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PLAYING GOD'S CHOSEN:
PROTESTANTS, JEWS, AND SIXTEENTH-CENTURY DRAMA

BY

LARA KWALBRUN

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in English
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

2003

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Abstract**PLAYING GOD'S CHOSEN:
PROTESTANTS, JEWS, AND SIXTEENTH-CENTURY DRAMA**

by

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As protestantism takes hold amongst the English populace in the sixteenth-century, increased focus on bible-reading and specifically the Old Testament, the literal hermeneutic, and the idea of God's covenant with a specific nation originating with Israel, converge to create a new cultural identification with the Jewish nation which departs significantly from late medieval anti-Semitic thought. In plays, sermons, poetry, travel narratives, and religious texts this identification is often made manifest through parallels of England and Israel's history and spiritual status, yet is problematized by the history of sin and subsequent exile with which God punished the Jews. Canonical texts such as Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* and Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*, non-canonical

drama, and cultural documents are re-examined along the lines of election affiliation and the more nuanced ideologies that result from protestants' ambivalent identification. The significance of biblical hermeneutics in an age where biblical figures and the history of God's paradigmatic chosen nation captured the imagination on stage and from the pulpit cannot be underestimated in determining not only ideas about England's national and individual election, but about contemporary Jews as well. The question comes to a climax in 1656 at the Whitehall Conference where Oliver Cromwell and his committee meet to determine the question of the readmission of the Jews to England. It is here, in the documented proceedings, and in the voice of Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel that the ideologies and images of the medieval past confront the identification (sometimes philo-Semitism) produced by protestant hermeneutics.

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Introduction

The process of making a certain thing one's own becomes inseparable from making other things (and persons) alien, so that the act of appropriation must be seen always already to involve not only self-projection and assimilation but alienation through reification and expropriation.

Robert Weimann 1987

On May 24, 2001 the Pontifical Biblical Commission (PBC), under the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith whose prefect is Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, published a document entitled "The Jewish People and Their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible" which examines the relationship between the Old and New Testaments and provides a historical context for the often negative representation of Jews in the New Testament. In Cardinal Ratzinger's preface he points to the Shoah (Holocaust) as a historical turning-point which forces the Catholic Church to reconsider its role and that of the New Testament in fostering anti-Semitism, carefully termed "hostility towards the Jewish people" (5). The conclusions drawn from the 210 pages document (conveniently available on the Vatican website) which cover such themes as Christian and Jewish exegetical methods, shared fundamental themes, views on post-exilic Judaism, and representations of Jews in the New Testament, are that the Old Testament is indeed a sacred text necessary to Christianity's definition of itself and interpretation of divine history. The Christian reading of the Old Testament, admittedly very different from that of Judaism, "corresponds nevertheless to a potentiality of meaning effectively present in

the texts” (5). Despite the fact that, as the document states, Christ fulfills the Old Testament and its prophecy while Christianity surpasses the legally mired Judaism, in light of “what has happened” (the Shoah), “what ought to emerge now is a new respect for the Jewish interpretation of the Old Testament” (6). The murder of six million Jews based on racial theories of inferiority, regardless of Nazi atheism, participates in a more extensive and pervasive debasement of the Jew for which the Church anxiously questions its own responsibility: “To avoid mistakes of this kind, it must be kept in mind that the New Testament polemical texts, even those expressed in general terms, have to do with concrete historical contexts and are never meant to be applied to Jews of all times and places merely because they are Jews” (88).

The document, significantly lacking any inclusion of or reference to rabbinical commentary, reiterates many beliefs rooted in the Gospels, Acts, Pauline letters, and other New Testament writings which establish the Jews as an elected nation of God, who, despite their lack of faith, cannot annul God’s covenant with them. According to the Pauline letters, the Jews’ refusal of faith in Christ places the Jewish people in a situation of disobedience, but they are still loved and promised God’s mercy (cf. Rm 11:26-32) (42). Christ has come to fulfill the law, adding a new dimension and freeing believers from the powerlessness of Mosaic law in such a way that the precepts may be fulfilled through his Spirit (46). This extra dimension given to the Old Testament does not indicate that the Jewish interpretation is not valid, according to the PBC document, or that the Jewish nation has been rejected. Instead, Paul says, those who are incorporated in Christ through faith in him become “descendants of Abraham, heirs to the promise” (3:29) and are

thereby able to inherit some of the empty spots as God's children left open by Jews who do not believe. The children of promise (as distinct from the children of the flesh) inherit God's covenant through faith (56). This return to the Pauline letters and reverence for the sacred history of Israel as relayed in Hebrew scripture echo some of the basic arguments at the heart of the Protestant Reformation in England; the literal reading of scripture heralded by Luther, Calvin, Beza, and Tyndale as a central focus of reform shifted perceptions of Jewish history from medieval, typological reading of the Old Testament, which rendered both scripture and nation outdated, to a recuperated historical representation that positions them in the vital role of proto-typical godly nation.

Cardinal Ratzinger briefly discusses the history of Christian hermeneutics which is addressed at length in the PBC's document itself: "In the New Testament, there is a single mention of 'things spoken allegorically' (*allegoroumena*: Ga. 4:24), but here it is a question of typology, that is, the persons mentioned in the ancient text, are presented as evoking things to come, without the slightest doubt being cast on their historicity. Another Pauline text uses allegory to interpret a detail of the Law (1Co. 9:9), but he never adopted this method as a general rule" (20). In contrast, the Fathers of the Church and the medieval authors made systematic use of the allegorical method for reading the entire bible down to the last detail. In every page of the Old Testament many direct and specific allusions to Christ and Christian history were found "but there was a danger of detaching each detail from its context and severing the relationship between the biblical text and the concrete reality of salvation. Interpretation became arbitrary" (20). The very next section of the PBC document entitled "Return to the Literal Sense" begins with Thomas Aquinas

who clearly saw that through allegorical exegesis the commentator reads back what he already knows into the meaning of the text; therefore a valid argument can only be produced from the literal sense. Patristic exegesis, in Cardinal Ratzinger's explanation, was non-historical and so, objectively defensible: "In the context of humanism, with its new-found historical awareness, but especially in the context of his doctrine of justification, Luther invented a new formula relating the two parts of the Christian Bible, one no longer based on the internal harmony of the Old and New Testaments, but on their essential dialectic linkage within an existential history of salvation, the antithesis between Law and Gospel" (5). Ever since then, critical study of the Old Testament has been dominated by the "historical-critical" hermeneutic.

The extremely difficult task in which the Church must engage is limiting this hermeneutic, that is, not permitting the historical method to reach its logical conclusion which would result in the severing of an independent Old Testament from the New. As the document cautions, today there is a danger of approaching the opposite extreme of allegorical exegesis – that is, the denial of all Christian and Christological readings of the Old Testament texts: "This gave rise in contemporary theology, without as yet any consensus, to different ways of re-establishing a Christian interpretation of the Old Testament that would avoid arbitrariness and respect the original meaning" (21). This is a virtually impossible endeavor; to maintain scriptural interdependence requires at least, to some extent, a re-allegorizing of the Jews and their texts as incomplete.

The Church is trapped in an ontological bind since not only is the idea of the New Testament predicated on the Old, as the PBC document notes, including many referrals,

quotes, and correlations to the Old, but Mosaic law and Jewish belief demonstrate the fulfillment and supersession found in Christ and expected in the future eschaton. The suggestion (made by Marcion) that the Old Testament should be done away with altogether would obviously necessitate some serious editing of the New Testament and represents an impossible solution. The Jews' persistent practice and ritualistic observance, situated as it is in opposition to the Christian spirit, can only be defined as an inferior faith; the Jews are labeled a blind people who cannot seem to get with the program regardless of the centuries and examples of truth that stretch out behind them. It is obvious from the Vatican's genuine attempt at inter-faith dialogue and sensitivity to the Shoah, the extent to which biblical hermeneutics is culpable for the "hostility" with which real Jews have been treated over the centuries. John M. Oesterreicher in *The New Encounter Between Christians and Jews* remarks on the Church's benevolent gestures towards the Jews in the 1960s with the publication of the *Nostrae Aetate* (Conciliar Statement) and argues that no one can converse with a corpse or speak with a relic of the past. Since Judaism is a living force, it is to the Jews of the here and now to whom the Church extends her hand and not to the Israel of Old.

The Church's sincere and politically correct address to the situation of contemporary Jews conflicts with the hermeneutic and ontological net in which Christianity's history and self-definition is entangled; the gesture and desire regardless of its impossibility reveals a twenty-first century attempt at releasing racial and religious "others" from the alterity that delineates their marginal status. As we will see, however, the history of Jews and Christians is, in large part, a textual debate that has embedded in

its chronology a necessary reduction of Judaism's legitimacy that will not disappear.

It is precisely this distinction between the Israel of Old and the Jews of the here and now that is blurred during the very period of reformation in which the "literal sense" is restored. The current willingness to see the Jew's otherness, his alterity, and to accept (to varying degrees) that he does not need be incorporated or made the same was unavailable to Christians in the late Middle Ages who read the Jew as pure typological figure, a shadow of Christ to come, or even to those early modern Protestants whose close affiliation with Israel as proto-elect nation suggested an almost interchangeable identity. For most of the period I will examine -- that is from the late Middle Ages through the Elizabethan era -- real live Jews, limited to a small marrano group, did not represent a visible and accessible community in England. Historians tend to base cultural representations of Jews on just such a presence and the intermediate period (1290-1656), including the sixteenth century which will form the substance of my study, lacks Jewish bodies despite the cultural power of the image of the Jew; some historians, therefore, such as Cecil Roth and David Katz focus on those rare Jews who were visible either abroad such as Joseph Nasi Duke of Naxos (a Portugese marrano who became chief advisor to the sultan of Turkey) or in England such as Dr. Roderigo Lopez, Queen Elizabeth's personal physician, who was accused of plotting with the king of Spain to poison the Queen. Roth in fact sees a direct link between Lopez (whom he finds innocent while Katz finds him guilty), executed in 1594, and the "mini anti-Semitic storm" aroused in England which, he says, led to the popular playing of Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* and the creation by Shakespeare of Shylock, whom Roth calls "the new Judas," in *The Merchant of Venice*

(144-145). Despite Roth's brief discussion of the growth of Hebrew Studies in England as well as his mention of Puritanism's "more favourable frame of mind towards the people of the Old Testament" (149), the entire cultural identification of protestant England with Israel is ignored because there are so few Jews actually living there. Katz, who has re-examined and updated Roth's work, separates the early modern period of English Jewish history into three chapters, the first dealing with Henry VIII's divorce, the second with Lopez and his co-conspirators, and the third, entitled "From Readmission to Revolution" with the more extreme beliefs of Puritans and sectarians as well as the debate over Jewish Readmission culminating in the Whitehall Conference of 1656. Katz does note that it is "curious" that "in spite of the emphasis on Old Testament reading promoted by the Puritans," references to ancient Israel did not translate into attending to contemporary Jews (109).

I would argue, however, that not only the Puritans emphasized the Old Testament; rather, the association of England with Israel and of godly individuals with the patriarchs and personages described in the Tanach was widespread, originating in the covenant theology inherent in beliefs of reformers such as Beza and Calvin; that John Bale, John Foxe, the translators of the Geneva Bible, a multitude of preachers, William Perkins, and many others made the parallel between Israel and England more than explicit is well documented. The Puritans took this affiliation to a different level of expression so that by the second half of the sixteenth century England's identification with the Jews and its fulfillment of Old Testament history was played and preached repeatedly for the English people. In order to fill the lacuna scholarship has left open produced in part by the

absence of real Jews, I hope to demonstrate the central and critical place of Israel and the Jews even earlier in sixteenth century mainstream protestant culture. I am interested particularly in those public mediums used by the Church as well as by individuals to demonstrate faith, illustrate doctrines, and promote identification to a wide audience.

The emergence of the Israelite paradigm in England is largely dependent on a hermeneutic shift available in Protestantism's emphasis on the literal sense. In order to understand both the role of plain reading and the authority invested in the individual believer (as opposed to the clergy) that evolved from the reformed doctrines of scripturalism and solfideism it is necessary to outline the traditional approach to the Old Testament from which the reformation departs. As the PBC document discussed earlier makes clear, it is impossible to discuss the birth of Christianity without discussing hermeneutics. The New Testament achieves what is possibly the "most momentous act of appropriation in human history," establishing a new critical theory whereby all previous religious writings are re-read (Prickett 4). Inherent in the Gospels and Acts, many of Paul's epistles, and the Epistle to the Hebrews was the notion that Jewish prophecy and history had been fulfilled with the coming of Christ which was formulated through allegorical reading of the Old Testament. The Hebrew Scriptures, now called "old," could not be abandoned since Christianity's role as divinely intended continuation of Judaism could only be authorized through the Old Testament's own unmistakable coded signs (Glick 9). The Jews' inability to read these signs correctly and consequently reconstitute themselves as Christians demonstrated their persistent blindness to the truth available in their own scriptures. Rosemary Reuther in her vital re-evaluation, *Faith and Fratricide*:

The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism, argues that Israel was divided through this hermeneutic into the law and the promises (to which they were blind). The Jews through their blindness had abrogated their chosen place and the Gentile Church, now the spiritual inheritors of Christ, was elected, finally becoming a historical reality (137). Allegorical reading was the key to proving this Jewish reprobation and Christian spiritual election as well as to unifying the two testaments in continuity of divine history.

Jeremy Cohen argues that during the early Christian era, pagans needed a good reason to adopt the new faith of Christianity as opposed to the ancient and respected Judaism. For this reason, Christian *Adversus Iudaeos* treatises explained that not only did the New Testament fulfill the Old, but that the Jews had forsaken God's covenant whereas the Christians, interpreting the law figuratively, had maintained it (*Living Letters*, 10). The orthodox fathers of the Church had to establish Christianity's superiority – Jews understood the law only in the literal sense and “the written code kills, but the spirit gives life” (2 Corinthians 3:6). Detailed discussion of patristic teachings and individual theologians is beyond the scope of this study, however. For our purposes here, suffice it to say that Paul himself, in a rather contradictory move, claims that the Jews have not been completely cut out of God's scheme and will eventually be grafted in again to the gentile spiritual church. Augustine also represents a point of departure as he argued, “slay them not,” preserving the Jew's necessary role as witness in the complete divine plan for the second coming. Regardless of these more positive, or shall we say, less vituperative, perceptions of the Jews' status, as the Middle Ages wore on anti-Semitic rhetoric and action increased in popularity and severity. At the same time, allegorical reading of

scripture was privileged above the other three methods distinguished by John Cassian (360-435) as the literal or historical sense, the tropological (or moral), and the anagogical (Reeves 16).

Eric Auerbach, in his landmark article, explains the effect of such figural interpretation of the Old Testament, “[F]igural interpretation changed the Old Testament from a book of laws and a history of the people of Israel into a series of figures of Christ and the Redemption”(52). If the figurae are always pointing to future fulfillment, something greater than the signifying image, then the signifying figure becomes shadowy substance, devoid of its own value and significant only in its elemental relationship with the thing it signals. James Preus puts its succinctly, “The effect of the medieval view of the Old Testament-New Testament relation can be summarized by the observation that the coming of Christ serves decisively to cut the Old Testament out of the theological horizon” (156). The Old Testament figures then become synonymous with the Jews who have lost their purpose in a world where their persistent belief in Jewish law constitutes obtuse and even willful apostasy to which their own scriptures may attest. As Reuther writes, the Old Testament becomes a text in support of anti-Judaism on the one hand and an example of ecclesiastical triumph on the other (132).

Both Auerbach and V. A. Kolve relate allegorical interpretation to medieval notions of time; the crucifixion affects time both before and after the event itself. The Corpus Christi drama staged in England to celebrate the Host, is made up of selected biblical episodes including those from the Old Testament which point to or expose proleptic significations of Christ. As Kolve notes, every moment of the drama is charged

with memories from the past and expectations of the future, revealing the continuity of God's plan over human time (84). These plays, rehearsing sacred events in the contemporary moment, in fact often incorporating medieval England, made evident the figural nature of the Old Testament figures and events; the Jews are portrayed in their roles as pharisees and persecutors of Christ in the New Testament episodes. In this way, an entire history of typological hermeneutics, which points to Christianity's inability to suitably deal with its own Jewish origins and co-dependency, was made available in a very visible way to the populace. Through listening to sermons, exempla, and drama even a largely illiterate population could be schooled in the hermeneutic manner in which Jews could be disinherited by their own scriptures.

The conflation of time evident in the drama and in eucharistic piety, where the real flesh and blood of Christ appears, generates the image of the Jew as perennial crucifier. If the Passion could be played out in the contemporary space of England, Jews would once again awaken to their desire to kill God's son; this physical realism, noted by Eamon Duffy as evident in the eucharistic miracle stories, was an inescapable element of medieval piety. What it did for the Jew was take his allegorically constituted image as blind reprobate and add to it the characteristic delineated in the Gospels as crucifier. The opportunity to see the Mass, after all, was to see Christ himself immolated on the altar of the cross, to feel his presence, body, soul, and divinity, replaying the event once again to nourish the church (Duffy 92). My first chapter will examine how allegorical reading and eucharistic piety determine the marginal alterity of the Jew through the cycle dramas, Chaucer's "Prioress' Tale," and the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*.

Beryl Smalley has noted that the language and the content of scripture everywhere permeate medieval thought (xi). Deborah Shuger similarly writes that the Bible remained the central cultural text in England as well as in the rest of Europe during the early modern period, operating on a synthetic field as a site for the convergence of all disciplines (*Habits of Thought* 3). In Christopher Hill's study, *The Bible in the Seventeenth Century*, he argues that the vernacular Bible became an institution in Tudor England – “the foundation of monarchical authority, of England's protestant independence, the text-book of morality and social insubordination” (4). Successive reformations in early sixteenth century England shifted the authority required for understanding the true sense of scripture from the Church to the individual believer. As Barbara Lewalski argues, the reformers calling for one sense of scripture, the literal sense, denounced the allegorical approach and the doctrine of the four senses. Tyndale claims allegory persuades to “false matter”; Luther mocked his days as a friar when he allegorized “even a chamber pot” (116-117). This is not to say, as both Lewalski and Thomas Luxon are careful to point out, that allegory and typological reading did not occur within a protestant system of hermeneutics – they did, but only as a dimension of the literal text.

Protestant formulations also emphasized the continuities between the Old and New Testaments especially as related to the spiritual condition of true believers (Lewalski 125). Even though both texts depended upon the fulfilment of Christ at the end of time, the events of biblical and contemporary history no longer existed on some misty, eternal plane but represented specific points on a real time-line signifying a chronology of divinely determined events. This historical value recuperates the Old Testament as an actual

chronicle of Jewish history and re-allocates purpose to the Jews. The protestant believer would look to the Old Testament for images of individuals chosen by God, examine the relationship, and refer to it as an example or model of election. The imaginative and productive power of covenant theology, explored (and perhaps overstated as specifically English) by William Haller in *Elect Nation*, which attracted early reformer William Tyndale, explained a doctrine of unconditional grace providing assurance of election. The English covenant theologians emphasized personal experience and provided an alternative source of ecclesiastical continuity to that of apostolic succession. This covenant first made by God with Abraham was extended in the New Testament to include the Gentiles. The patriarchs' spiritual descendants in every age are identified as the elect and unified in the invisible church (MacCougllough 91-93).

