylock reproduces this argument in Act four when he is met with resistance in trying to claim his bond of Antonio's flesh. Motivated by a desire for revenge, his desire for Antonio's flesh proves to be greater than the bond; just as Shylock asserts to have learnt revenge from the Christians, he implies the he too picks up his treatment of flesh from them. Shylock announces to the court:

> What judgment shall I dread, doing no wrong?
> You have among you many a purchased slave,
> Which, like your asses and your dogs and mules,
> You use in abject and in slavish parts,
> Because you bought them: shall I say to you,
> Let them be free, marry them to your heirs?
> Why sweat they under burthens? let their beds
> Be made as soft as yours and let their palates
> Be season'd with such viands? You will answer
> 'The slaves are ours:' so do I answer you:
> The pound of flesh, which I demand of him,
> Is dearly bought; 'tis mine and I will have it.
> If you deny me, fie upon your law! (4.1. 89-100)

Shylock's speech creates a direct connection between his "wrong" of "bought" flesh, the flesh he "demand[s] of" Antonio, and the evils of a "purchased slave". He argues that the Venetians would not extend luxuries or even social courtesies to the slaves they have "dearly bought" as they do to their contemporaries like Antonio; they use the "pound[s] of flesh" they have purchased in "slavish parts" without concern for their lives or their capacity for human gentleness. Shylock argues that if this kind of behaviour is acceptable, then he too is entitled to the "bond" in the form of flesh (the human) that he is owed: if they "will answer" with ownership of "slaves", he too "answer[s]" with the ownership of flesh "bought".

In this, Shylock creates a noteworthy connection between the money-lending bondage he is involved in and the human bondage of slavery. This framing is interesting to consider in light of the "juridical context" of the play "in which flesh and money were regarded as comparable forms of property" (Bailey 2). However, exploring Shylock's use of rhetoric in this scene, where his claims for flesh lend to both "a monetary matter" and "a moral one", Bailey argues that "Shylock's analogy of slave and debtor is merely sensational" given that "the institution of slavery in England was more an evocative concept" than a commonplace reality (11-12). She suggests instead that by using rhetorical comparison, "Shylock asserts his authority as a creditor, one who owns what he loans [...] preventing his witnesses from perceiving *him* as a slave [in a more conceptual sense], as Antonio has done" (Bailey 13). In other words, slavery functions as another means of achieving Shylock's resolve, to prove his sameness or, as Bailey suggests, to negate his difference.

Like revenge, slavery is a practice that Shylock claims to learn from the Christians and therefore it seems appropriate that revenge and slavery would go hand in hand here as Shylock's uses these practices to disprove his difference. However, despite the retribution Shylock thinks he achieves by claiming Antonio's flesh in this way, his use of this image of slavery rebounds on his arguments for sameness. His motivations aside, by continuously rejecting money, first "six [and later nine] thousand ducats" (4.1.84,224), as a payment for Antonio's flesh, Shylock indirectly frames the fair, European body as unquestionably desirable and correspondingly invaluable, since the value of the body as Morocco earlier shows is related to outward appearance[49]. In other words, I propose that the doubling and trebling of the bond value might be understood as offers of payment made by Portia and Bassanio to reclaim Antonio, since Shylock might have "dearly bought" (4.1.100) Antonio for the value of the bond and these offers exceed that value. When Shylock stubbornly rejects these offers of payment, he intimates that Antonio's body resists

[49] By invaluable I mean both critically important, but more literally unable to take-up and hold an economic value.

quantifiable, economic value; it is exceedingly valuable. This logic simply removes Antonio from the discourse of such slavery, doing more work to display Shylock's villainy than to undermine Antonio's worth.

Additionally, while Shylock's use of blood as an appeal for humanity and for negating views of his 'inferior' difference are ignored, Antonio's blood creates an argument for his humanity and his 'superior' difference in a way that disrupts Shylock's slave logic. Bassanio states that he will give "flesh, blood, bones and all" (4.1.112) before he will allow Antonio to "lose […] one drop of blood" for him (4.1.113). Bassanio, like Shylock and Morocco before him, makes an inward turn to the notion of blood, specifically Christian blood, drawing on an idea of fundamental humanness while simultaneously bringing to attention the *Christian* difference. Bassanio asserts that "one drop of [Antonio's Christian] blood" (4.1.113) is more important to Bassanio than the latter's entire body. Therefore, unlike with the Arab and Jewish others, the value of blood *is* recognised here, causing Shylock's argument for enslavement to fall apart. The value of Antonio's body is relocated from the outward flesh to the less visible, inward aspect of blood.

