9 "Her Father Loved Me, Oft Invited Me"

Staging Shakespeare's Hidden Hospitality in *The Travels of the Three English Brothers*

Sheiba Kian Kaufman

We are undoubtedly familiar with Manichean paradigms of global history that emphasize oppositional identities, prejudice, enmity, and strife between religions, nations, and cultures.[1] However, simultaneous with this tumultuous and often pessimistic story of our common past are lesser known narratives, both historical and fictional, that are imagined as collaborative and cooperative in varying degrees. In early modern studies, scholars have addressed these diverse modes of social interactions by examining depictions of both xenophobia and cosmopolitanism in the period.[2] Leah S. Marcus, for instance, raises the question of early modern attitudes toward religious pluralism and the impossibility of Protestant cosmopolitan coexistence by identifying a Shakespearean thrust toward "insularity": "English provincialism was itself a construction, in no small part a reaction to the shock of separation from Rome and to the establishment of independent networks of connection with other peoples, especially in the New World, the Near East, and Asia."[3] For Marcus, Shakespeare's plays "acknowledge cosmopolitanism and religious diversity but reject them in favor of an achieved communal harmony."[4] In her response to Marcus, Julia Reinhard Lupton contends that Shakespeare uses Venice in both *The Merchant of Venice* (1598) and *Othello* (1603) as an "experimental setting, a place to test the possibilities of pluralism *avant la lettre*."[5] Identifying Shakespeare's provincialism *or* his cosmopolitanism remains elusive because an integral component of peaceful and just coexistence relies upon exercising hospitality toward the stranger: to be a *cosmopolite*, a world citizen, one must feel at home in unfamiliar domiciles. This universal feeling of solidarity is conditioned through successful acts of embracing a guest, politically and domestically. Yet, such hospitality is often thwarted or hidden in Shakespeare's Venetian plays.

In both *Merchant* and *Othello*, potential hospitable encounters take place off-stage or beyond the bounds of the play, leaving only the consequences of the exchange as markers for evaluating the success or failure of hospitality in the play. Shylock begrudgingly attends dinner with his Christian neighbors with little description of the event. The dinner is, nevertheless, a catalyst

for Jessica's eventual conversion as it gives her the opportunity to flee her home. When Othello defends his amicable relationship with Desdemona and Brabantio before the Duke, he describes a Brabantio we never encounter—the welcoming, hospitable European who opened his door to a stranger, and not the startled, hostile father waking to the infectious alarms of Iago's dehumanizing rhetoric. Following the Duke's invitation to speak in the opening scene before the senate—"Say it, Othello"—Othello begins with a reference to this earlier invitation: "Her father loved me, oft invited me, / Still questioned me the story of my life/From year to year."[6] Ironically, like the irreverent image of the "beast with two backs" (1.1.116), such a vision of edifying intercultural hospitality is too unseemly to stage or of little dramaturgical interest; nevertheless, the narration of a hospitable golden age not only competes with Iago's dramatized hostility but also signals toward a cultural and literary reserve of cosmopolitan coexistence and interfaith *rapprochement* that is pivotal for the new worlds Shakespeare engenders.

Moments of hidden hospitality in *Othello* and *Merchant* are primers in deciphering the extent of Shakespeare's global visions and the interdependence of such vistas within his society, offering through such narrations a means to measure the range of cosmopolitan impulses in the period. A key text that reveals Shakespearean potentialities of interreligious and intercultural exchange is the 1607 topical travel play *The Travels of the Three English Brothers* by John Day, George Wilkins, and William Rowley (henceforth *Travels*). In staging a fictional rendition of the international adventures of the historic Sherley brothers and their attempts to forge an Anglo-Persian alliance with Shah Abbas I of Persia, *Travels* shares Shakespeare's concern with the limited nature of English hospitality in a time of burgeoning global consciousness. Scholars have written on *Travels*' "allusive mode" as it calls upon various dramas of the period, including Christopher Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* and *The Jew of Malta*.[7] I would add, however, that a coherent thread underlying the play's intertexuality is the possibility of offering or rescinding hospitality toward strangers found particularly in Shakespeare's two Venetian plays. In analyzing the dynamics of hospitality in early modern drama, I draw upon philosopher Richard Kearney's discussion of what he calls "the anatheist wager"—the foundational moment in Abrahamic religions when the divine stranger manifests as an unheralded guest and the host is faced with a choice to respond with hospitality or hostility—and Bonnie Honig's analysis of foreign-founder scripts alongside early modern and contemporary theories of cosmopolitanism.[8] Through this double framework, I examine the dramatic portrayal of an improbably hospitable Persia in *Travels* in dialogue with the seemingly hostile Venetian terrain found in *Merchant* and *Othello*. From this perspective, Persia, an Islamic country with a pre-Islamic, biblical, and classical heritage, unexpectedly parallels Venice, a contemporary city known in the period for its pluralism. By reading Shakespeare's narrations of *hidden* hospitality through corresponding scenes of *manifest* hospitality between English Christians and Persian Muslims in *Travels,* a more nuanced vision of early modern religious pluralism emerges.

Interreligious Hospitality

From its ancient theological foundations to its modern political configurations, hospitality lies at the heart of human negotiations over rights and citizenship, and thereby offers a dynamic and understudied dimension to "globally oriented scholarship" of the early modern period.[9] Furthermore, considering the dramatic function of hospitality in light of early modern England's inchoate cosmopolitanism reveals the utility of drama as a framework for burgeoning intercultural and, in particular, interreligious relationships. Theories and practices of intercultural and interreligious hospitality are particularly useful in articulating early modern religious exchanges that call upon, further, challenge, and re-envision Pauline universalism and its claim that "[t]here is neither Jew nor Grecian, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28)[10] in a post-Christian, Islamic temporality—that is, a temporality following the advent and influence of Islam on European society and consciousness. The demanding presence of not only Christian sects but also non-Christian traditions, particularly Islam via the Ottomans, tests Paul's injunctions and its "struggling universalism" and presents the historic drama of how to act harmoniously in the midst of such diversity, if such a relationship is even possible.[11]

Kearney's timely discussion of the imperative for interreligious hospitality in *Anatheism: Returning to God After God* draws on Émile Benveniste's seminal study of the conflated Indo-European etymology of the word *hospitality* (*hostis* and *hospes*), and provides early modern scholars writing after the religious turn with a discourse to identify early modern religious exchanges that stage the perennial choice facing the host: to respond with hospitality or hostility to the uninvited guest, and to understand the conditions and consequences of that response, historically and ethically.[12] These foundational moments of *anagnorisis,* of recognizing and accepting the unknown guest, are "primal dramas of response that serve as portals to faith"; the core scene is found in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam in the narratives of Abraham and the desert visit of the three strangers, Mary and the Annunciation, and Muhammad and the visit of the angel Gabriel.[13] As Kearney explains, the primary contribution anatheism makes in the wake of the religious turn in theory is essentially hermeneutic and potentially cooperative in its aims and ambitions beyond scholarly discourse. Kearney responds to a range of philosophers and theorists, including Jacques Derrida and his theory of hospitality with its demands of an "unconditional welcome," one that is only perfect and true if it is "absolute" and above the juridical.[14] Kearney contends that "unconditional hospitality is divine, not human" and therefore a "surplus" rather than an unattainable and thereby disempowering goal.[15]

Hospitality as *principle* and *choice* in fiction and in life is, therefore, a state of generosity, curiosity, and humility, and an act that enables the possibility for potential cooperation among diverse cultures. Its dynamism is better captured in hospit*ability* because it is the *hospitable* environment and

its accompanying gestures that comfort, nurture, and transform a stranger into a friend. The most successful attempts at hospitality, both secularly and religiously motivated, aim to make the guest feel as if the alien material surroundings he or she temporarily resides in are in fact akin to one's own home—"the stranger that dwelleth with you, shall be as one of yourselves, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Leviticus 19:34).