The covenant re-affirmed throughout the generations was apparent in the protestant's own life; he was a direct parallel and continuation of the patriarchs whose stories were told in the Hebrew scriptures. The Israelite paradigm, readily available in Paul's letter to the Romans, provided a basis for England's comparison. Just how this equation of England and Israel emerged, regardless of the many theories advanced by scholars, remains uncertain, but what I want to focus on is the problematic approach to both ancient Israel and contemporary Jews that such an equation and recapitulation raises. When England describes itself in the appropriated language of chosen nation, a close affiliation with Israel is developed, one which was virtually impossible in the signifying system of medieval typological hermeneutics. In the words of William Haller,

The will of God had made itself known directly to the people of Israel

as to no people before or since. It followed that the record of Israel's experience was the most authentic and authoritative record of God's will that ever was, and that the history of every other people, notably now the English people, was to be understood only by the light of the record of that chosen nation as brought to fulfilment in Christ and His church. (134)

Early Protestant drama reveals how the individual godly looked to the triumphant election of the righteous Hebrew as the story of his own spiritual ancestor (Roston 76). God's Word occasioned by history and the subjective believer's consciousness of the particular story in which that meaning originated is the sacred experience itself (Siemon 60). Early in reformation culture the parallel between England and Israel as nations and individual stories of election emerge but compete with the New Testament version of Jewishness, whose ceremony and law is linked to contemporary depictions of Catholics and "popery." In the second chapter I look at early English Protestant drama, used as a didactic tool by reformers, and examine the polarized representation of Jews as model Israelites versus stubborn pharisees that develops from close biblical reading.

James Shapiro's invaluable *Shakespeare and the Jews* goes a long way in detailing and explaining ideas about Jewishness as figured in emerging early modern notions of race and nation. What is missing from that study, however, is the all-encompassing rhetoric and confluence of protestant bible-mindedness that was a prevalent habit of thought. I would argue that Jewishness was not only a measure of otherness, a barometer by which the English could determine what they were not, but a gauge, albeit shifting and

indeterminate, by and through which English Protestants actually determined who they were; this occurred through the assimilation of Old Testament Israel into the godly, critical, and self-searching psyche. Christopher Hill estimates that the number of bibles and New Testaments published in England between the Reformation and 1640 was somewhere over a million (18). Preachers spoke in prophetic discourse; monarchs were compared to Moses, David, and Hezekiah; and in sermons, plays, and political tracts the language of the bible and specifically the Old Testament gave meaning and value to contemporary events, making them understandable in their own contexts and in the much larger context of the fulfillment of divine history. It becomes obvious that reflections of Israel and the Jews everywhere determined England's vision of itself – as elect individuals, penitents, sinning nation, obstinate misbelievers, or rejected reprobates.

The Israelite paradigm, which at first seems to engender closeness to and affiliation with the Jews, produces its own set of difficulties and negative associations as well. There were many cases of both individual and national election to be found in the Old Testament, but on the other hand, much of the Tanach (Torah, Neviim, and Ketubim -- Torah, Prophets, and Writings comprise the Old Testament) was dedicated to narrating the stubbornness and sinfulness of Israel, despite the warnings and prophecies sent to them by God. Israel, as depicted even in Hebrew scripture, denotes both positive and negative paradigm; England models itself on individual examples of faith such as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but as a nation, learned how to search out and repent from sin in contrast to the Jews complaining in the desert, ignoring the exhortations of Isaiah and many other prophets, and the list goes on. The Tanach can be split into two categories -- one that

invokes affiliation and one that invites distance and presents the potential for faith superior to that of flinty-hearted Israel. The trope of the mirror, which I discuss in chapter three, frequently presents Renaissance gazers not with an image of their own face, but with a relational image, a negative or positive ideal, in contrast or comparison to which the gazer might be able to find corrective strength. The sermons, drama, and poetry I examine demonstrate the recurrence of Israel as that reflected idea and record the range and even contradictory images of Jews that materialize as a result, specifically Israel as sinning, exiled nation as opposed to King David as psalmist, arch-penitent, and holy monarch.

Yet another image that problematizes the “paradigmatic” nature of the Protestant/Jewish relationship is that of the New Testament Jewish figures who help murder Christ and persist in following Mosaic law which is superseded by Christ and the spirit of grace. Despite the one sense of scripture, any given individual’s understanding of the literal sense will understandably depend on the subject’s personal context and experience; reading Jews through the bible produced more than one image and more than one relationship. Lewalski describes the divided Israelite paradigm as either correlative or antitype. Essentially, when the protestant reader identifies with Israel he sees his dependence on faith and his imperfect life and relates to Israel and the future fulfillment both nations await. When he feels the advantages he enjoys and the comfort of the Gospel versus the harshness of the law, the Christian sees himself (through Christ) as an antitype of Israel (132). To an extent, Lewalski’s assessment is accurate, but literal reading actually produced an even more diversified and nuanced set of images. Chapter four registers the variance in images of Jewishness even as the examples of Shakespeare’s *The*

Merchant of Venice, Nashe's *The Unfortunate Traveler*, and Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* all seem concurrently to depict evil Jews whose actions combine New Testament image, medieval stereotype, and the virulence of a long *adversus judaeos* tradition. When these plays are re-contextualized in the milieu of protestant election and covenant theology, they can be understood as engaging with this theology, recording it, and re-producing its beliefs even as they appear to undermine the Jews' paradigmatic role.

Israel, in many ways, at least within biblical narrative still maintained a separate identity from contemporary Jews who could be related alternatively to chosen Israel, reprobate Israel, or the misbelieving Pharisees depending upon the requirements of the politically or religiously charged moment. Sixteenth century drama, as we will see, both records and produces the varying positions, approaches, and difficulties that identification with and appropriation of Israel's status will engender. There is no one way of approaching Jews and Jewishness in sixteenth century England just as there is no one consensual approach to the Jews in the twenty-first century, although as evidenced from the Vatican's recent assessment, the Jews and their scriptures are invariably a critical component of Christianity's understanding of itself. By reducing the authority of allegorical interpretation, the reformers brought the Jews out of the shadows and again gave them a body, accorded them a reality. It is this re-construction of Israel and the Jews, however vexed and problematic, that empowers them as a real nation in the seventeenth century to sue for readmission after 400 years of expulsion.

My epilogue therefore leaps over half a decade which has been copiously documented by historians such as David Katz (*Philo-Semitism and the Readmission of the*

Jews to England, Sabbath and Sectarianism) and Richard Popkin (*Millenarianism and Messianism in English Literature and Thought: 1650-1800*) where the contributions of puritans and millenarians to a more philo-Semitic attitude is detailed. Once again even within this more “tolerant” religious culture emerge at least two antithetical images of Jews, one being God’s still-chosen-soon-to-be-redeemed nation; this produces a certain amount of anxiety in those who feel they will be judged during the last days based on England’s (ill) treatment of the Jews who are shortly to be restored to their former glory. The emphasis on the Jews’ foundational holiness elevates and sanctifies them even above the Christian nation which appears to have inherited their vocation. On the other hand, for those who focus on the unified vision of the imminent messianic era, the emphasis on conversion of the Jews continues to allegorize and reduce Israel; once all steps are taken to embrace and edify them, the Jews must relinquish their Jewishness in order to raise and complete the world. Understanding these varying protestant approaches permits Menasseh ben Israel, the marrano Portugese rabbi from Amsterdam who is in contact and conversation with so many Christian thinkers, millenarians, philosophers, and leaders, to approach Oliver Cromwell and argue for readmission. In *The Humble Address* and *Vindicae Judaeorum* he manipulates the rhetoric of election, making clear that what Menasseh offers is God’s actual nation and all of the blessings that entails; his arguments skillfully amplify the anxiety felt by some puritans, worried about treating the Jews as God desires. Conversion is tactfully avoided as the Jewish rabbi, demonstrating his fluency with protestant ideas, covenant theology, and the Israelite paradigm argues the political and economic advantages of having the Jews in England, while pressing the powerful

point of restoration and skirting the eventual problem of incorporation. His ultimate failure to gain official readmission in 1656 resulted not as much from any incompetence as much as from the variety of images including medieval stereotypes raised by committee members with beliefs ranging from the anti-Semitic to the philo-Semitic.

After I read the accounts of the proceedings at the Whitehall Conference as well as anti-admission tracts such as William Prynne's, my first reaction was to feel baffled at the recurrence of medieval accusations and the reserve with which many puritans approached the possibility of Jews in their midst. But the Israelite paradigm and the affiliation at the heart of reformed ideology and scripturalism had gone a long way in transforming what was a pervasive and virulent anti-Semitism in the late Middle Ages to an identification that varied in feeling from adoration to abhorrence, but one that established the centrality of Israel and the Old Testament in the hearts and minds of Protestant England nonetheless. That such an assimilation did not automatically translate into welcoming wholeheartedly the Jewish remnant into England tells us more about the layered ideologies that are embedded in history than it does about the failure of an idea (Israel) to affect the real (Jews). It is useful here to think about Raymond Williams' distinction between residual, dominant, and emergent values, meanings, and practices, alternative and oppositional, that can exist together at any given time. Louis Montrose calls this model of culture and ideology a "ceaseless jostling among dominant and subordinate positions, a ceaseless interplay of continuity and change" (23). The gamut of ideas and opinions represented at Whitehall certainly displays just such a jostling with an emergent affiliation with Israel as a newly formed peak in the waves of beliefs that define the Jew and indeed continue to

define him in 2001. If the PBC document suggests something different, something modern about the Church's approach to Jews it is an affiliation as well, an identification that is made possible by the connections in scripture and history but made necessary by death and a sense of shared humanity.

1: Medieval Typology: Israel as Shadow

But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone. Romans 9:31-32

To recognize a person means to affirm that he is irreplaceable. To hurt a person means to tell him that he's expendable, that there is no need for him.

Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik

Medieval Hermeneutics

From the moment that Christianity sought to separate itself from Judaism, the theological and ontological obstacle of the continued existence of believing and practicing Jews arose. The early Church, in order to establish its own authority, had to prove the divinity of Christ and establish itself as the true continuation of the providential history formerly accorded to Israel. Typology, or figural reading of the Old Testament, provided a hermeneutic means of demonstrating that Jesus Christ fulfilled certain Jewish prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah, simultaneously supplanting the old religion with the new. A fundamental principle of Christian self-definition was that their community was the "newly constituted recipient of all God's promises to the Hebrew patriarchs: that they, the converted Gentiles, and not the Jews, were Abraham's rightful heirs" (Glick 2). An enabling Christian hermeneutic that demonstrated and justified this replacement through the Old Testament became a necessary and basic formulation of validating Christianity.

The Gospels, Acts, and Paul's epistles themselves incorporate and practice this figural hermeneutic so that New Testament history is prefigured, proleptically anticipated by the events and language of the Hebrew Bible. Christ's birth, life, death, and resurrection are thus present in the pre-history of those sacred events, buried in the words, events, and images of the Old Testament. Once fulfillment is reached, the Old Testament loses its practical power. Paul's epistles demonstrate his attempt to convert the Gentiles, defend Christ and his teachings, and reduce the Old Testament to mere shadow. Hebrews 10:1 refers to the law as "having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very Image of things"; Colossians 2:17 calls the laws and ceremonies of the Old Testament "a shadow of things to come, but the body is Christ" (Lewalski 112). Erich Auerbach's landmark article, "Figura," traces the history of typological reading and its historical implications. Paul's Epistles, employing a rhetoric of fulfillment, are intended to strip the Hebrew Scriptures of their "normative character" and expose them as only a shadow of what is to come:

His whole figural interpretation was subordinated to the basic Pauline theme of grace versus law, faith versus works: the old law is annulled; it is shadow and *typos*; observance of it has become useless and even harmful since Christ made his sacrifice; . . . in its Jewish and Judaistic legal sense the Old Testament is the letter that kills, while the new Christians are servants of the new covenant, of the spirit that gives life. (Auerbach 50-51)

Not only was the Torah an antiquated text, but the Jews themselves, Paul suggests, are re-cast as a temporarily chosen people once Christ came. In one of the most often

quoted passages in Galatians, Paul writes,

For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave and one by a free woman. But the son of the slave was born according to the flesh, the son of the free woman through promise. Now this is an allegory: These two women are two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery; she is Hagar She corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother Now her brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise. But as at this time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him, who was born according to the spirit, so it is now. What does Scripture say? “Cast out the slave and her son: for the son of the slave shall not inherit with the son of the free woman.” So brethren, we are not children of the slave but of the free woman. (4:22-31)

Thomas Luxon points out that in allegorizing the Old Testament, Paul annuls the history of the Jews, transforming the past into something dramatic instead of historical. He says, regarding Paul’s Epistles and Auerbach’s explanation of the de-historicization process they deploy, that with respect to the Hebrew past, Paul is both antinomian and antihistoricist (60).¹

James Samuel Preus, in his examination of the ideology of promise and covenant from Augustine to Luther, similarly concludes that the result of allegorizing the Tanach

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For more on Paul’s mission and theology see Daniel Boyarin, *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1994).

was that the Old Testament became merely historical chronicle stripped of any theological and edifying significance. Although each of the various theologians he illustrates has distinct approaches to and agendas regarding the Old Testament-New Testament relationship, the established hermeneutic from Augustine to Aquinas asserts that the coming of Christ serves decisively to cut the Old Testament and the Jews out of the “theological horizon”:

That is, the Incarnation marks the time of the first appearance of spiritual salvation for only at that point in history appears the grace which fulfills the Old Testament law, the sacraments which provide that grace, the Church which dispenses the sacraments, and the New Testament scriptures which first reveal the normative-literal meaning of the Old Testament and of the pre-Christian history. (Preus 156)

The typological reading of the Old Testament initiated in the New Testament, developed by the patristic fathers, and practiced by the later scholastics, reads the Jews past and present as blind to the truth of Christ and his salvation. Even though Paul granted the Jews a paradoxically significant place in the eschatological landscape (see Romans and the image of the Jews as the root of an olive tree, eventually to be re-grafted into the main), Christ’s advent made their observance of the Torah “an exercise in futility” and an affront to the rebirth in Christ’s saving grace (Cohen, *Living Letters* 393).²

This “hermeneutic Jew,” constructed in the discourse of Christian theologians, was

² For more extensive arguments and theories see John G. Gager, *The Origins of Anti-Semitism: Attitudes Toward Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity* (New York: Oxford UP, 1983).

visible in any “real Jew” who was determined to practice his antiquated religion. Auerbach points out that the figural interpretation of the Old Testament changed it from a book of laws and a history of the people of Israel into a series of figures which point towards a fulfillment that is eternal and timeless. The figures themselves are not only tentative but take a tentative form and indicate something which is in need of interpretation – it will be fulfilled in a concrete future but is always present, existing in God’s providence which knows no difference of time (59). Thomas Aquinas in his influential *Summa Theologia* (Summary of Theology) explained that history is developing organically towards God’s revelation from Old to New and then from New to evangelical. Not only does the text develop, but time itself is moving from imperfect to perfect. The Jews’ adherence to the laws which were meant, in Christian terms, as temporary, time-bound commandments, causes them to lose their place in the providential scheme by refusing to move forward.

By the Middle Ages, a firmly established typological interpretation of the Old Testament prevails. The four methods of interpretation (quadripartite) -- history, allegory, tropology, and anagogy, supported by the oft-cited verse from 2 Corinthians (3:6): “The letter kills, but the spirit gives Life” taught that the letter of Scripture was not the end of Scripture. The spiritual senses aided the medieval pilgrim in penetrating the mysteries of God. What becomes increasingly obvious is that the Jew’s role in the medieval religious landscape is indeterminate at best. Whatever ideological protection the Jew had acquired either as a “witness” (in Augustine’s soteriology) to the progress of history and the ultimate second coming, or as a root of the original source of God’s blessing who would (according to Paul) return and convert, could do nothing against the powerful image of

displacement produced by biblical hermeneutics.

Scholars have supported various explanations for the rise of virulent anti-Semitism in late medieval Europe and for the demonic images that characterize Jews, ranging from economic frustration (Hsia), to the work of mendicant friars (Cohen, *Friars*), to the exclusionary power of eucharistic piety (Rubin); I would like to reiterate Jeremy Cohen's suggestion, however, that the image of the Jew as a remnant, who persisted in practicing the laws of the Old Testament despite their abrogation was foundational to their signifying alterity and otherness discernible from Christianity's earliest beginnings as a distinct religion: "Yet now Jesus' new covenant, having fulfilled and canceled God's old covenant with Israel, has forever altered – not expunged– the value of Judaism; Christianity must assert and negate that value at one and the same time" (*Living Letters* 397-98). Rosemary Ruether argues that at the heart of the *adversus judaeos* tradition is the proof of the election of the gentile church and its inheritance of the election of the rejected Jews (137).

Staging Typology

This figural interpretation and hermeneutically constructed Jew is transmitted through sermons, moral exempla, hymns and dramatic presentation to the lay people (Chambers). Religious plays mounted by guilds were a fundamental means of religious instruction and of stirring devotion. These plays had an enormous didactic and imaginative effective on medieval audiences; once they were seen they were never forgotten (Duffy 68). The plays we will be examining are valuable in that they represent (in a tangible way) the manner in which the figural relationship was taught, producing an image of the Jews and Jewish history as replaced and useless. The selection of plays

addressed here are taken from what is known as the Corpus Christi cycles, those episodes or “pageants” staged from sacred history during the Corpus Christi festival celebrating the sacrament of the Eucharist. The included plays were meant to demonstrate the history of the world from creation to judgement and certain Old Testament episodes were incorporated depending on their signification or ability to stand for events that are greater than themselves (Kolve 62). Bevington calls the cycle framework the “arch of scholasticism” since it is generally accepted that the patristic tradition of the church had a decisive influence on both the selection and figural relationship of episodes selected (232). There are some Old Testament plays, for instance in the Wakefield cycle, that recount the narrative almost exactly as it is found in the Hebrew Scripture without much figural interpretation. However there is significant evidence from numerous plays, and certainly from sermons (for example Mirk’s popular *Festial*) that figural readings of the Old Testament were frequently presented. V.A. Kolve in his seminal work on the cycle drama, *The Play Called Corpus Christi*, explains that the Jewish character is erased from Christ’s religion in the drama, producing not only the figural effect, but the complete separation between Jews and Christians that takes place at Christ’s birth (115-116).