This importance given to Antonio's inward body points to the bond's loophole which Portia, disguised as a lawyer's clerk, reveals to Shylock. The Jew is allowed to claim his bond as a "pound of flesh" (4.1.304) but if in the process he spills any "Christian blood," (4.1.307) his wealth and life will be taken away by the "state of Venice" (4.1.309). Antonio's blood is therefore more valuable than his own flesh, inverting the dynamics that have been used thus far in the play that give preference to the outside of the body over the inside, elevating the importance of Christian blood so it appears more valuable than all the "lands and goods" (4.1.307), blood and flesh of the Jewish other. To this end, the inward/outward dialectic in the play seems to resolve itself by attributing superiority to white, fair, Christian, European bodies.

Antonio's resistance to economic value, and to the logic of valuing flesh, is similar to Portia's, unveiling the hypocrisies of social structures in the play. When

Morocco presents his blood as a site for sameness, Portia refers to his flesh as a site for difference. Even as the Prince then follows Portia's process of using appearance as a guide for judgment, he is condemned. Shylock too attempts to use blood for sameness but is challenged by Salerio and as these ideas of blood and flesh re-emerge in the court scene, blood again–as an invisible aspect, internal to the body–saves Antonio because it can signify Christian difference and 'superiority'. Thus when it is engaged by the other as a site for sameness, as Morocco and Shylock both do, it becomes negligible to the Venetians. In fact, even when operating within the systems of early modern difference, as Morocco seemingly attempts to do by evoking his nobility, its value is still not recognized. Yet, when Shylock threatens Antonio's flesh, blood becomes useful again as it serves to create difference. To this end, the play conclusively treats Christian blood and fair skin distinctively from the skin and blood of the other.

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As a physical aspect, blood is less accessible, less visible, and therefore less useful for creating distinction than flesh, which can be marked by differences in colour. However, when both blood and flesh fall short in ascribing difference, economic value is able to make powerful suggestions about this difference. The use of such value in the play is arguably derived from the Arab Prince of Morocco's wielding of economic discourse, which I argue resonates with the Arab role of slave-trader. This discourse of value enables fair, Christian bodies to appear invaluable in a way that seems impossible for the bodies of religious and racial others. Specifically, these others are the Arab and the Jew who are brought together here in complex overlaps of difference that locate dark and non-Christian others in the same framework of alterity against the fair, Christian, European.

Challenges to these double standards of Christian behaviour on stage, made by the Prince of Morocco and Shylock, are met with an overall response that such inconsistencies can arise simply because fair Christians are 'worth' more. Accordingly, when fair, Christian, bodies in the play are delineated as

commodities, this injustice is framed as criminal; the Prince loses his right to marriage when he 'commodifies' Portia while Shylock is publicly shamed and forced to relinquish his Jewish identity after he repeatedly claims Antonio's flesh as his rightfully owned 'bond'. While the play, therefore offers a critique for the injustices of enslavement, it simultaneously reconfigures the economic logic of enslavement as a way of inscribing racial and racist difference. Thus, when the Arab Prince of Morocco is racialised as a 'slave' the effects are two-fold: the Arab is inevitably othered through a trope of enslavement, and the otherness of this dark, othered figure can and does feed into the anti-black racism that is inextricable to enslavement projects in this period and those to come.

Conclusion

The globalising turns in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries facilitated diverse economic, political, and cultural interactions between Englishmen and Arabs, which the early modern English stage examines in a variety of ways. These reflections on such interactions convey the ambiguity of Arab figures by highlighting the instability of racial identity, as I demonstrate via my analysis of the Scythian 'low-born' Tamburlaine; the Turkish Prince Selimus; the white, English pirate Ward and the dark, noble, Prince of Morocco. While these figures are characteristically distinct and variable in their features of class, appearance, national, and even religious identity, they share a common otherness that racializes them in relation to, but also beyond the boundaries of, Islam.

By exploring how these plays racialize the Arab, I also illustrate the stickiness of the Arab as a figure that proves to changeably attach and detach to different types and values of otherness according to this figure's role in a given context. On the early modern stage, these contexts are defined by practices and principles of power and enslavement: two hallmarks of colonialism. My overarching argument therefore contends that the English stage engages with Arab otherness to explore the semantics of such political power and economies of slavery while at the same time connecting the evil of these colonial systems to an other via the figure of the Arab, thereby displacing responsibility for colonial injustices that the English are beginning to conduct off the stage. By tangibly connecting immorality to otherness, the English absolve themselves of the injustices of colonial crimes, like land-grabbing and slave trafficking, by marking illicit aspects of these systems as inherently other. Monstrous power, sinful blackness, and false objectification account for such colonial crimes but these explanations are deeply bound to the notion of Arab otherness, not Englishness. To this effect, when the English later take-up such practices, they are able to do so from what seems like a less perverted standpoint, which is far-removed from this other.