Early modern and contemporary theorists of cosmopolitanism often account for the necessity of hospitality in the endeavor to make humans feel as if they are denizens of an ever-expanding homeland—*cosmopolites*. Even prior to Immanuel Kant's *Perpetual Peace* (1795) and its articulation of hospitality as "the *right* of the stranger not to be treated in a hostile manner," European peace proposals such as Émeric Crucé's *The New Cyneas* (1623), written during the heyday of religious conflict in seventeenth-century Europe, account for a common hospitable core: "we seek a peace, which is not patched up, not for three days, but which is voluntary, equitable, and permanent: a peace which gives to each one what belongs to him, privilege to the citizen, hospitality to the foreigner, and to all indifferently the liberty of travel and trading."[16] Yet, Crucé, a little-known French monk, repeatedly adds another dimension to this just form of hospitality, namely, an ethical vision of a united humanity:

> for how is it possible … to bring in accord peoples who are so different in wishes and affections, as the Turk and the Persian, the Frenchman and the Spaniard, the Chinese and the Tatar, the Christian and the Jew or the Mohammetan? I say that such hostilities are only political, and cannot take away the connection that is and must be between men. The distance of places, the separation of domiciles does not lessen the relationship of blood. It cannot either take away the similarity of natures, true base of amity and human society.[17]

Crucé's proposal to seventeenth-century potentates is an example of a vision of universal fraternity that combines both the juridical–political views of Kantian hospitality and those ethical concerns Derrida, Kearney, and others later explore. Radically, in outlining his international plan for arbitration, Crucé includes all nations in a general assembly to be housed in Venice, and places the Ottoman Emperor second to the Pope in rank. To borrow Seyla Benhabib's terms, in Crucé we see a "mediation between the ethical and the moral, the moral and the political."[18] Thus, historicizing early modern conceptions of cosmopolitanism and its hospitable foundation opens a window to understanding the various forms of hospitality depicted in the drama of the time. Neither completely about the law nor solely faith based, this multifaceted iteration of hospitality bridges boundaries and creates novel arrangements between seemingly incompatible groups, in Europe and beyond. Like the modern-day use of mediation as a tool of negotiation and

reconciliation, understanding early modern hospitality as *mediated* accounts for its complex representation as both principle and right.

Such mediated forms of hospitality are visible in the cultural reservoir the *Travels*' playwrights invoke when they depict Persia as both antiquated and contemporary. Through this self-consciously hybrid portrayal that merges pre-Islamic and Islamic images and references, we witness a rhetorical return to seminal moments of interreligious hospitality toward the stranger found predominantly in the biblical books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther. In these narratives, hospitality accommodates religious and political alliances between the Persian Empire and the Jews in exile. Consider the story of Esther. The Persian King Ahasuerus (Xerxes) embraces his new wife with great joy and regal "grace and favor" (2:17) without questioning her parentage. However, despite Xerxes' open arms and penchant for his favorite Esther, unbeknownst to him, the Jewish queen faces a formidable enemy to herself and her kindred. Like a Jewish Scheherazade, using her rhetorical gifts to delay her pending execution at the hands of a cruel and jaded ruler, Esther speaks on behalf of the Jewish people and protects them from impending destruction. She asks for a "petition" (5:7) to covertly set up Haman, the counselor promulgating the Jewish genocide, and reveal his perfidy at a banquet. Thus, "Esther's banquet" becomes the very moment when the forces of hostility and corruption in the state are uprooted. More important, her political actions are enabled by the Persian king, thus revealing her sense of ownership and empowerment in this interreligious match.

In this vein, staging Persia initiates a wager for the audience—a wager to remember and accept interreligious interactions that make up a shared biblical consciousness. If "hospitality is a virtue of *place*" as Brian Treanour describes,[19] then Persia reigns as a place where hospitable acts occur on stage; it is both particular and universal, defined nominally by an ancient locale and past temporality yet relatively unhindered by cultural markers that render its portrayal "exotic" or "orientalist."[20] The question animating my comparison of Shakespeare's Venetian plays and *Travels* is what distinguishes hospitality in the latter. What hospitable acts toward strangers are openly explored in this textual reception, sprouting from an earlier Shakespearean germination of the problems of plurality?

"We Give Thee Liberty of Conscience": Facilitating Interreligious Dialogue

Travels romanticizes the historic Sherley brothers' travels abroad and idealizes their relationship with the Safavid monarch, Shah Abbas I, referred to as the Sophy in the play.[21] The episodic plot dramatizes the contemporary sojourns of Robert, Anthony, and Thomas Sherley in Persia, Venice, and Constantinople, respectively. When Anthony and Robert arrive in Persia, they are warmly greeted by the Sophy, entertained with mock battles that spur religious debate between the Persians and the English, and accepted

as ambassador and general by the Sophy in a campaign against the Ottoman Empire. While Anthony the ambassador travels with a dissembling and prejudiced Persian court attendant who has him arrested in a clandestine plot drawing heavily upon *Merchant*, Robert remains in Persia where his loyalty to the Sophy is tested as he challenges Persian martial traditions to free Thomas from the Great Turk who tortures him on stage. Ultimately, Thomas is freed, Anthony is vindicated, Robert marries the Sophy's Niece, a "pagan," and the play concludes with a hyperbolic exchange of conviviality in a utopian Persian court cast as an ideal realm for experimenting with religious pluralism.

My attempt to define the features of Persian hospitality in *Travels* rests on identifying complementary attributes characterizing the relationship between Persian hosts and English guests: *liberty of conscience* and successful *political, familial, and religious embraces* in the commonwealth. Through this categorization, it becomes clear that *Travels* represents Persian hospitality as neither unconditional nor conditional but rather as a relationship that mediates juridical and ethical demands between both the host and the guest. In terms of hospitality and hostility, we witness three models: the classic host–guest relationship with its challenges and triumphs through Robert; a mockery of hospitality through Anthony's manipulation by the Persian Cushan Halibeck and Zariph the Jew; and the perils of captivity through Thomas at the court of the Great Turk. The only case of successful interreligious hospitality that takes place in the play occurs in Persia. Here we see Shakespeare's Sophy, mentioned twice in passing in *Twelfth Night*, take center stage in *Travels* in an alliance with representatives of Christendom against the Great Turk, who appears as a stereotyped, hostile enemy to both Persians and Christians in the play.[22]

Undeniably and unfortunately, the play's negative portrayal of the Ottomans differentiates the Persian Empire from the Ottoman Empire—while hospitality may reign as the dominant paradigm on theatrical Persian soil, the play is not exceptional in extending its association of interreligious and intercultural hospitality beyond set parameters.[23] The same can be said of the negative portrayal of Zariph the Jew, who betrays Anthony and serves as a metatheatrical avatar of Shakespeare's Shylock. The play manipulates the real adventures of the brothers to recreate what Lawrence Publicover identifies as a "playhouse-friendly anti-Turkish narrative" as well as the stage Jew.[24] There are several reasons why Persia, at this point in English dramatic history, escapes such early modern prejudices, one being that the temporal distance afforded by a combination of biblical and classical narratives sustain its reputation as ancient and distinct from other Muslim nations. In other words, while it is easy and familiar to stage the Turk and the Jew, since there is no parallel "Persia play" akin to the "Turk play," as Jane Grogan notes, the Persian is not an easily depicted type in either medieval or early modern traditions.[25]

Travels uses Anthony to magnify the social challenges of hosting Shylock in *Merchant*. As a reincarnation resurrecting the interreligious tensions within Shakespeare's play, Anthony engages in interreligious dialogue at the court. This step toward interreligious exchange is presented in philosophical digressions on similarities between the Persians and the English following the opening courtly entertainment of mock battles. The congenial tone of the exchange between Anthony and the Sophy contrasts with the bitter banter of Shylock and Antonio's initial dialogue in the opening scenes of *Merchant*. Antonio's discussion with Shylock over the terms of the bond is riddled with anger, envy, and intolerance on both sides, prompting Antonio to deride Shylock's biblical hermeneutics ("The devil can cite script for his purpose") and Shylock to confront Antonio's bigotry ("You call me misbeliever, cutthroat dog, / And spit upon my Jewish gaberdine").[26] Shylock ultimately extends his accusations beyond Antonio to Christians as a single, stereotypical group: "O father Abram, what these Christians are, / Whose own hard dealings teaches them suspect / The thoughts of others!" (1.3.159–161).