Seemingly anachronistic references serve the purpose of excising Jewish elements and asserting the typological hermeneutic. For instance, in the play, *The Killing of Abel* from the Wakefield cycle Cain will swear “by Godys sidys” (459) or “for Godys pain” (400); despite the fact that these curses invoke the future crucifixion, not yet available to Cain, they serve to call the audience’s attention to the proleptic crucifixion signified in the story of one brother’s betrayal and murder of another. The character of God specifically

tells Cain that the voice of his brother's blood calls out for vengeance, echoing the innocent shedding of Christ's blood. Abel is a historical personage but only becomes significant as a martyr once his story is placed within the trans-historical story of Christ's death.

Noah and the character of Deus or God in the *Noah* drama also from the Wakefield cycle similarly swear by the Trinity, while Noah's wife swears "by Mary." When Noah requires divine aid building the ark he prays to God in his tripartite form and in Latin! "*In nomine Patris, et Filii, / Et Spiritus Sancti. Amen*" (251-252). The Wakefield master takes every opportunity to re-inscribe the story of Noah within a Christian space. Scholars and readers are struck by the comic yet brutal relationship between Noah and his wife as they assault and yell at each other. The wife refuses to get aboard the ark until absolutely necessary preferring instead to spin. Her reluctance is symbolic of blindness in the face of overwhelming evidence, and the addition of this material to the biblical story replicates Jewish myopia while teaching a lesson to those who refuse to believe. The coming of the flood and the necessity of boarding the ark should have been as obvious a requirement for Noah's wife as recognition of God's plan through time should be to a Christian audience.

An Old Testament episode which becomes almost paradigmatic in its proleptic mirroring of Christ's sacrifice is the story of Isaac's near sacrifice by his father Abraham; this benevolent act anticipates the actual sacrifice of Christ by his Father for the sins of man. In *Mirk's Festial*, a collection of medieval homilies to be read on various holy days, the story from Genesis is inserted in the middle of a homily discussing Christ's life story —

incarnation, birth, death, and resurrection: “This was fygurt by Isaake” (77). In addition to juxtaposition, Isaac’s story is told in the same terms as Christ’s so that the two lives merge with Isaac as a hollow echo of the future: “Then by Abrahame e schull vndyrstonde e Fadyr of Heuen, and by Isaac his sonne Ihesu Crist” (77). The two methods by which a story may be allegorized require either an expositor who interjects with commentary during various points of the story as it is played or the figural interpretation is fashioned into the characters’ actual dialogue (regardless of the anachronism).

In the Chester play, *The Sacrifice of Isaac: Abraham, Melchisedech, and Lot*, several episodes from Genesis are combined to demonstrate the pre-figured institution of the Eucharist, the sacrament of baptism, and the sacrifice of Christ the Son by God the Father implicit in the Old Testament commandment to give tithes (Mills 64). A messenger enters first, making clear the connection between *Abraham* and the Noah play which was just played moments before. Abraham, he claims, will here begin “[i]n worship of the Trynitie” (10). The first episode involves Abraham and Lot offering Melchisedech tithes from the victory loot of the recently vanquished four kings; Melchisedech returns the honor by offering Abraham and Lot wine, bread, and reception. The expositor then intercedes on the grounds that he must edify the “lewed, standing hereby” (115) and illustrate that Melchisedech’s gift “signifieth the new Testament” (118). In the “Old Law,” he goes on to explain, beasts were the objects of offering and were their “sacramente” (124), but “sith Christ dyed on roode-tree, / with bread and wyne him worship we” (125-26). He figures Abraham as the Father of Heaven while Melchisedech signifies a priest who ministers the sacrament that Christ ordained at the Last Supper “in

bread and wyne, to honour him aye” (142). This “signification” initiated by Abraham (tithing) and Melchisedech (Eucharist) makes both of them “full deare” to God (135).

This early biblical exchange allegorically signifies the future and loses its own historical value as a result -- in fact, the story becomes meaningful as more than just polite courtesy between two ancients only once the future of Christian ritual is presented. When the expositor is finished speaking, Abraham jumps ahead of the true biblical narrative and asks God for a child; God promises fertility, prosperity, and ancestral lineage to “one Child of great degree / all mankind shall forbye” (175-76). God does not actually promise this to Abraham in the Genesis story but the text’s allegorical alterity reveals the hidden truth of salvation history. The “numberless seed” obviously includes Christ Jesus the savior – which the expositor points out to the audience. The requisite response to the gift of progeny is the covenant of circumcision to which Abraham agrees as a means of God knowing his “folk” from the “other men.” The Expositor again interjects, explaining that circumcision was a sacrament of the Old Law “but when Christ dyed, away yt went, / and Baptisme then began” (119-200). The entire rhetoric of replacement demonstrated and produced by the expositor instructs the audience in allegorical hermeneutics while displacing both the Old Testament and the people whose story it tells.

As soon as the expositor is done speaking, God immediately calls Abraham in order to instruct him to sacrifice Isaac, the son the audience has never even heard was born. The conversation between Abraham and Isaac as they ready for the sacrifice is agonizingly detailed; the deep emotions of fear, obedience, and anguish are produced and become the centralized site of this dramatic presentation. This almost gothic discussion of

the killing, the sword, and the blood anticipates Christ's sacrifice. The expositor says:

By Abraham I may vnderstand,
 the father of heaven that can fane
 with his sonnes blood to break that band
 the Devil has brought vs too.
 By Isaac vnderstand I may
 Ihesu that was obedyent aye,
 his fathers will to worke alway,
 his death to vnderfonge. (469-476)

In a more immediate sense, however, this episode looks forward to the playing of the crucifixion which will take place a few plays down the cycle. In virtually all of the extant versions of the cycle plays that depict the crucifixion, buffeting, scourging, etc. the beating, mocking, and torturing of Christ is agonizingly detailed and drawn out; the audience is given time to absorb the horror of the event, hear the derisive comments, witness blow after blow; time is allotted in the Isaac episode of *The Sacrifice of Isaac* as well for the cruelty and pain of the sacrifice to be felt by both players and audience, since it represents a proto-crucifixion moment.

The Aristotelean distinction between mimesis and diegesis, showing versus telling, is employed to distinguish between more and less significant events. According to the narrative theory described by Gerard Genette, the element of scene, or mimesis, occurs with the direct presentation of words and actions of the characters so that the events occur in their realistic duration. If the narrator employs the method of summary or

diegesis, temporal periods can often be cut (ellipsis) so that chronological time is not proportional to the duration of the events presented (Martin 124). Old Testament episodes are summarized, condensed, and often cut, unless the Old event signifies the New. Blocks of time are left out in this play without narrative to even connect the three episodes; this is not so much an issue of verisimilitude as it is a refashioning of the Bible along Christian lines and signification. The longer the duration of a scene and the closer it comes to chronological reality the more relevant it is to Christ's life, death, and teachings.

God, in the Brome *Sacrifice of Isaac*, tells Abraham to make a "blod sacrifice" (62) of Isaac who is then instructed by Abraham to "[h]old this fagot upon thy ba[c]ke" (116) clearly signifying Christ's burden of the cross. Abraham and Isaac's obedience to God's command is made even more emphatic by their dramatic lamentations, weeping, and fear; they never question God's will, however, and both prepare to offer Isaac's "blissyd body" (209) as a sacrifice. In this way the significance of the Old Testament story is maintained on a literal/moral level. Any reader, Jew or Christian, learns obedience to God and acceptance of fate.

The story becomes meaningful in a larger narrative framework once it is seen as an image of future events and promise. Again the anachronism of praying "to the Trenite" (104) signifies the eternal quality of this story; even more convincing is Abraham's discussion of a sheep who will replace his son despite the fact that God has sent a ram, stuck in the briars, to replace the now liberated Isaac. Isaac runs to free the ram and Abraham says,

A, scheppe, scheppe, blissyd mot thou be,

That ever thow were sent down heder!

Thow schall this day dey for me

In worchup of the Holy Trinite. (358-361)

This address to the sheep is really an apostrophe to the proleptic sacrifice, the lamb, Christ. In a moment both immured and suspended in time Abraham addresses both the literal sheep who replaces his son, a gift from God, and Christ who is also sent by God to die. Typological reading thus releases scriptural events from the limits of space and time and makes them perennial so that the historical moment of the patriarch, Christ, and the reader is conflated into a universal *imitatio Christi* (Roche 75). In this Old Testament episode, Abraham in his obedience, Isaac in his sacrificial stance, and the sheep having been divinely sent and sacrificed, all represent Christ who permeates not only all of Scripture but every detail and character of the text. What then happens to the audience when they watch this play? The events of the Old Testament are played out on stage but the spectator must utilize his knowledge and the figural hermeneutic to interpret the New Testament signs. The literal story is produced as a starting but not focal point for true meaning. The cognitive recognition that the spectator has rightly read the coded story played before him will underscore the future events and their signification at the reductive expense of Isaac's story. The drama makes literal not only belief but the practical substitution of the Old with the New through the re-fashioned presentation of Old Testament narrative.

The great prophet Moses similarly becomes not only a symbolic but actual figure for Christ. According to one of Mirk's homilies included in the *Festial*, Moses was a

figure and token for Christ “for Moyses com before and af e lawe, and Crist come aftyr and af grace, and mercy, and trewthe” (103). Both Moses and Christ lead the people to salvation but Moses exists in a past place where redemption was completed and historical potential ended. Following Christ is a way to outlive history and ensure oneself a place in eternity past “e heght of any erthly hulle” (103). In the Northern Homily Cycle the Israelite redemption and the slaying of the lamb five days before the exodus anticipates “is lamb lely a liknes was ? Of Christ Iat now upon an ass / Went to e cete ar he was slaine / Five days bifore he suld be tane” (104). The Israelite redemption has value because it is merely a signifier for a much more sacrosanct signified; it is the forerunner, waving its flag, pointing it continually to the pages of history yet unwritten. The Old Testament stories lose their historical potential as they are Christianized and made allegorical.

It logically follows that a play such as The Chester *Ten Commandments* which bridges the Old and New Testaments through its amalgamation of Old Testament events (God’s giving of the decalogue and the story of Balaam and Balak) through a string of prophets and prophecies that foretell Christ’s birth, death, and resurrection would be a hermeneutic aid. An expositor is present to make sense of the amalgam in a glossing voice that clearly represents patristic commentary. Israel is at the beginning of this drama and according to Balaam “His people” (223) whom he will “kepe and save” (229). The famous episode of Balaam’s inability to curse the Jews who are blessed by God’s protection is recounted and then used as a model for the future. Balaam says:

To Jacob’s blood and Israell

God shall send joy and heale;

And as a lion in his weale
 Christ shall be haused hye,
 And rise also in noble araye. (249-254)

Although there is no source in the Old Testament for this blessing, Balaam as a figural prophet establishes the connection in the authorized scriptural voice and transfers promise from the entire family of Israel to Christ. Various other prophets such as Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jonas, David, Joel, and Micheas then enter the dramatic space to prophesy Christ's conception, birth, death, and resurrection.

Balaam is the prophetic link who signals the future time in a passage quoted directly from Numbers 24:17: "*Orietur stella ex Jacob, et exurget homo de Israell, et confringet omnes duces alie{ni}ginarum, et erit omnis terra possessio eius.*"(288-290). That is, "A Starre of Jacob springe shall, / A man of Israell. / He shall overcome and have in band / All kinges, dukes of strang land, / And all the world have in his hand" (291-295). The other prophets listen, in turn quote a passage from the Old Testament, and narrate its scriptural context. After each prophet's presentation the expositor provides a gloss elucidating the typological significance of the quotes. The presence and words of the prophets are the literal sense, only comprehensible as various plots in a single story once the expositor provides allegorizing comments. For instance, Jonas tells how he lived in the belly of the whale for three days and was then saved; the expositor explains that Christ himself saw in Jonas' tribulation his own burial and subsequent resurrection on the third day. Thus the figural interpretation expounded takes Christ as its source and finds validity not only in the future events of his life but in the hermeneutic practice he employed to

convey prophecy. However, even more obscure passages are typologically interpreted – such as Ezekiel’s prophecy regarding the opening of the gates. The text appears thus:

Ezechiell: *Vidi portam in domo Domini clausam,*
et dixit angelus ad me, “Porta haec non aperietur
sed clausa erit” et ct. Ezechiel capitulo 2.

I, Ezechiell, sothlye see
 A gate in Gods house on hye.
 Closed it was; no man came nye.
 Then told an angell me:
 “This gate shall no man open, iwis,
 For God will come and goe by this;
 For himself it reserved is,
 None shall come there but hee.

Expositor. By this gate, lords, verament
 I understand in my intent
 That way the Holy Ghost in went
 When God tooke the flesh and bloode
 In that sweet maiden Mary.
 Shee was that gate, witterly,
 For in her he light graciouslye

Mankind to do good. (313-328)

God's coming and going within a closed gate is the metaphoric immaculate conception, but without the expositor glossing the text, transforming it, and making it allegorical the spectator would never have "seen" this reading. One is struck at how clearly these plays reflect a glossed text, a church sermon, or homily. The drama here is clearly instructional in not only a doctrinal way but also in a didactic one, and teaches a way of reading or thinking about events as meaning much more than they literally appear to.

All the highlights of Christ's life are thus accounted for in the Old Testament and are authoritatively explained through the actual prophetic words, demonstrating salvation history. The audience receives not only information but is edified by the expositor in exegetical practice, directly schooled in the selection of a biblical passage, its clarification, and figural interpretation. The selection of episodes leading into the Passion which was the central event of the Corpus Christi celebration reconstruct Old Testament history to comply with a typological framework. Significantly it is the interpretive authority of the expositor, signaling Christian hermeneutics, that centralizes the Passion and re-figures the Old Testament. V. A. Kolve comments on the "order and unity" achieved by the Corpus Christi drama which manages to span all time (84) while Deborah Madsen similarly claims this creates "a semantic continuity between the biblical episodes" (45). It is important to note that this unity is only achieved through allegorizing what were real and historical events. The corporeality of the actors playing the Old Testament patriarchs and prophets made tangible not the Old Testament but its representation, its signification as something more than and better than itself.

Once the Corpus Christi drama progresses to the New Testament episodes, the typological hermeneutics is coupled with a rhetoric of supplantation; the new can now be declared in the place of the old as it occurs. The central story unfolds and gives credence to the earlier Old Testament episodes only as they exist in this centered story. At the heart for instance of the N-Town *Passion Play I* is the Last Supper where Christ announces the Eucharist and its detailed ritual as a substitute for the Passover rituals -- the tradition from "Moyses and Aaron." Several events recounted in the gospels are conflated in the play-text, highlighting Christ's greatness, but supplantation, replete with a discourse of fulfillment, is the symbolic economy at the center of the drama. Christ at the Seder meal, which is itself an event that recalls the Jews' redemption from Egypt and is characterized by ritual and detailed instruction concerning preparation and consumption of the paschal sacrifice, now becomes both the Seder meal and the prefigured fulfillment of that sacrificial offering. Time for the Old Testament reaches its end here. Christ says,

This figure shal sesse; anothyr shal folwe therby,
 W[h]eche shal be of my body, that am your hed;
 W[h]eche shal be shewyd to yow by a mystery
 Of my flesch and blood in [the] forme of bred. (682-685)

The tradition of consuming the paschal offering, dipping it in bitter herbs, and eating hastily now becomes the figure, the abstract, while Christ's flesh and blood will be the real, the immediate, and the eternal. The Old Testament ceases to have significance as veiled description once the historical real occurs. Christ says just as the paschal lamb is sacrificed in the "old lawe" (691) so the "newe lomb" (692) will be used for a sacrifice.

The sentence construction deliberately parallels the two events as past and present/future. Just as in “the olde lawe it was comawndyd and precepte / To ete this lomb, to the distruccion of Pharao unkende, / So, to distroy your gostly enmye, this shal be kepte / For your paschal lombe into the we[l]dys ende” (706-709). Although a new rite is here being initiated, the term paschal lamb is appropriated and applied as a defining figure of Christ’s sacrifice. He is not only compared or likened to the paschal lamb but actually becomes a new version of it. Consequently, the old law and commandment become extinct.

The paschal lamb is historically bound to the Exodus and commemoration of Pharaoh’s cruel enslavement of the Jews; the new paschal lamb will serve until the world’s end and transcends even the temporal binds of the actual event itself. The figure is replaced with the real which itself will represent an eternal spiritual fulfillment. Christ says in Latin, “*Ecce agnus Dei*” - “Behold the lamb of God” (712) and with this statement transforms not only himself into a sacrament but the Passover offering into extinction. Each aspect of the Seder is removed from its historically specific space of the exodus and made eternal. The bitter herbs now represents “bittyr contricion” (725) for a life ill led while hasty eating represents readiness to fulfill God’s commandments in the face of possible death. An angel sent down with chalice and wafer makes visible to the audience a new symbol, a signifier not of a particular event (although the passion is obviously invoked) but of a state of being, of sacrifice, of benevolent offering for the sake of all humanity. The Jews and their old law are a moment in history, a place on the time line that exists on a plane of spirituality only meaningful in Christ and his death.

The Wakefield *Harrowing of Hell*, taking the apocryphal Gospel of *Nicodemus* as

its source, elides the difference between the two Testaments through the images of pre-figuration and fulfillment. The play presents the righteous New Testament souls such as Adam, Eve, Isaiah, Moses, and David waiting (not in hell but nearby) alongside John the Baptist and Simeon to be redeemed by Christ. Grouping these characters together on stage would display and enforce for the audience the coherence of the biblical story as constructed through the uni-vocal voice of Christianity. The prophets wait with anticipation as it is rumored Christ is coming, while the devils do everything they can to bar the gates from his powerful presence. Christ allocates the evil biblical figures to hell; those such as Cain, Judas, Achitophel, Datan, and Abirom are lumped together with all those “that will not here my law” (333). Anyone who does not recognize Christ’s coming and seeks to destroy his sacraments will be judged “wars then any Jew” (340). The Jew signifies the ultimate disbelief -- a people who were once elected but failed all tests and finally “flunked out”: “The message of election refers to a believing people. The Jews proved through their history that they are not this people. So the believing people becomes a historical reality only with the gentile church” (Ruether 137).

The patriarchs and prophets of Israel depicted in the Old Testament are made distinct from those unbelieving Jews, described in the New Testament as Pharisees and adversaries of Christ, as well as those contemporary blind Jews. Each Old Testament figure, Adam, Eve, Moses, David, and Isaiah confirms his/her longstanding belief in Christ’s coming and thanks him for bringing them each to a state of bliss. The drama ends as all voices sing their love of Jesus, “To Deum laudamus”-- “We praise you, O God.” In this way, as Rosemary Ruether in her monumental work, *Faith and Fratricide* has argued,

the Old Testament predicted both the reprobate Jews and the Gentile Church: All the Righteous Ones of the Old Testament belong to the lineage of the Church, while ‘the Jews’ are the ‘enemies’ of the Davidic king of the Psalms and the Suffering Servant of Isaiah” (132-133). This proof of the election of the gentile church and its inheritance of the vacated position of the rejected Jews is the core of the *adversus judaeos* tradition (137).