The use of the racial Arab to highlight these 'sinister differences' is significant since the Arab, unlike the Islamic other, is able to attach to many differences and specifically more concrete versions of difference that extend the operative meaning of otherness within this emerging colonial framework. These extensions of otherness are evidenced by the religiously and geographically indeterminate but ominously powerful Tamburlaine, whose compounded identity configures him as monstrous; by John Ward, whose lust and greed driven conversions to Islam turn him black; and by the Prince of Morocco, whose physical darkness aligns to his political darkness which resonates with Moroccan, Muslim, Arab enslavers, producing a new mode of difference-making that inevitably racializes this Arab as a slave.

What is not always obvious in each of the plays I have explored is the particular Islamic identity of the figures. However, by the definition of the Arab I have sustained throughout this paper, the Arab is a figure that is formally or informally, directly or indirectly related to Islam. Therefore when the instabilities of the Arab unveil what seems like early modern versions of cultural hybridity, physical and non-physical forms of blackness, and notions of class and enslavement, each of these aspects are in turn conjoined in some way to notions of Islam, as race and religion collapse into one another in the early modern representations of this other. The complexities of this overlap are perhaps best summarised by Shakespeare's Othello whose Moorish difference, like the Prince of Morocco, is typically defined by a noble blackness. As Ian Smith has noted, Othello the Moor is additionally racialised by a "mix of claims" against his identity that include "monstrous blackness and barbaric sexual conquest" (109). These features are not unlike the monstrous otherness of Selimus and Tamburlaine, or the erotic captivity that evokes Islamic alterity in Daborne's *A Christian Turned Turk*. However, this complexity of otherness is arguably most profound in the final moments of *Othello*, when before the Moorish general kills himself, he asks to be spoken of as he is (5.2.355 and Smith 109).

Proceeding to describe who in fact he is, Othello asks to be compared to the "base Indian" (5.2.358), and then to the "circumcised dog" (5.2.368), that is the

"turban'd Turk" (5.2.366), whose killing he recreates when he "thus[ly]" (5.2.369) kills himself. Here Othello attaches himself to the "base Indian" tethering him to ideas of race and geography in the so-called 'New World'. At the same time, he aligns himself to the Turk in a debatably religious reference that echoes his own Moorishness. However, this religious reference shifts into a moral one, when Othello implicitly seeks redemption by removing himself "thus", just as he killed the humane, Turk "dog" that threatened the internal Venetian community (Smith 109). In these last moments on stage, Othello produces a sticky vision of his racial and religious identity. Thus, to speak of him as he is, is to note that: he is a Moor, he is physically black, he is morally Turk, he is religiously aligned to Islam via the Turk, he is therefore Arab, he is geographically indeterminate (African, Venetian, Turk and Indian), and he is, in all these variations of difference, most significantly other.

These kinds of correspondences and confusions between race, religion and immorality of the racial Arab presented in Othello, continue to remain relevant in twenty-first century discourses of otherness. Vanessa Corredera demonstrates this in a paper that uses the anachronisms of race, enabled by conceptions of racial stickiness, to explore how the popular podcast *Serial* uses Othello rhetorically to exemplify the "tragic [and Islamic] Other[ness]" of Adnan Syed "a Pakistani American, Muslim teenager" whose murder trial appears in the podcast (36).This comparison, Corredera argues, is a problem because "Othello is not, in fact, Muslim", which illustrates how the podcast "confuses any distinction between religion and race" –a confusion that seems to be symptomatic of a larger set of conflations that exist in contemporary society (37-38). However, part of what Corredera's argument does not acutely recognise is the fact that this confusion arises precisely *because* Othello epitomises this overlapping and confusion of religion, race and in turn morality since he is racialised as an Arab.

Moreover, although on some level Syed's dark skin resonates with Othello's Moorish identity, he is, I would argue, more like John Ward, whose fair, English identity is overwritten when he is blackened by his erotic conversion and adorns the "habit of a free-born Turk" (Daborne 8. 18). The American teenager, like the

Englishman, is blackened by his Muslim identity when he is convicted with the murder of his girlfriend, committing a "black deed" against the flesh (Daborne 8.28). The image of the "turban'd Turk" that characterises Ward's difference reappears very literally in the "turbaned, bearded presence of" Adnan's "cultural community" (41). The turban interestingly seems to have persisted as a visual signifier of Arab identity even into the twenty-first century, where it also continues to engender racist narratives.

Jasbir Puar has discussed the problematic effects of this signifier in anxieties around Arabs and terrorism that produced "post-9/11 hate crimes", where confusions between "Sikh Turbans" and "Muslim Turbans" resulted in a series of attacks on members of the Sikh community because of Western inabilities to discern one cultural group from another (167). Part of the difficulty in recognising these differences boils down to the fact that the stickiness of discourse around the Arab, as a conglomerate of interrelated socio-cultural signifiers since the early modern period, allows this figure to be confused and combined with various modes of difference. I believe therefore that it is this stickiness that accounts for the persistence of a convoluted, racial Arab in current postmodern, post-colonial racial and racist practices, indicating just one of the ways that the early modern English stage fashioned ideological legacies that shape our cultural politics in the present.

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