Unlike the ongoing struggle to converse across religious lines in *Merchant,* civil interreligious dialogue is promoted in *Travels*. After the entertainment of "Persian wars" and "wars as Christians use," mock battles staging beheading in the Persian practice but not in the Christian version, the Sophy, in exaggerated awe of the Christian custom and the introduction of cannons into the Persian army (an historically inaccurate inclusion to bolster the Sherleys' status as military innovators), takes on the wager to accept the brothers in his court as military commanders in his wars against the Ottomans:[27]

> Christian or howsoever, courteous thou seemest;
> We bid thee welcome in unused phrase.
> No gentle stranger greets our continent
> But our arms fold him in a soft embrace.
>
> (1.36–37)

As part of this respectful rhetoric, the play's opening scenes are saturated with repetitions of "welcome" and "stranger" overflowing from the Sophy toward Robert and Anthony, which he further extends to all theatrically transported Christians in the audience: "For thy sake do I love all Christians; / We give thee liberty of conscience" (1.190–191). The Sophy's hospitality stems from his ability to invite the stranger, the uninvited Sherleys, into his court without reservation and with respect to their faith. The play's emphasis on embrace (repeated at the end of the play) presents Persianized hospitality toward English Christians as dynamic—as an active hospitability rather than a static and detached form of toleration. From the Latin verb *tolerare*, to bear and endure, toleration is not the guiding ethos in the Sophy's court; instead, he enables an *embrace*, which in early modern usage is defined not only literally as the physical act of friendship but also figuratively through

a host of accepting actions: worship of a deity, welcoming of friends and services, or joyfully adopting a course of action, doctrine, individual, and more.[28] The Sophy's offer of "liberty of conscience" presents Persian hospitality and its pact between host and guest as a reverential act that considers the interiority of the guest equally with his physical comfort and needs, thereby joining the materiality of the embrace with the immateriality of the conscience.

The Sophy's liberality is a primary hospitable condition that enables ongoing religious dialogue rather than disagreement and antipathy in the play. When the Sophy asks the central question, "And what's the difference 'twixt us and you?" (1.162), Anthony replies,

> None but the greatest, mighty Persian.
> All that makes up this earthly edifice
> By which we are called men is all alike.
> Each may be the other's anatomy;
> Our nerves, our arteries, our pipes of life,
> The motives of our senses all do move
> As of one axletree, our shapes alike …
> We live and die, suffer calamities,
> Are underlings to sickness, fire, famine, sword.
> We are all punished by the same hand, and rod,
> Our sins are all alike; why not our God?
>
> (1.163–180)

Anthony's description resonates with the universalistic aspects of Shylock's well-known speech in act 3, scene 1 of *Merchant*: "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?" (3.1.49–53). Both monologues contrast interior and exterior states of faith with physical analogies, yet in contrast to Shylock's pained confrontation with the Christian community in the play, Anthony's speech begins with an emphasis on the "greatest" distinction but then undermines that apparent discrepancy by appealing to the similarity of "each … other's anatomy." He laments the primary inner value that prompts a distinction in outward practice ("But that's not all: our inward offices/Are most at jar—would they were not, great prince!" [1.174–175]) and concludes with a provocative inquiry to prompt the Sophy's conversion ("why not our God") that is interrupted when a messenger arrives. Anthony's unanswered question hovers over the play as a possibility in Persia, a potential for Christian conversion that never comes to complete fruition. In *Travels*, the playwrights extrapolate Shakespeare's similarity motif to promote a genuine sense of familiarity that renders English and Persians more unified than distinct. Not only is Persia the setting for interreligious

discourse and debate, but the entire play is invested in what Grogan identifies as the "vocabulary of likeness" that "produces intriguing moments that break down both boundaries of class and race, if discommodiously."[29] This sameness or similitude extends to the matter of religion and it is through successful Anglo-Persian hospitality that fictionalized interreligious dialogue can find a nonthreatening arena.

"A League 'Twixt Us and Christendom": Political Embraces

The idea of religious commensurability between Persians and English Christians, with an emphasis across interconfessional lines to accommodate the historical Sherleys' Catholicism, occupies much of the opening scenes and remains a prominent theme throughout the play. Although the historical Sherleys' numerous international exploits are part of their individual ambitions and schemes for fame and recognition, as biographers of the Sherleys explain, the idea of a Persian–Christian alliance is rooted in a centuries-long relationship between Persia and Europe dating back to humanist historiography and mercantile accounts, if not ultimately to the tale of the Magi in the Bible.[30] In her study of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century European travelers and their encounters with Zoroastrians, the national religion under the Achaemenid Empire, Nora Kathleen Firby reminds us that

> the memory of ancient Persia had never faded completely from the European mind, but after the rise of Islam, Persia was so isolated from the West that little factual knowledge was available in the Middle Ages. Cyrus was known to have freed the Jews from captivity. The tradition that wisdom was derived from the East was reflected in the New Testament story of the three wise men who traveled to the Nativity. The name of Zoroaster persisted as a source of Chaldean astrology and magic, or, more acceptably, as the instructor of Pythagoras and associated with Platonism.[31]

Through references to Persia's ancient heritage and its "renownèd Persian" ruler,[32] *Travels* portrays Robert and Anthony as adventurers in an esteemed land and not as English explorers founding an undiscovered country in a New World setting. As in the Esther story, the realm harbors corruption in the court and thus the brothers serve as foreign agents, refounders who prompt change in Persia by identifying the debased constituents. Honig's study of foreign-founder scripts is helpful here in identifying the function and portrayal of refounders in early modern drama: "In the classic texts of Western political culture (both high and low), the curious figure of the foreign-founder recurs with some frequency: established regimes, peoples, or towns that fall prey to corruption are restored or refounded (not corrupted or transcended) by the agency of a foreigner or a stranger."[33] Although focused on conceptions of democracy, both Honig and Benhabib consider

how the foreigner can alter the landscape of a nation and challenge prevailing traditions and possible prejudices. In this conception of the foreigner's ability to instigate change, *Othello* and *Travels* find common ground: both Othello and Robert, with Anthony's aid, attempt to refound their respective settings, domains that are in need of such regeneration because of the social prejudices infiltrating Persia and Venice in their own right.

Distinguished because of its imperial legacy in the case of the former and differentiated for its potential mercantile and cultural experiments in the latter, for both Persia and Venice there is no dramatic discovery of a new world but rather a rediscovery of a state and its pernicious prejudices, embodied in Shakespeare's Iago and his nocturnal calumny against Othello, which creates and unleashes the infectious image of the "old black ram" (*Othello,* 1.1.87) that corrupts the susceptible white ewes of Europe. In *Travels,* it is Halibeck and Calimath, a duo of courtiers paralleling Iago and Roderigo in their insidious machinations throughout the play, who personify the reluctance to embrace foreign hands in the wars against the Great Turk.

As the Persian brothers witness the increasing fraternity between the Sophy and the Sherleys, exclamations of their hatred reverberate with Iago and Shylock's rapacious language. Halibeck declares, "Heart, how these honours makes me hate these Christians," and Calimath answers, "Poison finds time to burst, and so shall ours" (2.281–282). Halibeck and Calimath's statements echo Iago's initial protestations against Cassio's promotion (*Othello*, 1.1.7–32).[34] While the Sophy quickly assents to Anthony's offer of an Anglo-Persian alliance against the Turks, "a league 'twixt us and Christendom" (3.160), Halibeck and Calimath are truculent toward such a profane union, and Halibeck openly reminds the Sophy of his regal legacy and pre-Islamic heritage:

> Shall you, whose empire for these thousand years
> Have given their adoration to the sun,
> The silver moon and those her countless eyes
> That like so many servants wait on her,
> Forsake those lights?
>
> (2.190–194)

Coupled with the Sophy's repeated invocation, "Next Mortus Ali, *and* those deities / To Whom we Persians pay devotion" (1.87–88; emphasis added), the references to the "sun" "moon" and "lights" refer to pre-Islamic Persian traditions of Mithraism. These European conceptions of ancient Persian religion de-Islamize the nation through its associated paganism, its "natural" religion, and its yoking together of past and present temporalities that register with the early modern understanding of classical and biblical Persia.[35] The playwrights thus rhetorically shape the Sophy's court through references to ancient Persian solar worship, the long-standing cultural misconception of the Zoroastrian faith of the Achaemenid Empire. This type of

hybrid religious identification provides a dynamic space within the playwrights' pseudo-ancient Persia wherein strangers can become friends and the possibility of an East–West embrace materializes. This interstitial religious space allows for a theatricality of exchange, a fluidity of identities and hospitable relationships between the Sherley brothers and the inhabitants of their imagined Persian court.[36]

The first two scenes of the play, therefore, cater to a philosophical and spiritual discourse on the nature of an Anglo-Persian alliance and the potential advantages and disadvantages for the Persian court in accepting these foreign agents on behalf of the state. The playwrights further call upon the rhetoric of a Christian crusade, and thereby cast the alliance as one of the Sophy's near conversion. Before the Sophy accepts the proposal he asks, "What profit may this war accrue to us?" and Anthony responds, "Honour to your name, bliss to your soul" (2.187–188). While Halibeck and Anthony debate the superiority of the Persian God and the Christian God, both mirroring each other's dialogue in the repetition of "our God," the Sophy remains an observer who ultimately accepts the wager to unite with "Christendom," granting Robert the "place of general" (2.279) and Anthony the position of "Lord Ambassador" (1.267) who will be sent to Venice to obtain a jewel for the king with Halibeck at his side.