Each cycle had its variations and individual episodes but the overall presentation of Old Testament characters coupled with the New Testament stories would have produced an image of Israel as a nation replaced and Judaism as a religion which had outlived its use. Beyond this, the Jews in the plays presenting the Scourging and Buffeting of Christ are vicious, sadistic, and violent; they are figured as blind and unable to recognize the sanctity of the moment. *The Harrowing of Hell* extends disbelief (and its satanic underpinnings) into the contemporaneous medieval moment where real Jews would be identified with those who sold and tortured Christ. The physical spectacle of these dramas incorporated into the celebration of the corpus christi provided a narrative parallel to the real presence of flesh and blood achieved through transubstantiation.

Jewish Crimes: Passion Sequels

According to the New Testament, culpability for the “blood” of Christ’s death will remain on the heads of not only the Jews contemporaneous with the crucifixion, but all of their descendants. Origen writes, ““The blood of Jesus falls not only on the Jews of that time, but on all generations of Jews up to the end of the world.”” Tertullian similarly claims, ““The whole synagogue of the sons of Israel killed him”” (qtd in Freudmann 299).

Deicide is thus a perpetual crime and the historical events in the New Testament echo eternally. Episodes in the Corpus Christi cycle would have emphasized the cruelty and stupidity of the Jews who torture and condemn Christ and would have been produced in more than one play staged during a cycle. The central symbol of the Corpus Christi feast itself represents not only communal wholeness, as Mervyn James has argued, but the re-enactment over and again of “an original act of incarnation and sacrifice” (Rubin, *Corpus Christi* 56). In the thirteenth century the mass is not simply figurative, “rather its cultic function is to induce a re-experiencing of the Nativity, Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ in present time” (Beckwith 76).

As the audience witnesses the sacred stories played on successive wagons and witnesses for itself the cruel and heinous acts perpetrated by the Jews with added dramatic cruelty and torture, the abject body of Christ defines the specific manifestation of Jewish evil. The pageants replaying the Old Testament saturate the audience until finally the transformative event itself, the elevated Host, makes manifest the body sacrificed. In Eamon Duffy’s words, during mass “Christ himself, immolated on the altar of the cross, became present on the altar of the parish church, body soul and divinity, and his blood flowed once again, to nourish and renew the church and the world” (92). If these events are actualized, the role of the Jew is not merely that of heretic or doubter but of perennial crucifer. In this way, late medieval eucharistic piety and the doctrine of transubstantiation, sustained as “real presence,” through sermons, pageants, and plays petrified the Jew in his crucifying role.

By the late thirteenth century Jews came to be associated with violent attacks on

the eucharist in both exempla and chronicles; Rubin relates Jeremy Cohen's work on friars and Jews to the notion, spread through preaching and missionizing, that Jews were knowing killers of Christ intent on repeating the deed at every opportunity (*Corpus Christi* 54). Eucharistic miracle stories often revealed the Church and Christ's triumph when the Jew or doubter was made an "insider" through conversion after experiencing the "fleshly reality" of the sacrament (Duffy 104). This follows Gavin Langmuir's argument that irrational fantasies about Jews arose when Christians conformed to their faith while suppressing their own rational doubts. Anna Sapir Abulafia offers yet another theory dependent on medieval definitions of reason; the theologians of the eleventh and twelfth centuries questioned the "reason" of Jews and by extension, their humanity. This argument places Jews not only outside the *communitatus christi* but outside that of civilized society. The image of the Jew in late medieval religious culture – represented as devil, usurer, homicidal killer, host desecrator – represents any number of fears, anxieties, theologies or ideologies which perhaps cannot be isolated one from the other regardless of any scholar's well meaning and well supported desire to locate the impetus for anti-Semitism in one specific place. What is evident from the scholarship and historical material available to us is the symbolic economy of the remarkable symbol at the center of Christian society itself, the host, and its corporeality, its historical recurrence, its simultaneous existence in the temporal space of the first century A.D. and in any time that the priests consecrate it thereafter. At the end of Miri Rubin's recent work on host desecration narratives she writes, "The license for violence is not necessarily encoded in secret or sectarian codes, it is penned at the heart of cultures, with an ink coloured by their

most favorite symbols, tinted by their most cherished desires” (*Gentile Tales* 195).

The Feast of Corpus Christi displayed the communal wholeness not only of the church (in Christ’s body) but of the urban social body, gathered in unity to venerate the Corpus Christ (James 25). Ritual murder as it was imagined to be perpetrated by Jews most commonly took the form of the slaying of an innocent male child whose blood could be put to ritual use and whose death was a re-enactment of Christ’s. This Jewish act, antithetical to communal unity, inverts the sacred reincarnation of Christ in the Eucharist, and draws the community closer through the dangerous opposition of an outsider. In Geoffrey Chaucer’s “The Prioress’ Tale,” the Jews are isolated geographically and culturally from Christian unity. “Ther was in Asye, in a greet citee, / Amonges Cristene folke a Jewerye”(VII.488-489). Buried within the Christian community, itself located within a great city, enclosed in the even wider and foreign space of Asia, is the Jewish ghetto or “Jewerye.” It is triply enclosed, removed through its exoticism and national and religious otherness, but maintains two openings at either end through which “men mythe ride or wende” (VII. 493). The Jewrie is “almost” completely contained as Christians are given free access and are thereby exposed to the pernicious Jews in whose hearts nestle our “firste foo, the serpent Sathanas” (VII. 558). When the “litel clergeon” is murdered in the ghetto, his body is then thrown into a “wardrobe” (VII.572) or privy where it sinks, buried in waste. At the heart of the spatial enclosures that contain the Jew then, is the privy, a pit full of excrement.

The only person described in detail in the Prioress’s Tale as actually crossing the ghetto is the “litel clergeon” who is killed by the hit-man hired by the Jewish community.

As this child “cam to and fro” (VII.552) he would sing “O Alma redemptoris”(VII.554), demonstrating his adoration of Christ’s mother, Mary. When he miraculously continues to sing despite his slit throat, only then, do we hear that the “Cristene folk that thurgh the strete wente / In coomen for to wondre upon this thyng” (VII.614-615). The martyrdom and subsequent public miracle thus serves to fill the Jewish street not only with the songs but bodies of Christians. Despite the alterity of the continent on which this story occurs, the Christian community living in a great city, through its unity and faith, can reconfigure physical space demarcated as Jewish and foul. An interesting tidbit that the Prioress includes indicates that the entire existence of the ghetto space is dependent upon one man’s desire to contain and manipulate the sinful practice of usury; the ghetto is “[s]ustened by a lord of that contree / For foule usure and lucre of vileynye, / Hateful to Crist and to his compaignye” (VII.490-492). The Christian community also exists as distinct from the other people in the surrounding city, and yet, its theology and faith construct community not only as whole but bursting at the seams, unable to be contained by the borders that enclose its members.

The sweet and innocent chorister, clearly a signifier of Christ, evokes the sympathy of both the Prioress and her audience in his vulnerability, holiness, and reflection of the savior. The reverberations of Mary and the infant Christ are further adumbrated in his mother’s position as “wydwe,” linked to the Virgin by her devotion. She, like Mary, loses her son to the Jews and while searching for him “evere on Cristes mooder meeke and kynde / She cride,” self-consciously fashioning herself as a contemporary type of Mary (VII.597-598). The child is in turn symbolized by the Prioress, who is identified both as a

“mother” (of an abbey) and as a child. The Prioress claims that the infant sucking at the mother’s breast gives as much praise to God as “men of dignitee” (VII.456) since they “shewen they thyn heriyng” (VII.459). Seeing praise of God in the innocence of the breast-feeding child she then positions herself not as the nurturing figure but as the infant:

My konnyng is so wayk, O blisful Queene,
 For to declare thy grete worthynesse
 That I ne may the weichte nat susteene;
 But as a child of twelf month oold, or lesse,
 That kan unnethes any word expresse. (VII.481-485)

It follows then that in her presentation of a little boy who loves Mary with all his heart, she identifies not with the maternal but with the child, empathically experiencing Christ’s suffering through the contemporary reproduction of the Passion, known as ritual murder. As Caroline Walker Bynum has so compellingly demonstrated, late medieval piety stressed the importance of imitating Christ not only through meditating on his suffering but by actually becoming or being Christ so that *imitatio* translated into “shaping oneself to” (256). The connection between religiosity and body is made manifest in the real presence of Christ’s body found in the eucharist. This real flesh and blood (transubstantiation) led to a more literal sense of what imitation of Christ meant (255). In telling this story, full of pathos, sacrifice, and finally the miraculous, the Prioress demonstrates the physical experience with the sacred. The validating evidence of the miracle which permits the dead child to continue his song is the “greyn” placed on his tongue by Mary – so tantalizingly reminiscent of the Host in the recipient’s mouth. The Jews, on the other hand, are

associated with the physically repulsive. The “cursed Jew” who kills the child “in a pit hym caste. / I seye that in a wardrobe they hym threwe / Where as this Jewes purgen hire entraile” (VII.571-573). Chaucer’s choice of tale of the virgin provides a contemporary context for virulent anti-Jewish sentiment since the genre (any given collection of miracles of the Virgin) invariably contained some anti-Semitic element (Frank 179).

Significantly, in the Prioress’ narration, all of the Jews conspire and are therefore drawn and hanged together as a culpable community. In describing the Jews’ motive, Madame Eglantine makes reference to Eden and the snake who symbolically addresses the Jews of the ghetto as “Hebrayk people” (VII.560) people of the Old Testament whose attention to the “lawes reverence” (VII.564) signifies a layered history of providential rejection, blindness, and malevolence. The Prioress demonstrates her fluency with the typological interpretation of the Old Testament, thereby implicating the figural hermeneutic in the controversial anti-Jewish sentiment she espouses. In her Prologue, the Prioress refers to Mary as a “bussh unbrent, brennyng in Moyses sighte, / That ravyshedest down fro the Deitee” (VII.468-469). This reference to the bush that Moses saw that burned but was not consumed (Exodus 3:2) was a known Marian symbol signifying the Old Testament’s anticipation of the Virgin Birth (Benson n.914). Another allegorical inclusion involves the description of the inconsolable widow, weeping over the bier of her son: “Unnethe myghte the peple that was there / This newe Rachel brynge fro his beere” (VII.626-627). This reference from Matthew 2:18 repeats the gospel for the mass of the Holy Innocents. The original source is found in the prophecy of Jeremiah (31:15) and is read by Matthew as foretelling the future massacre (Benson n.916).

Jeremiah's "prophecy" reveals typological figuring -- only after the fact of the Slaughter of the Innocents can the allegory be read back into the prophetic writing. Chaucer's story perpetuates and augments the myth of ritual murder, invokes the extreme empathy of the listeners on behalf of the little chorister and his mother, provokes the actual killing of Jews, and affirms a continuing pattern of Jewish murder; his inclusion of figural hermeneutics in just such a story demonstrates the extent to which such hermeneutics were directly involved in the evolving Jewish image and the painful response to that image. The Prioress' comment that "[t]he blood out crieth on youre cursed dede" (VII.578) gestures towards an entire history of Jewish culpability for the death of Christ.

The structure of the prologue and the tale work to reveal the manner in which the story of ritual murder works its power on an audience and on believing Christians. In the prologue, the prioress narrates and demonstrates her love of and identification with the Virgin, making piety and devotion explicit. We listeners/readers stand outside the ghetto entrance imbued with the awesome sense of Mary's virtue. Once we enter the ghetto, this adoration/identification is transformed into the physical world through allegory. The widow whose son is innocently dedicated to the virgin, and now represents the Prioress/listener/reader is set upon by the Jews in the same manner as was Christ: "Fro thennes forth the Jues han conspired / This innocent out of the world to chace" (VII.565-566). Once the Jews are drawn and quartered, justifiably punished, we can leave the ghetto space with the body of the "clergeon" which has traveled to "the nexte abbay" (VII.624) where he reveals Christ and Mary's appearance to him and the placement of the grain on his tongue. Symbolic of the Host which sustains the recipient as the flesh and

blood of Christ, the miracle and the grain perpetuate the belief that Christ's real presence invites the Jews to participate in the Passion again and again in a homicidal way. This provides a way back to England where "yonge Hugh of Lyncoln, [was] slayn also / With cursed Jewes" (VII.684-685) just a little while ago. Conflation of historical time and of devotion to the Virgin, with a narrated/fictionalized miracle tale, emerges as a historical truth confirmed as occurring in England. The open-ended "Jewerye," whose geographical enclosure demarcates otherness, allows affective piety to enter its dark and putrid tunnel to unfold as empathic narrative and emerge finally as a solid historical truth. Whether Chaucer intended to mock Madame Eglantine or not is a riddle which will never completely lose its complexity but that the structure of the Prologue and Tale signifies the motive and development of the idea of ritual myth and its historical consequences is evident.

The host represents both Christ's individual body and all of Christian society; but more than anything, it is a narrative, a gothic moment of flesh and blood which allows those who attend mass and see the host elevated to travel back to the time and place of Christ's sacrifice: "To eat God was to take into one's self the suffering flesh on the cross. To eat God was *imitatio crucis*. That which one ate was the physicality of the God-man" (Bynum 67). If the Old Testament becomes mere pre-figurement, allegory, *figura*, anticipating the eternal and universal spirit of the New Testament, the eucharist gives the New Testament story a carnal place to rest, to make itself felt, to tell itself over and again. Eric Auerbach argues that figures are tentative forms of something eternal and timeless; even though they will be fulfilled in a concrete future, they symbolize an "eternal thing"

fulfilled in God's providence which "knows no difference of time" (59). All of this, Auerbach claims, becomes eminently clear in the sacrament of the sacrifice, the Last Supper, the *pascha nostrum*, which is *figura Christi*:

This sacrament, which is figure as well as symbol, and which has long existed historically — namely, since it was first established in the old covenant — gives us the purest picture of the concretely present, the veiled and tentative, the eternal and supratemporal elements contained in the figures. (60)

Once the host with its temporally transcendent quality exists in the present as the "real presence" it invites the entire contextual background of Christ's original immolation. The accusation of host desecrations against Jews repeated the familiar list of characters and allowed Christians to emerge victorious over Jewish unfaith, cruelty, and filth.³ Host desecration, as Miri Rubin asserts, is both history and story, encompassing both authority and universality while allowing room for individual participation (*Gentile Tales*, 1-2). Jewish characteristics displayed in the cruel and unyielding portrayal of the Pharisees of the New Testament crossed into the present as well and were attributed to real, contemporary Jews. The Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*, called by Rubin "a Passion play with a happy ending," represents just how the real presence manifested itself in the Host, exposing Christ again to the pernicious Jewish threat (170).

³

For more on the history and details of host desecration accusations and reprisals see Joshua Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1943).

The Banns that announced the play's content raise two issues as central and didactic. One is that the Jews will, through torturing the host, put Christ "to a new Passion" (38) while the other centers around the resolution of any "dowghtys" (69) that not only the Jews but the audience may have regarding the power and truth of the sacrament. Jonathas the Jew is a convenient heretic since he is both an outsider, one who does not accept Christ, and because he is a Jew and eternal deicide. Aristorius, the Christian merchant who sells Jonathas the host, removes the host and himself from the sacred space by selling his Lord. The two characters are made parallel by their vocations as merchants, their nearly equal number of lines during their opening speeches, their similar cataloguing of their merchant wealth, and their praising of their respective Gods at the conclusion of each monologue. Significantly, the Jew prays to Mohamet, and whether intentional or not on the part of the Croxton playwright, this increases his alterity, conflates difference and makes even stranger an outsider who is accused of killing Christ and worshipping an entirely "other" God. It is the merchant venture, capital, and the substitution of Christ with money of which Aristorius is then guilty; he cannot see the value in Christ or his sacrifice. He is afraid of being impeached for heresy and is a Judas refashioned by a disbelief manifest in merchant venture; he seems to have forgotten entirely the pain that will undoubtedly be inflicted on the Host/Christ. It is in this doubter and greedy venturer that the audience is to find its own sins; they may not actually steal a consecrated Host, whose real presence produced a considerable amount of anxiety and theological debate regarding its inviolability (Bynum 63). In valuing money or material things over the spirituality and mysticism embodied in the body embodied in the host,

however, the taint of such sins could make them unworthy of ingesting Christ.

After procuring the Host, Jonathas and his cronies rehearse the story of the Passion and Last Supper. Jonathas says:

He brake the brede and said "*Accipite,*"
 And gave the diciplys them for to chere.
 And more he said to them there
 While they were together all and sum,
 Sitting at the table soo clere :
 "*Comedite, [hoc est] corpus meuem.*" (399-404)

Jonathas becomes a kind of mock priest in retelling the story and although he intends to put the host to the test, the entire history of its place in Christian history is carefully repeated and told in an accurate manner. Jonathas then explains that the power to proclaim and sacer is given to Peter who then bestows it on the preachers, bishops and curates; Jason tells the story of Mary's conception and Jasdou follows with the story of the resurrection. The purpose of this iteration is to inform the audience but also to signify the knowledge and truth of the events of which the Jews are clearly aware. They claim to want to put the Host to the test but this conflicts with their blatant acceptance of the truth of the story. Moreover, once they have "rehersyd the substaunce of their lawe" (441) and the piercing of the host begins, the Jews begin to refer to the host as "him" and not "it." Jonathas claims that we will see "[w]hethere this be he that in Bosra of us had awe" (443) indicating doubt in the real presence and yet not even ten lines later Christ's presence is assumed when Jasdou says, "And with owr strokys we shall fray him as he was on the

rood, / That he was on-don[e] with grett reprove" (455-56). The issue shifts from examining the veracity of the real presence to torturing Christ again. In action and lines reminiscent of the cycle dramas presenting the scourging, buffeting, and crucifixion of Christ, the Jews gleefully take turns tormenting the Host. Malchus says, "Anothere buffett shall he likke" (476) as they alternately pierce and stab the host in the four quarter shape of the cross.

The Jews' own violence is visited back on them when the Host sticks to Jonathas' arm in his attempt to throw it into a cauldron of boiling oil; his fellow Jews nail the host to the wall in attempt to remove it from Jonathas' hand but instead his arm is severed from his own body. As Steven Kruger has noted it is at this moment that the torturer and tortured merge and the Jews in crucifying Christ guarantee themselves the same kind of crucifixion (308). Yet it is not until Christ appears out of the oven saved from the final torture that the Jews concoct for the Host, with his wounds bleeding asking why the Jews put him to a "newe tormentry" (732) that the Jews repent, believe, and finally fall under his grace and blessing. The Church is affirmed as the all powerful space that mediates between Christ and his people when the priest speaks to the Christ image and he turns back into the bread.

Much scholarly work has been done on eucharistic piety and how this play is meant to function within that operating system. What I am interested in looking at is the dual image of the Jew that is left in the audience's minds and how this yet proves a construction of biblical hermeneutics. Although the Jews here appear as doubters, it is the doubt or misguided value of Aristorius with which the audience would identify. They

perhaps do not believe enough in the real presence of the sacrament to resist selling it, removing it from the church, or allowing other “values” of worldliness to overcome their faith. The desire to torture Christ, however, is one that has been historically and eternally allocated to the Jews, and the Jews alone. The opportunity for such an action presents itself at the moment that history recurs, that Christ is reassigned his role as sacrificial lamb, sustaining those whom he feeds; necessarily, the Jews must come to torture him again, continuing to reveal themselves to be a displaced people, no longer chosen but reprobate. The alternative version is conversion to Christianity, enlightenment in the face of the bleeding Christ, the miracle of the host, the transformation. It is at the Calvary moment in the Croxton play that opportunity presents itself by the Jews’ changing history, by converting and returning with the procession to place the Host in its proper sacramental space, the Church. The building of the church will now contain Christ and an entire community of believers even if transcendence of time was necessary to achieve such a moment. In such a way not only the original immolation but the original replacement of Old Testament with New is finally validated and finds its fulfillment when the Jews believe. Although the Hebrew Scriptures are read as prefiguring the events in the New even the Christian story does not signify the ultimate fulfillment of the tale of this world. Christ is a promise that foretells the end of time and the true kingdom of God (Auerbach 58).

I want to stress the place of drama, along with art, lyric, liturgy, meditation, and miracle stories in facilitating the re-experiencing and re-occurrence of the Passion; incorporated in select plays from the cycle drama and certainly in the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament* is the staging of the mass which itself signifies recurrence – a kind of perpetual

sequel to the original Passion. The mass within the drama signals the double presentation of both the event and its contemporaneous renderings. The Jew in the Croxton play and in many of the miracle stories is either a crucifier (later killed and his community massacred) or convert; this is the role he has been designated by Christian history, Church ritual, and biblical hermeneutics.

As the Protestant Reformation takes hold in sixteenth-century England, typology is not abandoned as a hermeneutic and indeed Old Testament figures and episodes are still seen as pointing to Christ; but allegorical signification becomes an integral part of the literal-historical meaning of the text (Lewalski 118). The doctrine of sacraments as it is transformed by the reformers becomes a sign to be read as opposed to actual channels of special grace and so “things” are emptied of the tangible value accorded them in the late Middle Ages. The Old and New Testaments are re-united as sacred and continuous texts, re-instating Israel as well as prototypical chosen nation. The Hebrew Scriptures and people, allegorized away by medieval typology, are recuperated by godly reformers, preachers, and individuals as both negative and positive examples of the manner in which God relates to and deals with his elect. In the following chapters I will examine this hermeneutic shift from the allegorical to the literal especially as it is manifested in the drama and printed sermons of the period which were accessible in a visible way to the populace. In paralleling Israel and England, a certain affiliation, inconsistent and conflicted as it may be, arises that was not viable in the medieval typological hermeneutic; it offers a positive image of the contemporary Jew whose chosen status is maintained by a remnant (Paul and Calvin) even as his vices as they are related in scripture are emphasized

with the goal of admonition. There is no one definitive “image” of the Jew and early modern representations stand alongside residual medieval images which lifted out of context continue to generate and re-generate stereotypes that adapt themselves to the contemporary milieu. God, through his Word and the individual believer, was brought into the contemporary moment via the stories and examples of Israel, the spiritual inheritance initiated through them, and the projected hope to be fulfilled by them as well.

2: Appropriating Israel: Protestant Hermeneutics

“Israel and England, though they lye in divers climat, may be said right Parallels”

Thomas Adams, 1615

When John Bale, ex-Carmelite friar, English Reformer and playwright, composed *King Johan* in 1538, he combined historical chronicle, morality play, and religious polemic. His goal was to produce a legend and living myth which made England and the purified Church responsible for resuming the evangelical work of God. Centuries of Catholic authority and practice now had to be re-conceived as a lapse from the true faith. Bale’s work was part of a larger program of plays, songs, ballads, and graphic images aimed at illustrating the impiety of the past while promoting a vision of the godly elect (Collinson, “Iconoclasm” 282). This conception of England as elect nation was modeled on the Old Testament paradigm of the Israelites as a chosen people.⁴ The valorization of Israel as the prototypical godly nation offers Protestant audiences an alternative version of Jewishness to those traditional depictions of Jews as Christ killers and homicides. James Shapiro has recently argued that the expulsion of the Jews in 1290 Englishness is defined, in part, “by the wholesale rejection of that which is Jewish” (4); I would like to bring religion back into the equation since England’s culture in the sixteenth century was both intensely religious and biblically minded. Debora Shuger has argued that religion was pre-capitalist society’s “master-code” and the “discourse through which it interpreted its own

4

William Haller, in *The Elect Nation: The Meaning and Relevance of John Foxe’s Book of Martyrs* (New York: Harper and Row, Pub, 1963) 134, argues that England’s history is to be understood in light of the biblical record of Israel, God’s first chosen nation, as brought o fulfillment by Christ and his church.

existence” (*Habits* 5, 9). Patrick Collinson explains the religious imagination as the conscience, itself informed and excited by the Bible, “a landscape more familiar to the Elizabethan mind than any other region and as familiar as England itself (“Biblical Rhetoric” 17). With this in mind it is important to point out the extent to which the reformed faith imagined itself as replicating the history and filling the position of the Jewish nation. The Israelite paradigm invited affiliation, but coexisted as a dominant image with the New Testament Pharisee and of course with the Gospel and Pauline denunciation of the law in favor of the spirit. English Protestants grappled with their desire to embrace but simultaneously repulse God’s first elected, the Jews.

The covenant between God and Abraham’s descendants as narrated in the Old Testament was crucial to understanding English personal and national purpose. Bale’s play works to project this vision onto King John’s battle against the Roman Church, fashioning King John as a martyr who fights for Christian liberty and determines the beginning of the current anti-papal struggle. The personified figure of England declares herself a widow whose husband is “god hym selfe, the spowse of eu’y sort / that seke hym in fayth” thereby illustrating her critical role in salvation history (109-10). King John and King Henry (VIII) are conceived as the biblical figures of Moses and Joshua respectively, transforming England into the promised land. The Interpreter narrates:

Thys noble kynge Iohan, as a faythfull Moyses
 withstode proude Pharao, for hys poore Israel
 Myndynge to brynge it, out of the lande of Darkenesse.
 But the Egyptyanes, ded agaynst hym so rebell

That hys poore people, [must] ded styll in the desart dwell,
 Tyll that Duke Iosue, whych was our late kyng Henrye
 Clerely brought vs in, to the lande of mylke and honye. (1097-1103)

When John is likened to Moses who led the Jews out of Egypt but was barred from Israel, Bale uses a simile to demonstrate how the two leaders are parallel but distinct. John tries to sever ties with the Pope and bring England out of “darkness,” but it is King Henry who successfully reformed the country. The comparative simile is substituted in Henry’s case with a direct translation of Joshua into the English monarch; the two figures coalesce until Joshua is reincarnated in King Henry. The possessive, corporate “our” used to describe Henry is contrasted with the “poor Israel” described as an “other” nation that England resembles, but ultimately, surpasses; England assumes Israel’s qualities and is transfigured into the land of milk and honey, sweet with liberty, thereby displacing and replacing the land of Israel itself as supreme sacred site. By appropriating Old Testament nomenclature, Bale makes England and its place in divine history not only analogous to Israel but heir to Jewish promise.

This chapter will examine the way that early Reformation pictures and plays employ, appropriate, and coopt the images and stories of the Old Testament to validate and construct England as a chosen nation. In the theology of the high Middle Ages, the Jews are a despised nation while the covenant is forfeited by their refusal to believe in Christ (Reuther 137); this contempt is sustained as a negative stereotype by Protestants as well. Even within *King Johan* the derogatory image emerges when King John is heralded as a zealous lover of Christ’s religion since he “exyled the Iewes out of thys regyon”

(2172). Even as Protestants read themselves in and out of the Old Testament, becoming Israel-minded and covenant-centered, they construct Jewish belief as wickedly exalting the law over the gospel, the letter over the spirit. A binary emerges whereby the Jews as nation of Israel, constituting the focus of the Old Testament narrative, are embraced, ennobled, and made exemplary; yet the Jews depicted in the Gospels, Acts, and Paul's epistles as well as contemporary Jews, insistent on following Mosaic law in a world where Christ has already come, are enemies of Christ and the Church. Both representations, ideal and depraved, coexist in productions of Protestant belief and are often presented simultaneously to the English public. The doctrines of the Word and faith alone recuperated the ancient Jew while simultaneously giving voice to the Pharisee, the yet unconverted figure of the reprobate.

Protestant Drama: The Old Testament Reconsidered

The first generation of English reformers was faced with the tremendous task of instructing the population in the Protestant faith and shifting their devotional gaze from the mass to the Word of God; predestinarian philosophy, justification by faith, assurance (or perseverance) and sanctification were doctrines that had to be taught to and produced for the people.⁴ To convert the population, especially in outlying areas deeply entrenched

4

According to Susan Doran and Christopher Durston in *Princes, Pastors, and People: The Church and Religion in England 1529-1689* (New York: Routledge, 1991) by 1552 the theology of the Reformed Churches of Zurich, Strasbourg, and John Calvin's Geneva (as opposed to Lutheran theology) held enough sway in England to be reflected in "official" statements on doctrine and liturgy. Leading Reformed emigres such as Martin Bucer, Peter Martyr, and John a' Lasco "provided theological leadership in the universities and offered advice to English bishops." It was this influence which advanced the absorption of Reformed theology into the new Edwardian Protestant Church (18). A.G. Dickens in *The*

in Catholicism and illiteracy, those modes for disseminating belief and practice used by traditional religion that produced a visible system of faith would have to be adopted.⁵

Drama was considered by Protestant educators as an extremely useful teaching tool. Martin Bucer, the Swiss reformer and professor at Cambridge, in his systematizing work of faith, *De Regno Christi*, emphasizes Protestant plays as an instructive and entertaining method for teaching youth about the value of piety and moral character. He argues, “Youth could also perform comedies and tragedies, and by means of a useful form of entertainment, honorable and contributing toward an increase of piety, may be staged for people” (Pauck 349). In John Foxe’s well-known words, it is the “[p]layers, printers, preachers” who are the reformers’ “triple bulwark against the triple crown of the pope” (57). The plays examined in this chapter were thus a significant tool of conversion.

The dramatic genre was one with which the populace was familiar; biblical plays were standard for presenting and producing religious belief, affirming values, and creating memorable images especially in the late middle ages when the Feast of Corpus Christi was

English Reformation, 2nd ed. (London: Batsford, 1989) also notes that even before Henry’s death Protestant concepts “more advanced than those of Luther” and deriving mainly from Zurich, Strasbourg, and Geneva began to infiltrate England; these ideas were largely dominated by John Calvin’s theology (222). Moreover, Paul White in his article “Lewis Wager’s *Life and Repentaunce of Mary Magdalene* and John Calvin,” *Notes and Queries* 28.6 (1981): 508-12, notes that Calvin’s publications in English exceeded those of any author between the years 1548 and 1600 (512). I set this up as proof for my reliance on Calvin’s commentaries on Israel and the covenant even during the Edwardian period.

5

Patrick Collinson, “From Iconoclasm to Iconophobia,” *The Impact of the English Reformation: 1500-1640*, ed. Peter Marshall (London: Arnold, 1997) 297; Paul Whitfield White, *Theatre and Reformation: Protestantism, Patronage, and Playing in Tudor England* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993) 75.

instituted (1311) and its attending dramas staged. The episodes or “pageants” staged from sacred history during the Corpus Christi festival were selected to display the history of the world from creation to judgement. The central event of the cycle would revolve around Christ’s Passion but certain Old Testament episodes were included depending on their ability to represent figuratively the future birth, sacrifice, and resurrection of Christ. The figural interpretation of the Old Testament produced in the cycle drama made evident that the events and personages in the Tanach were merely shadows or bodily figures significant in that they point to the substance, body, and true spiritual reality found in Christ and the New Testament. The Israelites under the old Covenant lived a carnal life without comprehending the Law’s intention (with the exception of a few perceptive patriarchs and prophets) which was only understood by Christians who were able to discern the allegorical codes of the Old Testament made manifest in the New.

In Reformation thought, however, the Old and New Testaments were both the revered Word of God — the New no longer supplanted the Old and the Old was no longer a simple typological indicator of the New. Protestant typology existed but, as Barbara Lewalski notes, “the types constitute the symbolic dimension of the literal text” (123). Protestant formulation emphasized the continuities between the two covenants in regard to the spiritual condition of the faithful; even if Christ fulfilled the types and the Old Testament ceremonies were abrogated, both Israel and the Protestants depended on the signs of Scripture, themselves existing in a real historical dimension, for the expectation of the future (Lewalski 125-26). Both the Old Testament and the Jew hold a significant place even in the contemporary landscape, as correlatives and points on a historical time

line; but both find fulfillment only in Christ. In James Samuel Preus' study of Old Testament hermeneutics, Luther's image of Jews as the "Faithful Synagogue" indicates not shadowy figures but a nation waiting alongside the Christians, hoping for salvation. The Bible, including both testaments, and its translation from its original languages of Hebrew and Greek became a central endeavor of biblical scholars in both England and Geneva. The Protestant hermeneutic privileged literal as opposed to allegorical reading of the Bible, thereby granting the Old Testament its own sanctity and value. In William Tyndale's note to the reader prefacing his translation of the New Testament (1534), he claims that his marginal directives provide the "true key" (4) to opening the meaning of Scripture (unlike the "malicious hypocrites" who "leaven the scripture with glosses") since abstruse passages, read in context "maketh it plain enough" (3-4). Israel is accorded a status as a historically real people whose election is the basis for the Protestant's own chosen-ness.

Barbara Lewalski in her invaluable *Protestant Poetics* asserts that Reformation theology and the Protestant awareness of man's fallen state "dictated a shift in emphasis from *quid agas* to God's activity in us" (131). The individual Christian then could assimilate his individual life into the pattern of recapitulation and fulfillment found in Scripture and the lives recounted there. This led to a feeling of identification and correlation with the Israelites. The stories of the Old Testament, the patriarchs, and prophets were sources of inspiration, presenting individual encounters with the almighty God who elected and promised worthy people an everlasting covenant. The Protestant, fervently reading the Bible, imagined his life as re-enacting the cycle of reaffirmed

covenant throughout generations. The godly, interactive reader thus developed a personal relationship and parallel narrative with the Old Testament figures who were hand-picked by God.

Biblical plays, replaying many of these Old Testament episodes, are often categorized as distinct from the “secular” drama that emerges late in the second half of the sixteenth-century. Patrick Collinson places these plays in what he calls the first stage (out of three) of English Protestantism where existing cultural forms were employed as polemical weapons against its opponents. The second stage of the Reformation which he dates as beginning in 1580 was marked by the ascendancy of Puritanism and the rejection of the cultural media which now became as much an enemy as popery itself. The consequence of this rejection is the separation of the secular from the sacred, unprecedented in English cultural history (98). A representational barrier is constructed between the Jewish, biblical characters produced in early Protestant drama and later figures of Jews such as Barabas and Shylock; the audiences attending Marlowe and Shakespeare’s plays, however, may have seen one such early polemical drama played. These early dramas, often focusing on God’s promise to and covenant with the Jewish nation, provide an important context against which later plays must be considered. Although instruction in the reformed faith is often a goal of early Protestant biblical drama, the Israelite nation, authorized by God, becomes the acknowledged and envied paradigm that Protestants yearn not only to appropriate for themselves but to become. These plays begin to produce for a wide audience a visible affiliation with the Jews whose history offers Protestants as individuals and England as a nation the legacy of election.

Calvin and the Covenant: How to Get Elected

Seeing a biblical play and reading the biblical text did not only tell or inform, but played, re-formed, made tangible to the audience its own identity; the plays were not just recuperative, retelling the biblical stories, but reproductive, generating the story in the present and reconstructing the present in the chronology of the past in order to get closer to God. In the collected Elizabethan Homilies, the sermon, “A Fruitful Exhortation to the Reading of Holy Scripture” describes the transformative experience that occurs when one reads the testaments. The Bible is analogous to meat and drink that sustain the individual — the “food of the soul.” Scripture has the power to enter into the eyes, travel to the heart and then throughout the body of the devout reader like life-blood; God’s essence, then internally diffused, can divide “assunder” the soul and spirit, the joints and the marrow of the reader’s body (*Sermons* 3):

And in reading of God’s word, he not always most profiteth that is most ready in turning of the book, or in saying of it without the book; but he that is most *turned into it*, that is most inspired with the Holy Ghost, most in his heart and life altered and *changed into that thing which he readeth*. [emphasis added] (3-4)

The effects of this scriptural transubstantiation will depend upon the reader’s own participation; his ingestion of the text --its words and holiness -- can transform him into that sacred narrative when the words and precepts are written on his heart and become the motivators of his actions. The reformers had put reading of the Bible in place of the Mass as the ultimate climactic spiritual experience and the terms used to describe its

incorporation with the reader appropriate the ingestive and corporate language often associated with the Mass itself (Haller 52). The goal of reading Scripture is not only to *know* God but to *become* godly. For those who are illiterate, other cultural “texts” must be made available in the form of drawings, engravings, paintings, and especially plays. My interest here, however, is the way that such recapitulated experience modifies and transforms ideas about the Jews and Jewish nation. No longer abrogated and replaced, the nation of Israel is a paradigm redeemable through contemporary election. According to Calvin, elected individuals are chosen freely, but a covenant once made, cannot be broken (*Institutes* 3.21.7). Martin Bucer, whom Peter White argues exercised an even stronger influence in England than Luther, Calvin, or Zwingli, also stressed that election is eternal and denied that any name can be erased from the book of life (White 45).

According to Calvinist belief, God predetermines who will be chosen: “All are not created on equal terms, but some are preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation” (*Institutes* 206). The anonymous play *The History of Jacob and Esau* (1550-57) illustrates the doctrine of predestination: “Jacob was chosen, and Esau reprobate: / Jacob I love (sayde God) and Esau I hate” (Prologue 11-12). The Prologue offers the interpretive source of the story as Malachi and Romans which is also the scriptural basis for Calvin’s doctrine of election (*Institutes* 3.2.6).⁶ Although Jacob and Esau are two

6

Helen Thomas in her article “*Jacob and Esau*—“rigidly Calvinistic”?” *Studies in English Literature* 9 (1969): 199-213, argues against the idea that the *Institutes* was the source for the play since the prologue quote indicates God’s foreknowledge of man’s actions, implying mortal free will. Thomas claims the New Testament as the direct source, following closely sections of the Epistle of St Paul to the Romans. Taking Thomas into account, Paul Whitfield White, however, makes the point that *Jacob and Esau* exhibits a

brothers raised under “one tuition,” in the same household, with the same parents, Esau’s “yll inclination” accounts for his depraved nature. Despite the appearance of manipulation in Rebecca’s scheme to bestow Esau’s birthright upon her more worthy son, Jacob, God has actually informed her that Jacob is elected: “The one shal be a mightier people elect: / And the elder to the yonger shall be subject” (1.1.245-46). “[U]nthrif Esau,” Rebecca assures Jacob, “of God [is] reiected” (2.4.892). Esau’s reprobate status is manifest in his abominable behavior and habits of waking the neighbors at an early hour, physically and verbally abusing his servant Ragau, and of hunting until exhaustion. His depravity was predestined during his prenatal life when Rebecca was visited by God and informed of the future history of her twins.