"You Forced My Thought to Love Him": Familial Embraces

Like Iago and Roderigo who use their provincialized rhetoric to appeal to prevailing societal prejudices to color Brabantio's view of Othello as a dark beast, Halibeck, in an aside, declares his hostility in deference to his culture and ancestry—"Ye Persian gods, look on: / The Sophy will profane your deities / and make an idol of a fugitive" (1.156–158)—revealing at once an esteem toward Persia's imperial and pre-Islamic past and his encumbering attachments to his exclusive Persian community. Despite Halibeck and Calimath's protestations, the alliance between the Sherleys and the Sophy ensues, and the play subsequently turns to the romance between the Sophy's Niece and Robert, beginning with a scene between the Niece and her maid Dalibra, which is noted for its debts to both the initial dialogue between Portia and Nerissa in *Merchant* and the discussion between Desdemona and Emilia regarding Othello's jealousy.[37] Resembling in context but not in tone Emilia's sardonic comment—"they are all but stomachs, and we all but food" (*Othello,* 3.4.99)—Dalibra playfully inverts the bitterness of Emilia's cannibalistic comparison when the Niece asks her what she thinks about the Sherleys: "if they be as pleasant in taste as they are fair to the eye, they are a dish worth eating" (3.6). When the Sophy's Niece expresses "suspicion" (3.130) toward the Englishmen, her maid chides her, saying, "Strangers? I see no strangeness in them. They speak as well or, rather, better than our own countrymen" (3.22–23). Once the Niece meets Robert, she is caught between her desire for and doubts about a romance with him. Prompting

aspirations of ancient Persian solar sublimity for Robert, in lines that recall Desdemona's comments about Othello—"I think the sun where he was born / Drew all such humors from him" (*Othello,* 3.4.30)—the Sophy's Niece encourages Robert's saturation in the Persian environment: "The glorious sun of Persia shall infuse / His strength of heat into thy generous veins / And make thee like himself" (3.80–82). As Robert leaves, the Niece, in an aside, bemoans the religious difference between them: "fare the well, good Sherley. / Were thy religion …" (3.107–108).

In "dreaming" (3.118) of the possibility of marriage with Robert, the Sophy's Niece aligns herself with the story of Aeneas and Dido, an intercultural union that was tragically doomed despite Dido's welcome of the Trojan stranger. In conjuring this ill-fated couple, she reflects the anxieties found in these love stories, worrying that Robert, like the "true Trojan" (3.121) will play with her heart; the foreboding allusion also recalls the mythological references to "Cressid," "Thisbe," and "Dido," in the moonlight dialogue between Lorenzo and Jessica in the final act of *Merchant,* suggesting that there too lurks the possibility of a tumultuous future for the newlyweds. Moreover, when the Sophy's Niece compares Robert to the "wandering knight, Aeneas" (3.120), her nomadic description of the legendary founder echoes Roderigo's pejorative identification of Othello as a "wheeling stranger / of here and everywhere" (*Othello,* 1.1.135). Despite the shade of suspicion, the Niece's admonition of Persian cultural and religious imbibing works as Robert begins to assume a foreign persona. However, like Othello, Robert's embrace of an alien culture proves perilous to the host–guest relationship because his assimilation assails the *ipseity* of the host. Although the Sophy emphasizes the priority of Persian laws over the right to hospitality when he establishes the conditions of his hospitality toward Robert from the first mention of genuflection to his demand to maintain Persian martial traditions, as the play continues, his hospitality toward the Sherleys, and Robert in particular, brings to light the potential risks of the hospitable act. Hence, hospitality toward the favorable stranger, Robert, ushers forth various usurpations of the Sophy's personhood and demands the Sophy's response to such an imposition.

At the heart of the Persian martial "custom[s]" (6.25) in the play is the practice of killing prisoners of war, and it is the very malleability of this law that binds the Sherleys, the Sophy, and Persia in an alternative form of mediated hospitality. Despite an early model of mercy in the mock battle opening the play, Robert initially relinquishes the Christian practice in loyalty to the Sophy, thereby proving his status as the law-abiding guest even to the extent of acting as general for the Sophy. When he enters—"*Enter* Robert *and other* Persians" (7)—he takes on the Persian ethos in his response toward the prisoners and abides by the laws limiting his rule: "We are now here the Persian substitute/And cannot use our Christian clemency" (7.14–15). Furthermore, in a moment of conflated religious identity, Robert turns to the Turkish prisoners and demands, "Speak, do ye renounce your prophet Mahomet? / Bow to

the deity that *we* adore / Or die in the refusal" (7.16–18; emphasis added). Here, the use of the plural first-person pronoun emphasizes Robert's lack of differentiation from the Persian majority and recalls Othello's identification with his Venetian citizenship when he rebukes his drunken soldiers: "Are *we* turned Turks" (*Othello,* 2.3.161; emphasis added). While Robert's proclamation leaves open the possibility that the Turk may need to answer in the Christian affirmative, a Persian soldier follows Robert in urging the prisoner to "[j]oin Mortus Ali then with Mahomet" (7.20–23), clarifying the expected answer. Finally, when a *Christian in Turk's habit* enters as a messenger from his imprisoned brother Thomas in Constantinople, Robert quickly declares the disguised Christian's death—"We'll have no ransom but conversion" (7.26)—suggesting, through syntactical confusion conflated with the Persian soldier's response, that conversion to Christianity *or* the Persian religion is acceptable.

When Robert challenges the Sophy's identity and customs as he tries to free Thomas from the Great Turk, he reveals how "the guest's hostility is an imminent possibility within the *hostis* relation, a menacing consequence of his potential interchangeability with the host," which renders the Sophy's realm *unheimlich*.[38] The Sophy angrily conveys Robert's heroic transformation in alchemical terms that draw upon the Niece's solar references: "Dares that proud Sherley, whom our powerful heat / Drew from the earth, refined and made up great; / Dares he presume to contradict our will" (6.2–4). In addition to Robert's military transgression, his relationship with the Sophy's Niece is a cause of further antagonism for the Sophy who begins to see Robert as a potential threat to the throne. Like Brabantio in the opening of *Othello*, the Sophy learns about the possibility of a romance between his Niece and Robert not from either of the lovers, but from the injurious third-party voice, Calimath, which further fuels his growing rancor toward Robert. The outraged Sophy exclaims,

> *Alter our customs*, steal our subjects' bosoms,
> And like a cunning adder twine himself
> About our niece's heart! She once his own,
> He's lord of us and of the Persian crown.
>
> (11.25–28)

When the Niece is summoned and interrogated, like Desdemona, she boldly asserts her love of Robert—"That I love him: true" (6.43)—and turns upon the court as a solicitor on behalf of Robert: "If he had his due / You should all love him; he has spent a sea / of English blood to honour Persia" (6.43–45). Initially, however, the Sophy sees this union as one "against all rules of nature" (*Othello,* 1.3.102) and castigates his Niece:

> Forgetful of thy fortunes and high birth,
> More bestial in thine appetite than beasts.

> The princely lioness disdains to mate
> But with a lion; time and experience shows
> That eagles scorn to build or bill with crows.
>
> (11.51–55)

The Sophy's outrage at such a disparate marriage mirrors Brabantio's speech before the Duke—"in spite of nature, / of years, of country, credit, everything"—(*Othello,* 1.3.97–98) and Iago's later affirmation of it: "Not to affect many proposed matches / Of her own clime, complexion, and degree" (*Othello,* 3.3.233–234). Like Othello's nostalgic report of Brabantio's prior hospitality—"her father loved me, oft invited me" (1.2.128)—the Niece reminds the Sophy of his earlier *visible* embrace of the Sherley brothers: "You forced my thought to love him, and like a tutor / First taught my tongue to call him honourable" (6.59–60). Thus, while this latter theatrical embrace is staged and then reiterated in *Travels*, in *Othello* the hospitable welcome resides beyond the parameters of the play, and thereby marks the beginning of the play as already far removed from harmonious relationships and the potential for unity found therein.