What is illustrated in this drama is the complete divergence within two branches of a specifically chosen man’s family. Election is individually based and so, even if Isaac is promised grace, God may determine that one of his sons will be worthy of it and the other will not. Although Isaac bemoans Esau’s tardiness in uncovering the scheme that gave Jacob the eldest’s blessing, he concedes, “An other to thy blessing was predestinate” (4.3.1452). At the end of the play Israel is established as the first nation elected by God, “Of thine owne will thou didst Abraham electe, / Promising him seede as sterres of the

moderate and likely popular Calvinist position on reprobation and would have reflected the opinions of John Bradford, Martin Bucer, Peter Martyr, Ridley, Latimer, and other English Reformers of the time who defended divine determinism without completely acknowledging God’s part in reprobation, “Predestinarian Theology in the Mid-Tudor Play Jacob and Esau,” *Renaissance and Reformation* 24.4 (1988): 291-302. In book 3, chapter 21 of the *Institutes*, Calvin argues that God possesses both the attribute of foreknowledge (“all things are present”) and the power of eternal decree, predestination (175-76).

skie, / And them as thy chosen people to protecte” (5.10.1732-1734). However, although Abraham was elected, not all of his descendants will inherit as the additional criterion is personal, and not only national, election. The Poet states,

Yet not all fleshe did he then predestinate,
But onely the adopted children of promise:
For he foreknewe that many would degenerate,
And wylfully giue cause to be put from that blisse. (5.10.1747-1750)

Esau’s family name, then, does not insure him election just as the Jews, even as descendants of Abraham will not all be chosen since many have degenerated.

In Calvin’s discussion of predestination in the *Institutes of Christian Religion*, he addresses the issue of the Jews. Calvin cites numerous passages from Deuteronomy and Psalms proving God’s choice of the nation of Israel due to God’s free bestowal of his covenant and not as a result of Israel’s merit. Quoting from the prophets and particularly Isaiah, Calvin establishes that the future will involve the redemption of a select group of Jews:

“The Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel” (Isa. xiv.1). Referring to a future period, the gathering together of the dispersion, whom seemed to have been abandoned, he says that it will be a sign of a firm and stable election, notwithstanding of the apparent abandonment. (208)

Therefore, once the covenant is established with a specific nation, it is eternally binding but may be maintained with only a small remnant of the original group. Calvin offers

examples of rejected individuals such as Ishmael and Esau and “at last an innumerable multitude, almost the whole of Israel, “exhibiting the Jews’ ungratefulness (208). The election of the individual who must “ascend to the head in whom the heavenly Father hath connected his elect with each other, and bound them to himself by an indissoluble tie” is emphasized as the superior route (209). In the members of Christ “there is a far more excellent display of grace, because, those ingrafted into him as their head, never fail obtain salvation” (209). By way of faith in Christ the Christian elect will surpass the Jews and gain eternal grace.

The Poet at the close of *Jacob and Esau* offers the Protestant audience the possibility of becoming, through spiritual inheritance, the elected progeny of Abraham: “Thus if we do, we shall Abrahams chyldren be: / And come with Iacob to endlesse felicitie” (5.10.1767-1768). The literal hermeneutic defined Israel as an entity onto which Protestants could be engrafted — the coattails, so to speak, that would carry them to God. The actors and spectators answer “amen” to the Poet’s prayer incorporating Jacob’s blessing with their own inheritance of the patriarch’s bounty; in this form of scriptural transubstantiation, they insert themselves into the past story while concurrently transferring the past into the current Protestant milieu, fashioning themselves as a New Israel (White, *Theatre* 123). Each actor individually prays for the various members of English society; Isaac prays for the clergy, Rebecca for the Queen’s majesty, Jacob for the councillors, and Esau for the nobility and subjects of the realm. The history presented coalesces as both that of the Jewish people and the Protestant godly. The image of Isaac and Rebecca praying on behalf of English society (despite the fact that they are merely

players) produces for the audience the image of themselves as a New Israel directly connected to the Old. The shift from recounting Old Testament events to the Protestant's vision of himself as a participant in that continuing story grew out of the interiorization of religion and the active human consciousness that was a product of reformation faith. As James Siemon points out, sacraments are "bodies of stories only" – they replay a historical event in order for the individual to achieve that moment and in so doing he keeps alive within himself a historical truth (60). Invariably this Israel identification reconfigures the Jew at least in his historical personage as an exemplary figure. God's hand directed English events as understood through his relationship with Israel. The literal hermeneutic therefore suggested to Protestants that they understand themselves as kinds of Jews, albeit as those who lived before Christ's advent. I do not suggest that this makes them philo-Semites and Jew lovers; that would be an inappropriate and erroneous leap. Instead, a psychologically complex relationship develops where paradigm and example are incorporated with self-definition.

Becoming Israel

The beginning of the early modern period experiences a self consciousness about England's place on a time line in a particular historical space with the writing of historical chronicles about the English monarchy and nation by historians such as Raphael Holinshed, the mapping and histories of cities, landmarks, and counties by antiquarians such as John Stowe, and the later production of historical dramas by writers such as Marlowe and Shakespeare. Arguably, it is the awareness of the importance of one's temporal and spatial orientation, of one's place in the geographically delineated world,

with a particular context, inheritance, and individual purpose that will mark almost every area of early modern English life. The triumph of the reformed faith in England is an integral part of this historical self-consciousness.

The two most widely read books in sixteenth century England, the vernacular Bible and John Foxe's *Actes and Momuments*, both of which were chained in halls, cathedrals, parish churches, colleges, and various other public places, made biblical and modern apocalyptic history accessible everywhere (Haller 221). Even for those who were illiterate, the drawings and engravings that accompanied the texts and adorned their respective pages had to achieve the unification of both Testaments (in terms of the Bible) and illustrate the place of England and the Protestant believers within that chronicle (in terms of *Actes and Momuments*). The Geneva Bible, compiled by the exiles of Queen Mary's reign, was initiated under the direction of William Whittingham with Calvin's approval and first published in 1560. Despite the authorized publication of the Great Bible (1539), the Geneva version with its Calvinist glosses, became the popular choice of the English people (Collinson, "Coherence" 93). Widely disseminated, the Geneva Bible represents a pervasive cultural text whose words, glosses, and engravings would have been "read" by a large audience. Particularly significant is the frontispiece of a 1594 version of the Geneva Bible reprinted from earlier editions by Christopher Barker, the Queen's printer, who in 1577 purchased a patent that included the Old and New Testaments in English (*DLB* 1116) (Figure 1). This engraving employs passages from Exodus and Psalms indicating the trust required in God's salvation. The passage from

FIGURE 1

With most profitable Annotations upon all the hard places,
and other things of great importance.

Stand still, and behold the salvation of the Lords, which
he sheweth you this day. Exod. 14. 13.

Righteous: but the Lord delivereth

him out of them all. Psal. 34. 19.



Great are the troubles of the

The Lords shall fight for you, therefore hold ye
your peace. Exod. 14. 14.

PRINTED AT LONDON
by the Deputies of Christopher Barker, Printer to the
Queenes most excellent Majestie.

THE BIBLE:
THAT IS, THE HOLY SCRIPTURES CONTAINED IN THE OLDE AND NEW TESTAMENT.
TRANSLATED ACCORDING to the Hebrew and Greeke, and conferred with the best translations in divers languages.

With most profitable Annotations upon all the hard places, and other things of great importance.

For ye see, first fill, and behold the salvation of the Lords, which he will shew to you this day. Exod. 14. 13.

Righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all. Psal. 34. 19.

The Lords shall fight for you, therefore hold ye your peace. Exod. 14. 14.

PRINTED AT LONDON
by the Deputies of Christopher Barker, Printer to the
Queenes most excellent Majestie.

1594
Curt. 151165

FIGURE 1

Psalms, surrounding the top and sides of a square illustration located in the middle of the page, reads, "Great are the troubles of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all" (4.19). Mirroring the hope for personal salvation, the psalm offers strength to the godly who must, even in critical moments, trust that God will "fight for you," the chosen individual, as he did for the Jewish nation whom he freed from Egyptian slavery. The engraving depicts the nation of Israel standing at the Red Sea in the background as the Egyptian chariots pursue them in the right foreground. The reader's gaze is transfixed on the distant waters about to be parted, proleptically reading the event, almost willing it to happen -- to see the redemptive moment and become a participant. The passage above the engraving, spoken by Moses but meant here as well for the Protestant reader, says, "Feare ye not, stand still, and beholde the saluation of the Lorde, which he will shewe to you this day" (14.13) The "standing still" signifies Israel waiting at the edge of the sea but also represents the stillness of meditation -- of reading the Bible. Salvation is imminent for Israel but it is available to all through Scripture, in reading, in coming in contact with the divine spirit. At the core of this possibility though is the image of Israel, the words of the Torah.

In a 1583 English printing of the Geneva Bible by Christopher Barker a similar message is conveyed (Figure 2). The frontispiece must unite both testaments which have been translated from the Hebrew and the Greek. The 1583 version printed in London had decorative scrolling around the rectangular box containing the Bible's bibliographic information. At the top of the box is a picture of a closed Bible with the Latin words, "Verbum Dei Manet in Aeternvm," centering the Word as the medium of faith in the

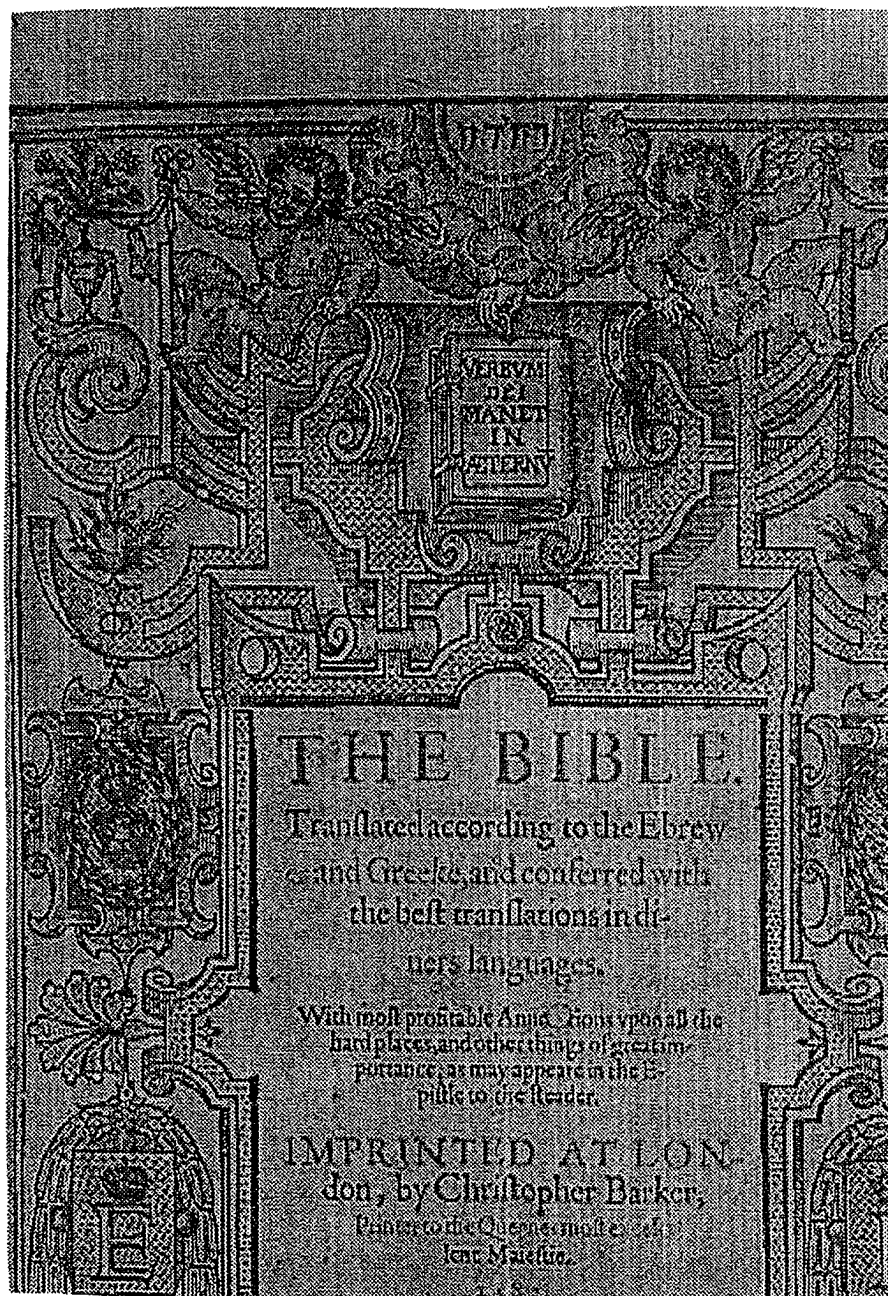


FIGURE 2

eternal God. The top of the Bible is held in the delicate fingers of a hand descending from a cloud which forms a semi circle at the top of the page; at the center of the radiating sphere of light is the Hebrew name of God. The core of emanation is again God himself, but conceived in Jewish terms in the language of the Torah; this indicates primacy as does the quote at the bottom of the page from Joshua which continued to be printed on almost all English copies of the Geneva Bible. Joshua instructs the Jews not to let “this Booke of the Lawe depart out of thy mouth, but meditate therein day and night” (1.8); such observance of the law will make the reader prosperous and successful. This cover introduced the Scriptures in their entirety and yet it is clearly centered on the nation and God of Israel.

One of the most important, widely read, and often printed texts in sixteenth century England was one that contextualized divine history and in fact was treated as a kind of appendix to the Bible; like Scripture, *Actes and Monuments* was read systematically or thoroughly (Collinson, *Birthpangs* 12); it was one of the many historical chronicles being written and printed in the Elizabethan age which provided English subjects with a legend which, when recounted, Scripture-like, “made them aware of themselves as a people having a common past full of meaning for the present” (Haller 149). Foxe explains that salvation history begins with the Old Testament where the people “exemplifieth and beareth a propheticall image to us declaring what is to be looked for in the universal church of God dispersed through the world, planted in Christ Jesus his son” (94). He uses this monumental book to create a history that is at once biblical and political, uniting the reformed Church with the Church of Israel, world history, and the

cosmic drama which began in eternity (Olsen 58). When the reader first picks up a copy of *Actes and Monuments*, the engravings depicting the physical torture of those martyred members of the true and invisible church make visible the spectacle of suffering and the vindication of truth (Collinson, *Birthpangs* 12). Foxe, in his epistle “To the true and faithfull congregation of Christ’s universal church” explains the necessity for his history in English:

For first, to see the simple stock of Christ, especially the unlearned sort, so miserably abused, and all for ignorane of historie, not knowing the course of times, and true descent of the Church, it pitied me, that part of diligence so long to have been unsupplied in this my country the church of England. (A2)

His book, he claims, is specifically aimed at edifying “the vulgar sort” whose only reading material is stories written by “monks or clients to the fee of Rome” and are completely unaware of Christ’s true church. Foxe’s text then, like the drama, becomes a didactic tool consisting of both linguistic and pictorial texts.

The frontispiece of Foxe’s 1570 edition depicting the Last Judgement divided the page into a right side showing the error of the Catholic (persecuting) Church and the left showing the true faith of the Reformed (persecuted) church (Figure 3). Contemporary Catholic worship is depicted in a box on the right hand bottom of the page in a desolate landscape; the procession that follows the clergy is headed into a distant nowhere towards the back of the scene while a group of people sit listening to a priest, counting their rosary beads, and looking distraught. Above the box is the historically constituted visible church,

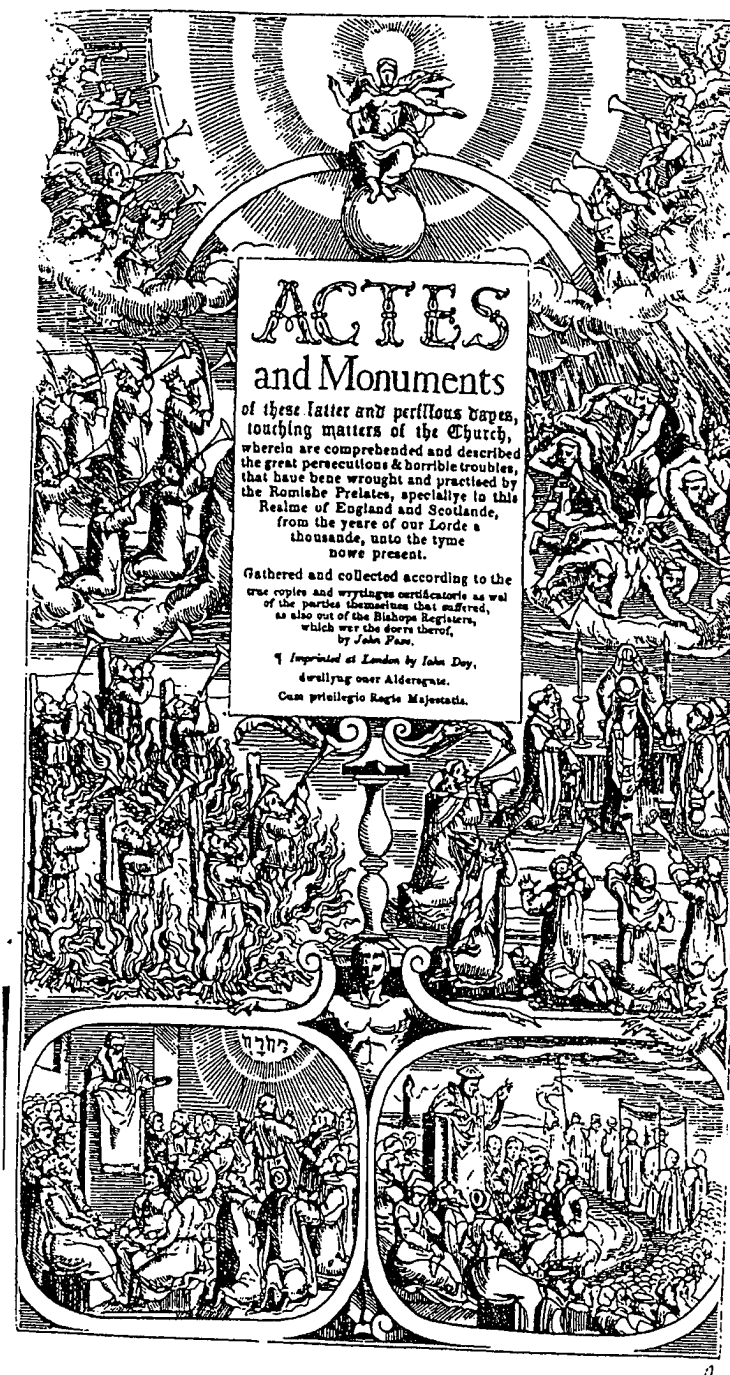


FIGURE 3

illustrated by the clergy's sanctification of the Host. The reformed church is depicted in a parallel spatial layout on the left side of the page; the bottom box contains the image of the true church, most of whom are seated and listening to a preacher with open bibles on their laps to which one or two individuals point as they listen, indicating the preaching and learning of God's Word. A group to the right of the preacher look upwards to an illuminated disc in which is written God's name as it appears in the Hebrew Bible. The elected believers who see this name have fallen to their knees in wonder; one man whose back is completely to the reader holds up his hands in a kind of surprised awe as he witnesses the revelation. Through reading of the Word and listening to preaching, chosen individuals bear witness to God who is formulated as a name. That name is written in the Hebrew as it appears in the Old Testament -- the source of illumination only paralleled in the Christ figure who sits atop a bow at the very horizontal top of the entire illustration emanating three rings of light. God's name in Hebrew emanates a singular ring of light but is clearly linked to the heavenly truth which finds Christ as its source. The illustration can be read as linear spiritual revelation with the boxed worship on either side of the lower page as contemporary antithetical forms of worship; the depiction above them illustrates past history of the true and false churches shown (respectively) by Protestants burned at the stake whose upward trumpets evangelically call for Christ. On the right is the elevation of the host by the clergy. In the spiritual realm above the Church of Rome, devilish figures turn back those trumpet calls upon the heads of the clergy as their service is rejected. The arrangement of the entire illustration depicting the history of faith on a cosmic and eternal scale is in the form of a cross, with Christian history divided into two

distinct sides, but Christ and heaven as the overarching image above the crosses implied horizontal line. If the Protestant reader is to locate himself within this scheme and illustration it would be in the boxed left hand corner with those true believers who look to the image of God as it is conceived in his word – the original, Hebrew word. His affiliation with the Old Testament and the entire history of Israel and the patriarchs as God's people is invoked by the image of Yahweh's sacred name as the source of divine grace. Israel and the Torah evidently become more than just example; Israel is incorporated in England in a way which both defines and elevates the English nation and its history. Protestants begin to define themselves as a nation not only like the Jews but as godly Jews, reformed Israel, who has adopted the spiritual inheritance of Israel.

Israel is accorded its status not only as God's nation but as his perpetually chosen nation in the anonymous Protestant biblical drama *A new enterlude of Godly Queen Hester* (c.1525-29). The Persian king Assuerus' (Xerxes) search for a bride signifies God's search for and rewarding of his grace. Hester is chosen as the queen for her humility and virtue, but her uncle Mardocheus warns her that if she is chosen she should remember "[i]t is of hys goodnes, bountie, and grace; / And for none youre merites, the truthe to bee seene" (172-173). Assuerus is doubly constructed as both mortal and divine king who chooses whom he will based not on merit or works but on his own inscrutable judgement. Moreover, Hester is suitable since she is "a virgin puer" (255) who is "[s]ober, sad, jentill, meke and demure" making her the perfect conduit for God's grace (257).

Hester is a Jew and is chosen from amongst a nation saved from the machinations

of the evil Aman, Assuerus' councillor, whose abusive actions affiliate him with Catholic misconduct. When Adulation claims that Aman completely manipulates the law, Pride wonders at the "divines that do preache" who should reprove such flattery (417). Adulation responds that the divines have left preaching and flatter as well, an inevitable result of the corrupted environment of the Catholic Church:

They solde theyr wol, and purchased a bull,
 Wyth a pluralitye..
 And lefte predication, and toke adulation,
 And what by mendation, and dyspensation,
 They gat the nomynation of every good benefyce. (430-434)

The divines use the means available to them through Catholic practice — papal bulls and dispensations — to make themselves rich while cheating the people. Aman, as vice figure, is aligned with Catholics in opposition to the Jews who emerge here as chosen and victorious.

Ruth Blackburn notes that Aman's greed and thievery were devised as an attack on Cardinal Wolsey whom Aman is said to represent in the tradition of writers such as Skelton. She argues that the play was written by a Catholic, its composition date being placed more than thirty years before the first printed edition in 1561; however, *Queen Hester's* emphasis on election, personal prayer, scriptural history, and the elevated status of the Jews indicates dominant Protestant thought.⁷ Aman, in league with the clergy, is afraid the reform movement will eliminate his source of power, the greed and ambition of

⁷ Ruth Blackburn, *Biblical Drama Under the Tudors* (The Hague: Mouton, 1971) 74-76.

the Church; he says, “Fooles let the reformation of common wele” (668).

Furthermore, there are distinct similarities between the Jews of Hester’s story and the early modern Protestants in England. Aman tells Assuerus that the Jews pose a danger to the realm as a result of their habit of “[w]ith in them selfe dwellyng, deseuered from our nation”(729) and, he argues, they actively proselytize (734) :

By they new lawes they think to convince,
 And eke draw unto theyr conversation,
 And unto their ceremonyes and faction,
 Of our people as many as may be,
 Intendyng to sub dew all gentilitie. (730-734)

Jews are thus stigmatized by Aman much as the early reformers were attacked by their Catholic opponents. Conversion to Judaism involves sectarianism, national betrayal, and a reduction to crudity. The Jews are a “not goode” (727) people whose laws are described as “new,” untraditional, the product of dissension (730). This depiction of the Jews parallels that of the godly in the early reformation years — dispersed throughout the realm, converting through peaching, offering a “new” version of Christianity, and perceived by many as a “faction.”

Aman also tries to accuse the wealthy Jews of greed, claiming they refuse hospitality to the poor meanwhile hiding their possessions amongst themselves and “lyvyng voluptuouslye” (939). Hester’s response to Aman’s slander is to recount the greatness of the Jews as narrated in the Bible:

Is not of Abraham the hospytallyte

In Scripture noted, and of noble fame,

.....

Both Isaake and Jacob had a lyke name,

Of whom the twelve tribes descended be,

Which ever dyd maintaine hospitalyte.

Sinse God, therefore hath begunne theyr housholde,

And ay hath preserved theyr hospitallite

I advise no man be so bolde,

The same to dissolve, what so euer he be. (950-960)

Abraham and his family's generosity is evidence of a history of Jewish philanthropy that began when God elected the Jews. Hester incorporates the Jews dwelling in Assuerus' "region" with those direct inheritors of God's promise: "It is with them as always hath bene / Sins the beginning of their possession, / Which God to them gave, of His mere mocion" (945-947). Since God first blessed them in Genesis, he continued to preserve Jewish hospitality indicating that the Jews of contemporary Persia exhibit the same marks of God's blessing as Abraham and Isaac. Aman's accusation that the Jews represent a faction who practice their own laws and will not be made subject to the king is never addressed; rather, Aman's guilt is affirmed solely on the basis of scriptural evidence and the idea of God's continuing covenant with the Jews.

When Aman is hanged, the Jews are restored to their former place of honor.

Hester reveals Mardocheus to be a gentleman whose lineage descends from "stocke of Beniaminy" (1065). The admiration engendered by Mardocheus' link to the twelve tribes

motivates Assuerus to give him the King's ring and seal. The decree against the Jews is revoked and Hester advises Assuerus that if any Jew in his realm breaks the law he must be reminded to observe "that law God gave them by Moses" (1088):

The Jewes be the people of God elected,
 And weare his badge of cyrcumcision.
 The dayly prayer of that hole secte,
 As the Psalmes of David by gostly inspiraction,
 Eke holy ceremonies of Gods provision
 To God is vaileable, that nothing greater,
 And al the whole realme for them fares the better. (1089-1095).

The reverence of Jews and their adherence to Mosaic law is not only advocated here but endorsed as a protective blessing for the whole realm in which they live. Such a sanction, and finally Assuerus' command, read to all the realm, that the Jews should "duely" keep their laws and "not from them square" is the result of an almost philo-Semitic sentiment (1142). Circumcision as a sign of the covenant is not reviled as useless and un-spiritual in a post-advent age but is prized as a badge — a ritual practice that immediately invites God's favor; the inward prayer of the Jews, especially as represented by the psalms, a favorite source for English Protestants, points to the sustained power of Jewish ritual coupled with the godly inner life that fortifies Israel's place as elected nation. The scribe warns that "no man" hurt the Jews since they are God's people. *Godly Queen Hester* demonstrates God's operation within history, making promise available in a contemporary space and confirming the Protestant idea that history was the process whereby God sifted

out the souls of his elect through trial and conflict (Haller 135-36). The Jews are given distinction here not only as precursors to the godly elect but as worthy for being themselves. This reading of them as a nation chosen and persisting through history with the mark of election yet upon them could only have come from a particularly Calvinist hermeneutic that emerges into English Protestantism.

Still Stubborn

The story of Esther is used by William Perkins, in his treatise “A Reformed Catholic,” not to wholly embrace the Jewish nation but to illustrate one half of two emphatic but diametrically-opposed images of Jews that coexist within Reformed ideology. He first explains the story of Esther as one that demonstrates the power of the Jewish nation. He lists three kinds of societies that offer members “many freedoms and privileges” and so become desirable for inclusion. The first community is the true church of saints and the last community mentioned is the believers in Christ who can thus become “new creatures” joined through him to the “true church of god.” Sandwiched between the true church (the end) and the visible church (the means) is the example of Esther and the Jews: “When Esther had procured safety for the Jews and liberty to revenge themselves upon their enemies, it is said that many of the people of the land became Jews” (570). When God acts on behalf of a nation, election is demonstrated and people are drawn to that community. Perkins does not choose an example from the Torah where many paradigmatic election stories are found but uses a story where Israel exists as an exiled nation, cast out of their land, living as strangers. The story of Esther is filled with historical self-consciousness as the Jews are a minority whose chosen-ness seems occluded

by their inferior political and social position; and yet, God clearly works on their behalf. Only a scant few paragraphs later, however, Perkins refers to the (contemporary) Jews and Turks as atheists who don't acknowledge the savior Christ along with anyone who conceives of God out of the trinity (571). When the Jews are represented as chosen nation, they appear as ideal and thus distinct from real Jews who will not convert and accept Christ. The Jews who live after the New Testament story remain divided from their kin in the Old Testament one.

Appropriating the Israel paradigm and the inheritance of spiritual favor necessitated the re-centering of the Protestant elect and de-centering of Israel. The remnant of the faithful Jews would now be appended to the godly chosen as they would continue the covenant and surpass Israel through faith in Christ. The Old Testament Jews require close affiliation as the prototypical godly nation but New Testament and contemporary Jews are marginalized for their refusal to believe. This delicate negotiation is demonstrated by yet another Geneva Bible frontispiece (1614) reprinted numerous times in the seventeenth century and possibly as early as 1599 (Figure 4).⁸ The central heart of the engraving is surrounded by four ovals forming a square each, with a portrait of one of the evangelists - - Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John making the New Testament text the central narrative. The evangelists diligently pen their texts; their work represents the love

⁸

The earliest date of this frontispiece is *Short Title Catalogue* number 2180 although the date remains questionable. This frontispiece began to be printed when Robert Barker was granted the reversion for life by Queen Elizabeth of the office of the queen's printer after his father, Christopher's death. He then possessed the right of printing English bibles, books of common prayer, statutes, and proclamations. He first started printing Genevan Bibles with his own imprint in 1600, *DLB* vol 1 1127-28.

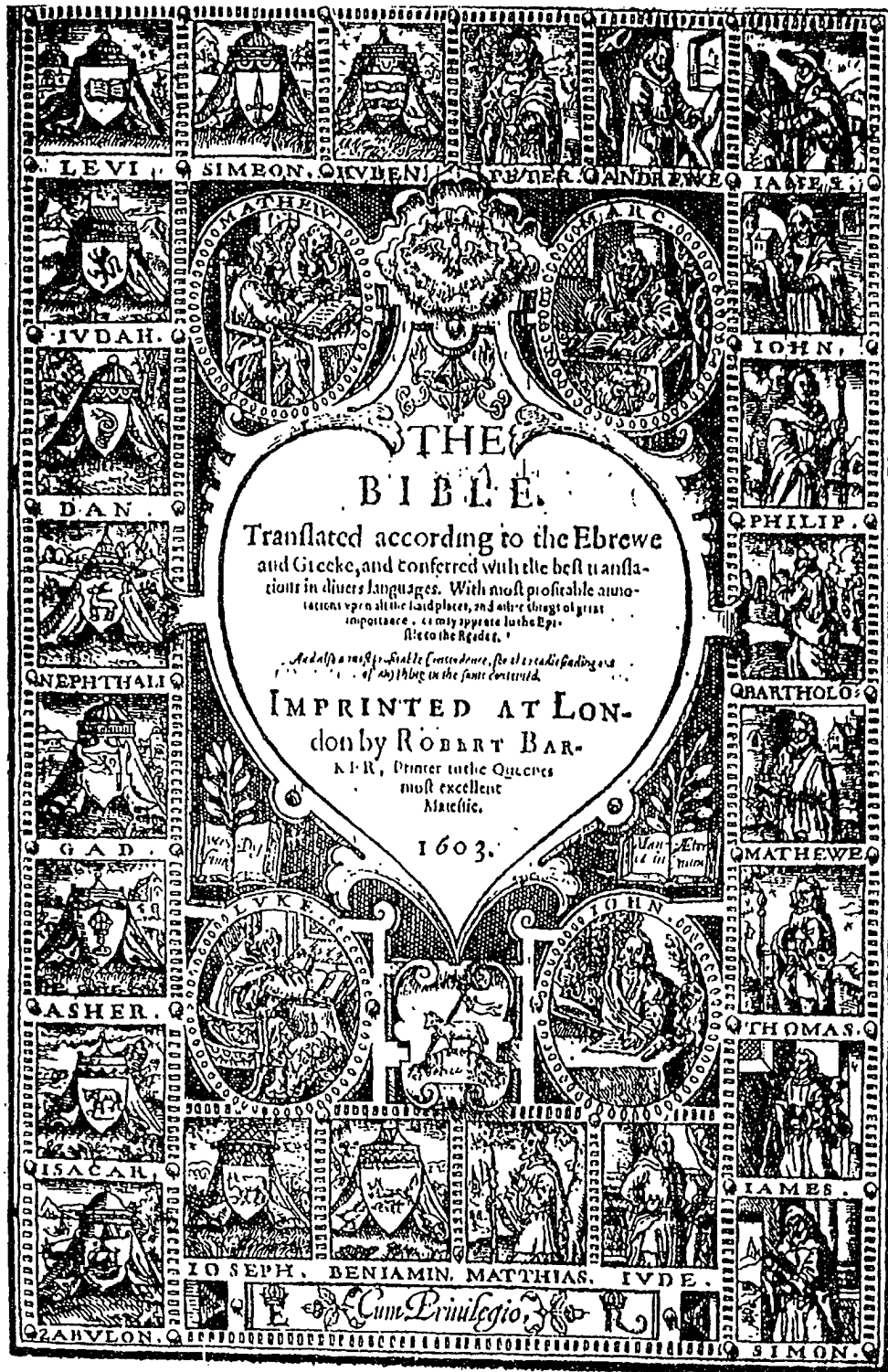


FIGURE 4

symbolized by the heart which contains the title of the Bible and its bibliographic information. Surrounding the gospels is a frame of boxes that are equally divided on the right side into depictions of the apostles and on the left, into the twelve tribes of Israel. The apostles are depicted in appropriate dress with relevant scenery, individualized facial features, and distinguishing accouterments.

The twelve tribes of Israel, on the other hand, are missing faces or portraits, signified only by tents covered with shields engraved with various symbols representing each of Jacob's son as described in Genesis 49. Entry to the tent's interior is blocked by the symbol itself, so that the sons become emblematic of nationhood. The shield signifies strength but the tent is an enclosure which occludes its contents and becomes a mysterious space into which Protestants may insert themselves. The entire piece, in fact, is a set of enclosures with the frame of tribes and apostles encasing the evangelists and two images of Christ at the top and bottom of the heart (the lamb and the phoenix) which then enclose the heart encasing the title of the Bible. The heart signifies the faith of the reader who must determine the meaning of all the signs available in Scripture. The Jewish nation plays an important role in the election image and is incorporated, taken into the heart and mind of the reader, but whose authority must be contained and restrained. The reader's eyes can take in the symbol and strength of Jewish nationhood and use it, identify with it as it pertains to the framework laid out for him here. Despite the idealized image of Israel woven out of Protestant desire for personal and national election, the image is appropriated but not completely empowered to sustain itself. This contradiction in Protestantism's approach to the Jewish nation signifies a desire for a return to Old

Testament history with Protestants replacing Jews as the heroic nation of God. It is one thing for Israel to be a historically real nation and quite another for that image to generate comparative or superlative power to that of the Church.

The Old Testament, while offering paradigm and example, represented the Protestant individual and the English nation whose history continues through the New Testament and depends on faith in Christ; as Thomas Luxon argues, allegory is still allegory. The Israelite nation was not independent from the church but was always understood in relation to, as inherited by, waiting for. Archbishop Cranmer's Forty Two Articles of Religion (promulgated in June 1553 under Edward VI, implemented in 1571, and eventually printed in editions of the Book of Common Prayer (1662)) represent the "official stance" on the place of the Old Testament in Protestant thought. Article 6 claims that the Old Testament should not be refused. The 1553 edition read: "The Old Testament is not to be put away as though it were contrary to the New, but to be kept still: for both in the old and new Testaments, everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ, who is the only mediator between God and man" (Bray 289). The 1563 and 1571 edition revised this explanation:

Although the law given from God by Moses, as touching ceremonies and rites, do not bind Christian men, nor the civil precepts thereof, ought of necessity to be received in any commonwealth; yet notwithstanding, no Christian man whatsoever is free from the obedience of the commandments which are called Moral. (289)

Both the Tanach and the Jew have a place in the contemporary historical landscape

although they must find fulfillment in Christ and the New Testament. The Jewish Scriptures are the first component of an ordered program to becoming godly. John Calvin in his *Commentary on Corinthians* (3:6) elucidates, “[I]t is the function of the Law to show us the disease without offering any hope of a cure, and it is the function of the Gospel to provide the remedy for those in despair” (*Calvin’s Commentaries* 45).

Although the individuals in the Tanach are models of election, the Jews and Pharisees depicted in the New Testament provide a powerful negative counter. Not only do they participate in deicide in the Christian story but they are contemporaneously stigmatized as Catholics who trust in superstitious and idolatrous practices. Jewish culpability is repeatedly manifest in their adherence to the Law versus the Gospel since they only see half the picture, read half the text, and participate in half of divine history. William Tyndale, in his preface to his vernacular translation of the New Testament, explains the inaccessibility of true Scriptural meaning to the Jews:

[A]s Christ testifieth how that the scribes and Pharisees had to shut it up (Matt. 23) and had taken away the key of knowledge (Luke 11) that the Jews which though themselves within, were yet so locked out, and are to this day that they can understand no sentence of the scripture unto their salvation, though they can rehearse the texts everywhere and dispute thereof as subtly as the popish doctors of dunces’ dark learning, which with their sophistry, served us, as the Pharisees did the Jews. (3)

The Old Law is perceived as merely punitive whereas the Gospel represents love, grace, and the tangibility of God’s spirit through Christ:

If therefore the Jews seek for Christ in the Law, the truth of God will appear clearly to them but, as long as they wish to be wise without Christ, they will wander in darkness and never reach the true meaning of the Law. And what is said of the Law applies to the whole of Scripture, for when it is not taken as referring to Christ, its one aim and centre (*ad unicum scopum*) it is distorted and perverted. (*Calvin's Commentaries* 48)

Calvin believed that the two testaments and covenants were “one and the same,” but it is Christ as foundation and substance that connects them.