Later in the scene when the Sophy's anger at his unruly guest quickly dissipates once Robert explains his motivations for keeping the prisoners and his lack of ambition for the crown and his Niece, the Sophy tests her devotion to Robert by presenting a "*counterfeit head like Sherley's*" (stage direction). In response to the prop, the Niece alludes to Antigone's legendary actions: "Let his dissevered head and body meet. / Return them me, let me the credit have / And lay his mangled body in a grave" (6.232–234). After the Sophy reveals his fabrication and eschews his temporary *senex* stance, he reverses her declaration with a statement that invokes Desdemona's foreboding desire to be shrouded in her unsullied wedding sheets and transforms the tragic sartorial symbol into one of celebration: "And having joined his body to the head / His winding sheet be thy chaste marriage bed" (6.237).[39] The Sophy's understanding and accommodation of Robert's transgression against Persian military and marriage customs exemplifies the mediated form of hospitality I have been tracing in the play: the Sophy maintains his dignity and right to rule and judge throughout the play, but allows for certain compromises with his guest, depending on his background and worth to the realm. In this sense, laws and customs of the realm are presented as flexible and conciliatory to the guest rather than binding or arbitrary.

"I Am, Like Thee, a Stranger in the City": Religion at the Dinner Table

As the Shah's ambassador, Anthony travels with Halibeck to meet the Emperor of Russia and the Pope. Anthony's stop in Venice consumes three consecutive scenes at the center of the play and draws heavily upon *Merchant*.[40] Anthony, like Antonio, is caught in a monetary exchange with Zariph the Jew who

desires to "taste a banquet all of Christians' flesh" (9.23). However, while the scene borrows from *Merchant*, it departs in significant ways, including in its metadramatic portrayal of the stage Jew, Zariph. Anthony, who owes him "gold" for a "jewel" he bought for the Sophy, asks Zariph for "forbearance" and reminds him that he too is a visitor to Venice: "I am, like thee, a stranger in the city. / Strangers to strangers should be pitiful" (9.35–36). Furthermore, while Shylock's accusations toward the Venetian Christians—"villainy you teach me I will execute" (*Merchant*, 3.1.59–60)—is never acknowledged by the Christians in *Merchant*, Anthony takes ownership of such hypocrisy. When Zariph contends, "If we be learnt of Christians / Who, like to swine, crush one another's bones" (9.37–38), Anthony answers, "Is it sin in them? ' Tis sin in you" (9.39). Lastly, when Anthony invites Zariph to a banquet, he refuses and meta-dramatically answers: "No banquets; yet I thank you with my heart—[*aside*] And vow to play the Jew; why, ' tis my part" (9.50–51).[41]

In *Merchant*, Shylock's attendance at the dinner provides an opportunity for his daughter Jessica to escape his household, pilfer his money and possessions, and ultimately elope with Lorenzo and convert to Christianity. Thus, the off-stage banquet, with the potential of Pauline unity and inclusion, not only eschews any harmonic ends, but also further intensifies Shylock's anger toward the Christians in the play. In approaching the play from the point of view of "culinary exchange" rather than financial negotiations, David Goldstein points out that despite the play's obsession with the language of food, staged eating is absent in *Merchant*. Goldstein identifies the potential for community building through the "commensal event" of a shared meal and concludes that in *Merchant* "every opportunity for eating together offers, and then withdraws, the possibility of hospitality."[42] This commensal void seems to have captured the interest of the *Travels*' playwrights, presumably for rhetorical rather than ethical ends, and thus Shakespeare's elusive banquet is staged with great immediate costs to Anthony because of Halibeck's machinations. Through this staging, the playwrights probe the conditional state of what *could* happen when such fraught hospitality between Christians and Jews is staged.

In *Travels*, Anthony is host to the banquet, a dramatic moment that often magnifies the "vulnerability" of the host, leaving him in a "dramatic snare" that leads to his demise as Daryl W. Palmer explains.[43] Here, Zariph and Halibeck, Jew and Muslim united in hostility, conspire against Anthony, an "uncircumcised slave" (10.10) and have him arrested during the course of the banquet in Venice with its overt biblical allusions to the Last Supper. When Anthony is arrested, his earlier appeals to fraternity and solidarity evaporate, as he calls Zariph an "[i]nhuman dog … true seed / of that kiss-killing Judas" (11.91–93) who betrays him "in midst of courtesy" (11. 91). Rather than the Sophy's embrace, Anthony is caught "in a serpent's arm" (11.112). While Zariph enjoys the theatrical indulgence of his pernicious action, declaring he will relive this scene again—"I shall dream of this happiness tonight" (11.109)—Halibeck acts with greater malignant efficiency. Earlier

in the scene, he cuts Zariph's indulgences short to describe his Iago-like motivations, stemming from an unadulterated hatred of the foreigner and his exterior status rather than his interior value: "Ere any stranger shall with me walk even, / I'll hate him, were his virtues writ in heaven" (10.56–61).

While Anthony suffers at the hands of this malicious partnership, his brother Thomas is abandoned by his crew and subsequently captured and tortured by the Great Turk until letters from "England's royal king" (12.130) secure his release. His captivity scene is cast as the inverse of the Sophy's hospitable embrace as the Jailor describes the physical terms of his Turkish imprisonment as analogous to the hostile gestures rival Christian groups extend one another in the struggles of the Reformation: "for I am sure … these five or six month at least he has had nothing but the hard board for his bead, dry bread for his food and miserable water for his drink. And we Turks think that it is too good for these Christians too; for why should we do any better to them, since they do little better to one another?" (12.10–15). As with the favorable depiction of the Pope, and later a hermit counseling Robert on his spiritual duty to maintain his Christian faith in Persia, the play's investment in a united Christendom accommodates multiple purposes beyond commentary on interconfessional challenges of the time. Richard Wilson elucidates the Catholic interests of the play, which were intertwined with attempts by Catholic gentry, including the Sherleys, to gain toleration under James who had made such ecumenical promises before taking the throne.[44] In using Persia as "a screen for Catholicism" so that Persia and England can unite in a "new Crusade," the play's adventurers, like its Persian setting, register multiple temporalities.[45] In alluding to medieval romance, the brothers are akin to Christian knights; yet, as contemporary representations of early modern travelers and self-fashioned ambassadors, they are also at the cusp of the burgeoning discourse of trade and cross-cultural exchange.

Forms of Coexistence

The global aspirations of *Travels* are not easily reconciled with either its archaic representation of medieval knights-errant or its portrayal of an exclusive form of Anglo-Persian coexistence. As Anthony Parr summarizes, "this ecumenical vision has its human limits in the play—no room in it for Turk or Jew."[46] This limited form of Christian tolerance appears in another European peace proposal contemporary with Crucé's utopian vision of international peace and prosperity: *The Grand Design* of Maximilien de Béthune, Duke of Sully. Unlike Crucé's *Cyneas*, which reads like a discursive prototype of the League of Nations, Sully's plan for a "very Christian Republic in a state of enduring internal peace" aims to unite Christian rulers, allow tolerance for Catholics, Lutherans, and Calvinists, and establish an army "for maintaining continual war against the infidels," the Ottoman Turks.[47] In comparing the rhetoric of both proposals, a continuum of

tolerance and intolerance emerges with Crucé's wide embrace on one side and Sully's limited embrace closer to the other end. In the plays I have been discussing, we see the enactment of these varying punctuations on the continuum through distinct forms of receiving the stranger in the commonwealth. Thus, in *Travels* when Jew and Turk are expelled from scenes of hyperbolic solidarity between Persians and Englishmen in the play, their separation is both a product of their stage histories as well-known types in the drama of the period and a depiction of limited toleration in the play. Although Robert's Persian welcome and final absorption into the realm is radical and utopian in its own right, the play in its entirety gravitates away from the Crucé end of the spectrum, revealing thereby the tension between utopian politics and *Realpolitik*.

Although lacking in the overt, exaggerated, and mediated hospitality characterizing Persia and its exclusive form of coexistence between Persians and Christians, the Venice of *Merchant* and *Othello* refuses to throw out its guests. Shakespeare does not exile the ethos of the Jew or the Moor in his plays but rather dramatizes the early modern problematic of religious coexistence in the forced conversion of the one and the "*death into citizenship*" of the other.[48]

In *Merchant*, Shylock's formal rather than spiritual conversion, although damaging to his person in ways *Travels* avoids by skirting a conversion of the Sophy's court, assures his physical presence in Venetian society while his will ensures material security for Lorenzo and Jessica, an interreligious marriage based on conversion unlike that of Robert and the Sophy's Niece. Robert as Englishman in Persia may participate in altering or eliding certain laws and customs, but Shylock, a Jew in Venice, is subject to the law and must fulfill his pact as resident "alien" as Portia reminds him in the trial scene: "The law hath yet another hold on you" (4.1.358). The play ends with a textually burdened, detached, juridical solution rather than with an equitable compromise between Antonio and Shylock,[49] yet it also signals toward a future Christian state that desires to uphold a Jewish presence with all its potential commercial ramifications in a state of conditional hospitality. As Aryeh Botwinick posits, in *Merchant* "a Judaically softened and modulated Christianity, as the state religion that even a Jew can live with, can serve as the basis for a new vision of civilizational amity and progress."[50] In this imperfect arena of early modern cultural and religious exchange, this same inherent desire for change is found and amplified in *Travels* and *Othello*: the Christian Venetian state absorbs Judaism and the Moor *as* reconverted Muslim just as Persia absorbs and accommodates Christianity through the Sherleys.

While it may seem that through Othello's suicide the Moor and all instances of the stranger, whether pagan or Muslim, are expunged from the play, it is in his final speech that Othello reasserts his Venetian citizenship—"I have done the state some service, and they know't (*Othello,* 5.2.338)—and reminds the Venetians of their obligation toward him as a naturalized citizen by laws

established in Cardinal Contarini's *The Commonwealth and Government of Venice* (1599), which articulates that "foreign men and strangers" could be naturalized "either in regard of their great nobility, or that they had been *dutiful towards the state*, or else had done unto them *some notable service*."[51] Moreover, this is Othello's second declaration of his citizenship; he invokes his contributions to the state at crucial moments of potential estrangement from his naturalized home. His first reference to his citizenship is recalled when he finds he must prove himself worthy, perhaps to himself as well as to the *magnifico*, when his marriage is questioned: "My services which I have done the Signory / Shall out-tongue his complaints" (*Othello,* 1.2.18–19). Othello is confident that his inner attributes, his "demerits" and "parts" alongside his "title" and "perfect soul" will be enough to fairly "manifest" him as a consort for Desdemona (*Othello,* 1.2.22, 31, 32). Indeed, as the Duke presents Othello with the impending crisis in Cyprus, ordering him to engage in battle "[a]gainst the general enemy Ottoman" (*Othello,* 1.3.49–50), the state of emergency trumps Brabantio's resistance to Othello's integration through marriage and the state officiates the union. Because of the state's dependence on him, because "the fortitude of the place is best known" to him, and "opinion, a more sovereign mis / tress of effects, throws a more safer voice on" him (*Othello,* 1.3.221–224), his citizenship and marriage are not lost.

Othello commits suicide by tragically completing one last service to the state against the "general enemy," and by invoking his right as a Venetian when his citizenship is most dubious, he ensures that his presence as part of the state and its legacy is not erased. On the potential ramifications of Othello's suicide, Lupton argues that on the one hand, "Following the directive of Paul in Romans 2, Othello has indeed circumcised himself in the heart, reentering the Christian covenant through his expiatory death. Moreover, this sacrificial cut also signs and seals Othello's death into citizenship, his entry into the archives of state memory as a citizen-soldier."[52] However, as Lupton further suggests, the "reinscriptive cut," taken from Judaism, is a "legally ratifying and self-identifying mark that dislodges Othello from the Christian historical order by locating him in a different covenant."[53] His death as "circumcised" Moor reasserts Othello as Honig's "much-needed" foreign element in the "vulnerable moment" concluding the play.[54] Othello's reinscription through his reference to the Contarini document and through his suicide transforms him into a sacrificial non-Christian refounder whose alliance with the Venetians purges the state of its most corrupting element, Iago, much like the Sherleys' arrival and service in Persia rids the Persian court of the representative forces of disunity and hostility, Halibeck and Calimath.

When the Great Turk tortures Thomas on the rack on stage in an attempt to make him reveal his identity and then to recant his faith and join the Turks, the steadfast Sherley brother refuses to "turn *apostata*" (12.114). Thomas's reference to *apostata* follows another critical invocation of the term; during her interrogation, the Niece reproaches the Sophy for his

mercurial attitude when he recants his welcome of Robert, claiming, "And is affection turned *apostata*" (11.63). As in *Othello*, "turning" in *Travels* is a problematic term, a phrase reverberating with the early modern fear of "turning Turk"—a moment of Christian "betrayal," "subversion," and ultimately "renunciation both of God and of country."[55] As Daniel Vitkus explains, the "idea of conversion that terrified and titillated Shakespeare's audience was a fear of the loss of both essence and identity in a world of ontological, ecclesiastical, and politically instability."[56] Considering the cultural aspersion toward such an act, it is notable that *Travels* only flirts with the idea of cultural and religious conversion through Robert, "the Persian substitute" and the Sophy's exaggerated embrace of the Christian brothers. In this drama of similitude and exchange, Grogan concludes that "if the play began with an over-emphatic insistence that it is the Persian who will be made to be like Englishmen through the ministrations of the Sherleys, what the play actually depicts is Englishmen acting like Persians: *inglese persiani*."[57] Ultimately, as in the case of religious dialogue versus conversion, where the aim is to find common ground but not necessarily convert one another, the representative of each faith maintains his or her position, a solution that Shakespeare does not posit in *Merchant* and *Othello*. Instead, for Shakespeare, religious hospitality remains conditional, contingent, and elusive, an improbable and imagined social ideal known primarily through its absence and negation.

Like *Merchant, Travels* concludes with all potential catastrophes diverted; Anthony is cleared of his charges, and both Halibeck and Calimath are punished, the former to death and the latter to oversee his brother's execution. The Sophy promises to grant Robert his free reign in Christianity, an idealized ending that *embraces* Robert as the *law-decreeing* host founding his own hospitable domain within Persia for Christian immigrants. Robert will baptize his child with the Sophy himself as godfather, "erect a church / Wherein all Christians that do come / May peaceably hear their own religion," and "raise a house … where Christian children" will only know "what by Christians is delivered them (13.177–179,187–191). Although detailing aspects of a sequestered domicile with little interreligious interaction, Robert's description of a wider society wherein Christians and Persian Muslims live and maintain their individual identities both revisits and revises the conclusion of *Merchant*, wherein only a Shylock bereft of his religious identity is tolerable in Venetian society, and emphasizes his camaraderie with the Sophy, of feeling at home in Persia.

While neither the Sophy nor his Niece become Christians in the play, the entertainment of concluding with "*[a] show of the Christening*" (13; stage direction), with its overt symbolism of the rebirth of Christianity in the East, suggests that the initial interreligious dialogue between Anthony and the Sophy coupled with Robert's Persianized ways, influences the Persian court. Persia is not a Christian country, but it is hospitable to Christians through the combined royal forces of the Sophy and

his Niece. While Robert claims that through his baptized child "Sherley in Persia did the first Christian make" (13.55), it is the Sophy who orchestrates the christening, claims that his "royal hand / Shall make thy child first Christian in our land" (13.200–201), and appropriates his proper position as sovereign host, subordinating Robert by the end of the play. Yet, the inclusion of a Christian religious rite also recalls the Sophy's opening proclamation of "liberty of conscience" in Persia; the Sophy and his purified court retain their Persian identity and faith, but in a novel arrangement, allowing for coexistence with Christians. His court is not converted or attempting to convert others, unless they are Turkish prisoners, but rather an unusual haven for Christians to live alongside non-Turkish, Persian Muslims. The question Anthony asks the Sophy, "and why not our God," is not overtly answered through scenes of conversions, but rather through acts of hospitability toward Christianity in not only politically promoting Robert and Anthony but also in going beyond tolerance and participating in a Christian ceremony in Robert's newfound home.

In remembering its Shakespearean forbearers' challenges with welcoming and integrating the foreigner, whether through political alliances, marriage, or conversion in irrevocably changed forms, *Travels* pushes encounters into embraces in its pursuit of Anglo-Persian hospitality. While in both *Merchant* and *Othello* hospitality between cultures and religions is thwarted despite the cosmopolitan reputation of Venice, in *Travels,* Persia provides a religious loophole, a means by which the playwrights can avoid the long-standing and multifaceted relationship among the People of the Book—Jews, Muslims, and Christians—to create unity in a pseudo-ancient Persia. With its pagan past in some instances more alive than its Islamic present, a tangible Persia exists, puzzling while providing early modern audiences with a distinct utopian setting to stage improbable receptions. Through its anachronisms and mediated forms of hospitality, the play parallels Persia and Venice in its diversity and potential for coexistence, claiming that the former can be even more hospitable to such opportunities than the latter, given the right circumstances. At the same time, because Shakespeare's Venice contingently and conditionally hosts Shylock and Othello, representative minorities of two cultural and religious traditions, its attempts at pluralism are potentially more radical (and devastating) than even the strides Persia makes in *Travels*. In reading these scenes of hospitality and hostility, it becomes clear that Shakespeare begins to adumbrate the conditions necessary for cosmopolitanism, and the *Travels* playwrights provide an arena and situation to activate those potentialities. As Shakespeare's Venetian plays negotiate unlikely unions that lead to changed worlds, *Travels* plays with the idealism of hospitality in far off lands, calling upon the audience to engender novel social realities by staging that which is hidden and potentially hopeful in Shakespeare.

Notes

I would like to acknowledge the support of the UC Irvine Center in Law, Society, and Culture and its Peterson/Microsemi Fellowship program, which made preparation of this article possible. I am grateful for scholarly and editorial suggestions from Julia Reinhard Lupton, David B. Goldstein, Jane O. Newman, Bradin Cormack, Christopher Tomlins, Nedda Mehdizadeh, and Bret Kaufman.

1. See Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996); David Cannadine, *The Undivided Past: Humanity Beyond Our Differences* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013); and Michael R. Karlberg, *Beyond the Culture of Contest: From Adversarialism to Mutualism in an Age of Interdependence* (Oxford: George Ronald, 2004).
2. This scholarly discussion on the interplay between cosmopolitanism and xenophobia in the period is long-standing and multifaceted, with recent contributions including Richard Wilson, "Making Men of Monsters: Shakespeare in the Company of Strangers," *Shakespeare* 1, no. 1 (2005): 8–28; Jean Howard, "Introduction: English Cosmopolitanism and the Early Modern Moment," *Shakespeare Studies* 35 (2007): 19–23; Barbara Sebek "Morose's Turban," *Shakespeare Studies* 35 (2007): 32–35; Jonathan G. Harris, "The Time of Shakespeare's Jewry," *Shakespeare Studies* 35 (2007): 39–46; and Carole Levin and John Watkins, *Shakespeare's Foreign Worlds: National and Transnational Identities in the Elizabethan Age* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009) among others.
3. Leah S. Marcus, "Provincializing the Reformation," *PMLA* 126, no. 2 (2011): 434.
4. Ibid., 435.
5. Julia Reinhard Lupton, "Re-vamp: A Response," *PMLA* 126, no. 2 (2011): 470.
6. William Shakespeare, *Othello, the Moor of Venice,* ed. Michael Neill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 1.3.127, 128–130. All subsequent references will be to this edition and cited in text.
7. Laurence Publicover, in "Strangers at Home: The Sherley Brothers and Dramatic Romance," *Renaissance Studies* 24, no. 1 (2010), reads the play in terms of its allusions to "nationalistic" romances of the period: "this is not simply a question of digesting the strange, but of digesting the strange *through theatre*; material is so manipulated that it fits the palatable and familiar structures of dramatic discourse" (702–703). See also H. Neville Davies, "*Pericles* and the Sherley Brothers," in *Shakespeare and His Contemporaries: Essays in Comparison*, ed. E. A. J. Honigmann (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), 94–113; Anthony Parr notes borrowings from *The Merchant of Venice*, in *The Travels of the Three English Brothers* by John Day, William Rowley, and George Wilkins (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 78; Bernadette Andrea identifies comparisons with *Anthony and Cleopatra* and *Othello* in "Lady Sherley: The First Persian in England?," *Muslim World* 95, no. 2 (2005): 284; Ladan Niayesh comments on similarities with *The Merchant of Venice, Antony and Cleopatra,* and *Othello* in "Shakespeare's Persians," *Shakespeare* 4, no. 2 (2008), 133.
8. Bonnie Honig, *Democracy and the Foreigner* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Richard Kearney, *Anatheism: Returning to God After God* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 40–56.
9. Jyotsna G Singh, *A Companion to the Global Renaissance* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 5. See Singh for a biography of recent work engaging with global notions of the Renaissance, including Jerry Brotton, *The Renaissance*

Bazaar: From the Silk Road to Michelangelo; Lisa Jardine, *Worldly Goods: A New History of the Renaissance*; Nabil Matar, *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery*; and Jonathan Gil Harris, *Sick Economies: Drama, Mercantilism, and Disease in Shakespeare's England,* among many notable others (25).

10. Biblical quotations are taken from the Geneva Bible (London, 1599) unless noted otherwise.
11. Quoted in Jane H. Degenhardt, *Islamic Conversion and Christian Resistance* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 37. Degenhardt draws upon Gregory Kneidel's discussion of the challenges of Christian universalism in Renaissance England, and ultimately argues "how the early modern imagination Christian universalism was not all inclusive, how its very promise of universal faith depended on certain degrees of exclusion, and how Shakespeare reveals its limits in particularly canny ways" (40).
12. Émile Benveniste, *Indo-European Language and Society* (London: Faber, 1973), 71.
13. Kearney, *Anatheism,* 48.
14. Jacques Derrida and Anne Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality: Cultural Memory in the Present* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 77, 25.
15. Kearney, *Anatheism,* 48.
16. See Immanuel Kant, *Toward Perpetual Peace and Other Writings on Politics, Peace, and History*, ed. Pauline Kleingeld, trans. David L. Colclasure (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 82, emphasis added; Emeric Crucé, *The New Cyneas of Émeric Crucé*, ed. Thomas W. Balch (Philadelphia: Allen, Lane, & Scott 1909), 302.
17. Crucé, *The New Cyneas,* 84.
18. In responding to commentators, Seyla Benhabib claims that "the orders of the unconditional and the conditioned are heterogeneous, but the ethical can and ought to inform the *juridico-political*. I seek neither *totalization* nor *transcendence,* to use Emmanuel Levinas's language, but *mediation*" in *Another Cosmopolitanism*: *Hospitality, Sovereignty, and Democratic Iterations* with essays by Jeremy Waldron, Bonnie Honig, and Will Kymlicka, ed. Robert Post (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 158.
19. Brian Treanor, "Putting Hospitality in its Place" in *Phenomenologies of the Stranger: Between Hostility and Hospitality*, ed. Richard Kearney and Kascha Semonovitch (New York: Fordham University Press, 2011), 50; see also Lupton, "Making Room, Affording Hospitality: Environments of Entertainment in Romeo and Juliet," *Journal of Medieval & Early Modern Studies* 43, no. 1 (2013): "Hospitality bears on questions of space and its theatricalization insofar as entertaining involves *making room for guests,* both physically (where will they sit, slouch, sleep, eat, dance, or check their e-mail?) and existentially (the guest might be a ghost, or a kidnapper, or allergic to peanuts)" (146).
20. After years of academic neglect following Samuel Chew's *The Crescent and the Rose: Islam and England during the Renaissance* (1937), emerging scholarship has brought Persia out of academic obscurity, culminating recently in Jane Grogan's monograph, *The Persian Empire in English Renaissance Writing, 1549–1622* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014). Scholars including Niayesh, Linda McJannet, and Chloë Houston have noted Persia's distinction among Islamic nations, particularly in relation to far more negative representations of the Ottoman Empire, and its resistance to a stable category of representation. Grogan discusses the problem of articulating discourses of "familiarity" rather than "otherness" that is the prevailing language scholars call

upon to articulate cross-cultural encounters in critical definitions of the "global Renaissance" (7). Similarly, Jane O. Newman's work on the "rhetoric of sameness" and "similitude" in the writings of Hugo Grotius offers "alternative, less 'othering' discourses about Africa at the time," and pioneers the terms by which a less adversarial framework can be called upon in critical discussions of race. See "'Race,' Religion, and the Law: Rhetorics of Sameness and Difference in the Work of Hugo Grotius," in *Rhetoric and Law in Early Modern Europe,* ed. Victoria Kahn and Lorna Hutson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 285–317. I propose that dramatic iterations of hospitality through Persia, although not limited to its model, can offer a paradigm for understanding another instantiation of the global early modern.

21. Publicover, in "Strangers at Home," details the political ramifications of the brothers "troubling individualism," and writes that Anthony's tour around Europe as the Shah's ambassador was taken on without Elizabeth's permission; the Sherleys' Persian travels began in 1598 at the bidding of the Earl of Essex when Anthony Sherley left England to initiate "the long-cherished design of a league between Persia and Christian Europe" against the Ottoman Empire after consulting with Venetian merchants, 695–697. For biographical sketches of the Sherleys and their diplomatic actions, see David W. Davies, *Elizabethans Errant: The Strange Fortunes of Sir Thomas Sherley and His Three Sons* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967); Manoutchehr Eskandari-Qajar, "Persian Ambassadors, Their Circassians, and the Politics of Elizabethan and Regency England" *Iranian Studies* 44, no. 2 (2011): 251–271; Parr, "Foreign Relations in Jacobean England: The Sherley Brothers and the 'Voyage of Persia,'" in *Travel and Drama in Shakespeare's Time*, ed. Jean-Piere Maquerlot and Michele Willems (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996): 14–31.
22. William Shakespeare, "*Twelfth Night*, *or What You Will*" in *The Complete Pelican Shakespeare*, ed. Jonathan Crewe, general editors Stephen Orgel and A. R. Braunmuller (New York: Penguin, 2002), 2.5.172 and 3.4.267. For an historical overview of the reference to the Sophy in *Merchant* and Anthony Jenkinson's exchange at the court of Tahmasp I of the Safavid dynasty, see Bernadette Andrea, "Elizabeth I and Persian Exchanges" *The Foreign Relations of Elizabeth I*, ed. Charles Beem (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 172.
23. David B. Goldstein eloquently questions unattainable ideals in *Eating and Ethics in Shakespeare's England* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013): "Where in Renaissance religious thought do we find an unadulterated sense of common humanity that transcends religious boundaries—or for that matter, national, cultural, racial, or sexual ones?" (77).
24. Publicover, "Strangers at Home," 701–703.
25. Grogan, *Persian Empire,* 28.
26. William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, ed. Leah S. Marcus (New York: W.W. Norton, 2005), 1.3.96, 109–110. All subsequent references will be to this edition and cited in text.
27. John Day, William Rowley, and George Wilkins, *The Travels of the Three English Brothers*, ed. Anthony Parr, 1.53, 62. Subsequent references will be from this edition; scene and line numbers—there are no act divisions—will be cited in text.
28. *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. "tolerate, v.," accessed July 20, 2014, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/ 202987; *Oxford English Dictionary Online,* s.v. "embrace, n.," accessed July 20, 2014, http://www.oed.com/view/

Entry/60977; *Oxford English Dictionary Online,* "embrace, v.2," accessed July 20, 2014, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/60979.

29. Grogan, *Persian Empire,* 169.
30. Margaret Meserve's analysis of humanists' writings on Islamic empires and the search for the origin of the powerful Ottoman Turks emphasizes Persia's distinct place in European historiography and marks a telling enthusiasm for Persian kings resurfacing with the first Safavid king, Shah Ismail I, who is compared to Xerxes, Darius, and Alexander the Great, and figured as the "long-lost heir of Cyrus, the Magi, and Prestor John." See Meserve, *Empires of Islam in Renaissance Historical Thought* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 233–237.
31. Nora Kathleen Firby, *European Travellers and Their Perceptions of Zoroastrians in the 17th and 18th Centuries* (Berlin: Reimer, 1988), 17.
32. From the printing of Richard Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations* (1589) to Thomas Herbert's *Some Yeares Travels* (1634), travelers often comment on both contemporary and ancient Persia, particularly in descriptions of Persepolis: "this Citie continued mightiest in *Asia* from *Cambyses,* to *Darius* … This Citie, saith *Diodorus Siculus,* was the richest and most louely City vnder the Sunne" (London, 1634), 57. Some travelers, including Herbert and Pedro Teixeira, an independent Portuguese traveler in Persia at the same time as the Sherleys, describe contemporary Zoroastrians as fire-worshippers: "they serve the sun, and fire which they preserve with great care" (quoted in Firby, *European Travellers,* 24).
33. Honig, *Democracy and the Foreigner*, 3.
34. Michael Neil, introduction to *Othello, the Moor of Venice* by William Shakespeare (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006): "The key word in this outburst—the one on which Iago's sense of violated proportion fixes, and which provides an indispensable clue to the social tensions that animate the play, is 'place'"(148).
35. Niayesh in, "Shakespeare's Persians," explains that while it was known in Europe that by "Mortus Ali" the Sophy meant the son-in-law of Muhammad, the rightful successor according to the Persian Shi'as but rejected by the Turkish Sunnis, it is possible that "'Mortus,' for much of the audience, would have simply meant death (142). On the play's representation of the Mazdaist symbols of the sun and the moon derived from Zoroastrian theology, see Javad Ghatta, "'By Mortus Ali and Our Persian Gods': Multiple Persian Identities in *Tamburlaine* and The Travels of the Three English Brothers," *Early Theatre* 12, no. 2 (2009): 242. For an initial reading of Zoroastrianism, see Jenny Rose, *Zoroastrianism: An Introduction* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2010).
36. Nedda Mehdizadeh notes a "triangulation between England, Persia, and the Ottoman Empire" in the hybrid faith of the Persia court; the two characters that invoke sun worship, the brothers Halibeck and Calimath, "inhabit a middle space that is not quite Persian and not quite Turkic." "Translating Persia: Safavid Iran and Early Modern English Writing" (Ph.D. diss., George Washington University, 2013), 111.
37. Parr, *Three Renaissance Travel Plays,* 78; Andrea, "Lady Sherley," 284.
38. Tracy McNulty, *The Hostess: Hospitality, Femininity, and the Expropriation of Identity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), xii, viii.
39. This scene also includes a mirroring of interreligious terms as Robert swears by the Persian sun, "Yon fire / That lightens all the world knows my desire / Durst never look so high" and the Sophy charges Robert to swear his loyalty

by Christ: "By that first mover who thou call'st thy god, / The blest Messiah, and the sacrament / Which Christians hold so ceremonious (6.137–138, 178–180).

40. Parr, *Three Renaissance Travel Plays,* 101.
41. The play's consciousness of the "stage Jew" speaks to David Nirenberg's thesis on the proliferation of "so many imagined Jews on the new stages of London" that are independent of the insignificant "real" Jewish population in London in "Shakespeare's Jewish Questions," *Renaissance Drama* 38 (2010): 79.
42. Goldstein, *Eating and Ethics*, 89.
43. Daryl W. Palmer, *Hospitable Performances: Dramatic Genre and Cultural Practices in Early Modern England* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 1992), 175.
44. Richard Wilson, *Secret Shakespeare: Studies in Theatre, Religion and Resistance* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 275–276. See also Wilson, "'When Golden Time Convents': Shakespeare's Eastern Promise" *Shakespeare* 6, no. 2 (June 2010): 209–226.
45. Wilson, *Secret Shakespeare*, 276.
46. Parr, introduction to *The Travels of the Three English Brothers,* by John Day, William Rowley, and George Wilkins (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 17.
47. Maximilien de Béthune, Duke of Sully, *The Grand Design* in *Europe: Giving Shape to an Idea*, ed. Jorge T. Silva (London: Anthem Press, 2009), 58.
48. Kearney, *Anatheism,* 47; Lupton, *Citizen-Saints: Shakespeare and Political Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 105.
49. Geraldo U. Sousa, *Shakespeare's Cross-Cultural Encounters* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999). I concur with Sousa's reading that in *Merchant* "the cross-cultural encounter becomes a textual experience" (71); however, while Sousa sees texts such as the bond and Portia's xenophobic Venetian decree against aliens as part of a "protective barrier" against foreigners, I believe that these documents serve as legal aids to maintain an alien presence in Venice, limiting in the immediate instance but ultimately dynamic because of the probability of unknown futures.
50. Aryeh Botwinick, "Shakespeare in Advance of Hobbes: Pathways to Modernization in the European Psyche as Charted in *The Merchant of Venice,*" *TELOS* 153 (Winter 2010), 158.
51. Quoted in Neill, ed., *Othello*, 395.
52. Lupton, *Citizen-Saints*, 121.
53. Ibid.
54. Honig, *Democracy and the Foreigner*, 21.
55. Jonathan Burton, *Traffic and Turning: Islam and English drama, 1579–1624* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005), 16–17.
56. Daniel Vitkus, *Turning Turk: English Theatre and the Multicultural Mediterranean, 1570–1630* (New York: Palgrave, 2003), 78.
57. Grogan, *Persian Empire,* 167.