Although the scriptures are central to the godly life, in the end only faith in Christ can save anyone. Article 18 of Cranmer's articles lists the other churches — of Jerusalem, Alexandria, Antioch, and of course Rome (listed in article 20) as having erred in their ceremonies, living, and matters of faith:

They also are to be held accursed that presume to say that every man shall be saved by the law or sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to the law, and the light of nature. For Holy Scripture doth set out unto us only the name of Jesus Christ, whereby men must be saved. (Bray 295)

Despite the biblical history of the Jews, their representative status as chosen nation, and the morality of the Mosaic laws, rejection of Christ condemns them even in the formulations of the Reformed Church.

Producing Jewish Error

Protestant drama required its playwrights to cast biblical episodes in a new

theological framework as well as clarify the scriptural relation to contemporary godly life. Lewis Wager's Protestant saint play, *An enterlude of the Repentaunce of Mary Magdalene* (1550-66), produces a program for repentance of sin, illustrates election and grace, and positions the Jew within that scheme as chosen but depraved since the New Testament is its source. The play is split into the first half where Mary Magdalene, vain and sensual, manipulated by the allegorical vices, advances further into sin, and then repents; the second half of the drama tells the story of Simon the Pharisee, also a sinner, who persists in Jewish practice, and ultimately rejects Christ when offered grace. The drama then returns to the reformed Mary in the last scene; an emphatic contrast to Simon, she is now accompanied by Justification and subsequently joined by Love who sums up the program for salvation.⁹

Mary's sin(s) is her "wanton" behavior visible the moment she comes on stage fuming and ranting against her tailor for ruining her dress and appearance; she is drawn to Infidelitie's lewd comments and yearns to "be plesant to euery mans eye" (308). As Infidelitie, Cupidite, and Carnall Concupiscence befriend and advise her in the first act of the play the audience is witness to and participant in her seduction; the figures discuss her body frankly, fondle and caress her, and give her detailed tips for debauchery, sinfully arousing both Mary and the spectators. She so completely succumbs to the vices that she will sleep with any man she finds in her bed even before she is aware of his identity.

9

See Paul White, "Lewis Wager's *Life and Repentaunce of Mary Magdalene* and John Calvin" *Notes and Queries* 28.6 (1981): 508-512, where White lists side by side the almost identical passages from Wager's play and Calvin's *Institutes* and demonstrate how the play reflects Calvinist thought.

Christ's unmerited offer to forgive her for sins (and the audience, by extension, for their own lustful thoughts) is clearly benevolent. The progress of the individual soul from sinning and repenting to chosen and saved is produced for the audience while simultaneously reproducing the repentant impulse in the spectators' hearts.

Mary first begins to feel guilt for her immoral transgressions when the image of Lawe of God carrying two stone tablets "pricketh" (1150) her conscience (pun intended) causing her to reconsider her promiscuous behavior. The Lawe describes how sin is punished in his text which is designed to instill fear, but, he continues, all of his contents are shadows of God's son's majesty: only believing in Christ leads to salvation. At the same time, however, the Lawe of God represents the Jews as the ideal chosen nation: "A peculiar people to him selfe he had elected, / Comming of the stocke of faithfull Abraham" (1117-18). The Jews are designated as elect nation but in refusing to accept Christ they continue to be controlled by Infidelity, whom the Jews call "Moysaicall Justice"(107) and "Legall Iustice" (473); they mislabel Malicious Judgement "true intellection of the law" demonstrating their obvious blindness to truth. The audience is privileged in its ability to see the allegories for what they are, making the Jews' obtuseness even more palpable.

The basis for Infidelitie's claim that he is "best amongst the Jews" certainly stems from this stubbornness and refusal to believe as exemplified by Simon the Pharisee. Christ tells Simon that he cannot properly fulfill the law since Simon requires "god's spirite" and "love": "Serch the Scriptures, for you think in your mind / That in them you shall obtaine life eternall, / Them to beare witnessse of me you shall fynde, / How I am the sonne of the liuying God immortall" (1737-1740). Simon's problem is his hermeneutic block -- his

inability to read the Scripture outside of Jewish exegesis where time and law end with the last page of Tanach. Both testaments, however, are to be perceived as a unit infused with the same holy spirit. Calvin claims that Christ cannot properly be known in any other way than from the Scriptures (meaning the Old Testament): “[F]or it was not in the gospel that Christ first began to be manifested, but, having received testimony from the law and the prophets, he was openly exhibited in the gospel” (*Commentaries on John 5:39*).

Malicious Judgment, associating himself as “we” the Jewish community, argues that the Jews cannot accept Christ as the messiah since calling oneself the son of God and condemning traditional law is blasphemous. Infidelitie appeals to their elected status as proof of the verity of Jewish belief: “They come of Abrahams stocke and holy sede, / And thou saiest that they beleue all amisse” (1383-1384). Despite this entreaty, Simon’s sin is his belief in only “obseruances externall”(1996). While Mary has completely converted Simon prepares “sacrifice” for the “euenyng service” (2045); clearly idolatrous in orientation, this form of worship will provide a convenient correlation to Catholic ritual incorporating Judaism and Catholicism as the carnal and misguided opponents of the much more spiritual Protestantism. Simon, suspicious of Christ and the potential influence of his teaching, tells Infidelitie to follow Christ and report back his actions so that Simon can “cause the byshops hym to examine” (2036). The use of the word “byshops” intentionally draws upon the contemporary associations of Catholic contempt of true faith. Infidelitie earlier claims that he makes bishops and pharisees “more hard hearted” so they cannot be converted nor win grace; his first gesture of the play, in fact, is to mock the mass as he enters the stage parodying the sacrament where “euery man brought in his own dish” to

eat “wonderfull good fare” (91, 92). Both Catholics and Jew, then, become a combined and conflated signifier for perverted, iconographic religious practice. Christ offers Simon grace but is rejected, signifying God’s sustained attachment to the Jews; if they reject Christ they too will experience exclusion from the true community of elected believers.

John Bale similarly used anti-Catholic propaganda to promote Protestantism while maintaining that Jewish election is dependent on faith in Christ. In *A Comedy Concerning Three Lawes of Nature, Moses, and Christ* (1538) the vices are almost all dressed as Catholic clergy except for Covetousness who is dressed as a pharisee; Sodomy is dressed like a monk, Ambition like a bishop, False Doctor like a popish doctor, and Hypocrisy like a grey friar. These evil figures who both represent and subvert the authority of Catholic ceremony and clergy correlate with the carnal Jew depicted in the New Testament, patristic commentary, and specifically in the typological hermeneutic. Infidelity integrates the two heretical groups as he boasts of influencing characters such as Judas and Simon “[a]nd now I persever amonge the ranke and rable of papystes” (5.1877). Sodomy also claims, “I dwelte among the Sodomytes, / The Benjamytes, and Madyanytes, / And now the Popysh hypocrytes / Embrace me every where” (2.571-574). The perversion of religion evident in both Jewish and popish practice, spans historical time; Natural Law can claim that the Pope is “Master of Gomor and Sodom” since Protestants define themselves, in part, by the continued struggle against Rome and all idolaters. At the same time, however, that Jews and Catholics are maligned for their belief in “outward ceremony,” the image and nomenclature of Israel as God’s chosen is appropriated to (re)define Protestant purpose. The title identifies the three laws (natural, Jewish, Christian) as working

together, as a unit, but they are listed in their chronological order ascending to the most sacred. Mosaic law is meant to raise man while Christ's law will save him, requiring Moses to acknowledge that he is a middle man since only Christ can pay "man's ransom." Although the Old Testament precepts and rituals are "commendable," they require Christ's spirit and are reduced to typology. Moses himself explains the value of ceremonial rites:

Whych are unto Christ as fygurs, types and
shadowes.

As Paule doth declare, in hys Pystle to the
Hebrues,

These are only fygures and outwarde testimonyes,

No man is perfyght by soch darke ceremonyes. (3.940-943)

Moseh Lex further explains that when Christ dies the "whole Judaycal presthode" is completed (3.946). To emphasize further the antiquated practice of Mosaic ritual, the prophet is blinded by Infidelitie as if he had been physically transformed into the sightless text. Once God restores each of the three laws to their previous state, Christ's Law says, "A lyght Thu hast sent whych is Thy joyouse Gospell / To the consolacyon of the Howse of Israel" (5.1951-1952) In other words, the Jews are still salvageable if they accept the gospel and Christ.

The Protestants construct themselves as chosen through the very terms and history of the Jews. Deus Pater says:

A New Hierusalem the sayd Johan also se,

As a bewtyfull bryde prepared to her husbande.
 Our true faythfull churche is that same fayr cytie
 Whom We have censed by the power of Our ryght
 hande. (5.1910-1913)

The new holy city is in the simile of these first two lines, “as” a beautiful bride, but the last two lines equate the church and the new Jerusalem; the church is reincarnated. It must be placed squarely on the time line of promise and election and Bale achieves this through linguistic rehearsal and recapitulation — Jerusalem purified becomes the fair Church.

Deus Pater’s restoration of the three laws of Nature, Moses, and Christ parallels the restoration of truth to England by the “late Josias and Kynge Henrye” (5.2064).

Henry, then, in the real contemporaneous space of sixteenth-century England is an agent of God, here ennobled and mythicized in his reforming practices:

No prynce afore hym toke ever yet soch payne
 From Englande to bannysh Idolatrye and fowle
 Sodomye,
 Covetousnes, Ambycyon, False Doctryne, and
 Hypocresye.
 It was he that brought Christes veryte to lyght
 Whan he put the Pope with hys fylthynes to
 flyght. (5.2065-2069)

The three laws whose story has been told in a timeless plot are now restored and strengthened in the political and temporal space of sixteenth century England. Henry and

his “noble sonne Edwarde, soch a kynge of God elect” have been appointed to fortify the true path and unite the laws (5.2033). The play ends with a recitation of the ten commandments signifying the back to basics understanding in both the historical and spiritual restitution the reformed church meant to accomplish. Lewalski attributes this assimilation of events and circumstances of contemporary history into the providential scheme of fulfillment through time to the Protestant modification of typological exegesis (129). The divide between the two covenants (old and new) is narrowed and the history of God and his chosen originating in the Old Testament continues to replay and fulfill itself particularly in an age self-consciously attempting self-purification and a return to God.

The apocalyptic strains available in *Three Laws* and the sense that a great historical and spiritual crisis was at hand are formative and central components of Reformation culture. The paradigmatic role of Israel and the sacred value re-allotted to the Old Testament would seemingly redeem the Jews in English eyes. Although Hebrew scripture generates such strong imaginative and correlative power, it still competes with New Testament representations of Jews as antithetical image. In addition, the Protestant doctrine of *sola fide*, faith alone, holds the Jews responsible for conversion to faith in Christ. In the seventeenth century, the Protestant vision of history and eschatological fulfillment depended on both the faith of the godly and the ultimate conversion of the Jews. The tension between these two representations of the Jew as model elect and the Jew as Pharisee/depraved misbeliever is sustained through what sometimes appear to be self-contradictory approaches to the same nation. Protestantism alternatively promotes itself through affiliation with an idealized Israel which fights against Catholic practice and

through its repudiation of the ignoble Jews who, like the Catholics, persist in idolatrous practice. Either way though, the proximity to Israel, and the centrality of its contemporary status in God's plan for England and the fulfillment of history is a direct product of the literal hermeneutic and subsequent recuperation of the Old Testament.

3: Through the Looking Glass: Reflections of Israel

At all times God is with the just
 Because they put in him their trust.
 Who shall therefore from Sion give
 That health which hangeth in our belief?
 When god shall take from his the smart,
 Then will Jacob rejoice in heart.

Praise to God.

Elizabeth I, "Psalm 13"

Protestant theology focused on man's natural depravity and stressed the dichotomy between the elect and the damned, while glorifying the power of repentance. Arthur Dent in his extremely popular guidebook, *The Plain Man's Path-way to Heaven* (1601), makes clear that if a man be in a state of nature versus a state of grace, he can do nothing that is acceptable to God, and is indeed "under the tyranny and dominion of Satan" (8). In the state of nature, men may do good actions but they fail in the manner of doing them; the interior state of faith, love, zeal, conscience, and obedience is absent and these men cannot possess "the proper cheerfulness and delight" regardless of their actions or faith.

According to historian J.J. Scarisbrick, Protestantism asked that people "should stand head high and wholly on their feet *and* acknowledge their total dependance on an inscrutable, incomprehensible deity" (163). They had to face up to their own vile sinfulness and to the awesome fact that they were already predestined to Heaven or Hell by the "irreversible and unmerited decree of God" (163). God was both an absolute power

and the “unappeasable alien other” even to those assured of grace (164). The Protestant believer inevitably experienced a sense of inadequacy even as he was assured of his election; anxious self-examination was perpetually required as there were sins still undetected. Everyone who believed himself elected had to be constantly thinking, speculating, and experiencing uncertainty as to the manner of his deeds and God’s perception of them; as Alan Sinfield has argued this anguish must have been a great generator of self consciousness (159). The faithful often looked to models or examples in which his own fate or destiny could be perceived, leading to an enabling process of comparison, edification, and amendment.

The mirror, reflecting man’s state, becomes a useful and popular method of representing vice and virtue to both the individual believer and nation of England as a whole. The way in which Israel figures in the glass as a complementary likeness to England, reveals the close affiliation between the two nations in England’s collective religious psyche. James Shapiro has argued that English character could be defined by its need to exclude Jewishness which threatened religious and social identities (7), but the reformed faith modeled itself on Israel’s election and even on their eventual rejection. Various images of Jewishness circulated in England during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries – the image of medieval ritual murderers, marranos/dissimulators, usurers, coin clippers, etc. — all of which have been examined often by historians and literary scholars; but the elected nation of Israel, the events and characters of the Old Testament, and the language and prophecy of the Hebrew scriptures possessed a powerful hold on the cultural mind of reformed England where the Bible, as Christopher Hill has argued, and especially

the Old Testament, was at the crossroads for most men and women in all their thinking (34); as Debora Shuger writes, the bible was “the cultural matrix for explorations of virtually every topic” (*Habits of Thought* 6). The availability of the vernacular Bible led to an increased knowledge specifically of the Old Testament characters and stories which according to Patrick Collinson were applied to England *ad nauseam*: “These people were living, in a sense, in the pages of the Bible. Theirs was a mode of discovering a shared identity which was indirect and is somewhat mysterious to us, but it was as meaningful as those other processes of England’s self-discovery which involved chroniclers, antiquarians, topographers, surveyors, and map-makers” (*Birthpangs* 10-11).

These biblical images should not be underestimated in offering an alternative vision of Israel, one with which England was very closely affiliated and upon which a portion of its own self-identification and self-perception was predicated. Barbara Lewalski writes that Christians discerning typological patterns in Old and New Testament salvation history perceived those events and figures not merely as exemplary but as recapitulated in their own lives – this experience she calls correlative and claims that it exists in the same Protestant religious economy that conceived of Jews as an antitype, whose Law puts them at a disadvantage to those who benefit from the Gospel (131-132). Lewalski writes,

When the emphasis is upon the great benefits and advantages the Christian enjoys in his religious life, the ease and comfort of the Gospel in comparison to the Law, the Christian may see himself (through Christ) as an antitype of the Israelite of old. But when on the other hand he concentrates upon his essential spiritual life and situation, his dependence

upon faith and his imperfect spiritual vision in this life, he is more likely to view himself as a correlative type with the Old Testament Israelites.

(132)

The symbolic mirror is an image or trope through which much of this relationship may be examined since England's reflection often represented in early modern textual mirrors is both Israel (correlative) and not-Israel (anti-type). I would suggest that some examples of Protestant mirror-images where Israel stares back at England in the glass are more nuanced than Lewalski outlines in *Protestant Poetics*, concomitantly demonstrating the positive attributes of Israel that England takes for itself such as the coopted voice of the arch-penitent King David as well as the destructive sinning Christians hope to avoid. A significant point is both the way such mirrors function to reflect back to England and individual Protestants not only their own personal or collective faces but the image of what they aspire to be or not to be. The mirror enables self-correction and Israel as the reflected image offers a variety of possibilities ranging from ideal to depraved.

I will examine the manner in which varying images of Israel are constructed as reflections of England. In so doing I look specifically at extant cultural material capable of broad public presentation, mostly in the form of plays and sermons, but incorporated as well in poetry or polemical tracts. Drama and sermons were the most frequent and widespread method of conveying ideas despite the anti-theatrical debate that seems to have pitted dramatists and theater-goers against the godly and preachers. Paul Whitfield White claims that the views of anti-theatricalists such as Gosson, Stubbes, and Prynne represent extreme positions and in reality many Protestant leaders eventually accepted

theater-going as a suitable recreation. During the 1590s there were popular biblical plays and domestic or homiletic tragedies as well as Protestant saint plays that would have appealed to protestant values, models of piety, and moral conduct (*Theatre and Reformation* 173-174). Preaching was another public medium, visibly available in churches and in the streets, directing the hearts and minds of the people; it was the heart of edification (MacCullough 86). Both mediums, drama and preaching, are culturally produced and productive, and in the case of Israel work to demonstrate both the godly and sinful nature and actions of which Israel's inheritors were capable.

Representing Representations

A text meant to show man's weakness to himself was Stephen Gosson's translation of *The Miserie of Man, The Mirror of Man's Life* (1555) with its bleak subtitle: *Plainely describing What weake moulds were made of what miseries we are subject unto, how uncertaine this life is, and what shal be our end*. Reading the table of contents is enough to make a man repentant if not suicidal. The text itself is labeled a mirror through which man is reflected as a miserable, sinning, depraved creature; the reading or viewing of this image will hopefully motivate the reader to amend his ways before he dies. The reflection in the mirror, the text as glass, is not of one particular face but of all mankind, revealing his general vices. It does however seem that mirror is not the appropriate image here. Indeed Deborah Shuger, in a fascinating article, "The 'I' of the Beholder," argues that Renaissance mirrors often act as a painting or window through which one may see a scene or example that functions as a spiritual guide, enabling self correction (30-1). Typically, the Renaissance viewer looking in the mirror sees an exemplary image which can be either

positive or negative (22). The verbal or pictorial representations of mirrors, as Shuger explains it, which do not reflect the “self,” tell us something about the way self-construction functioned; the mirror of conscience reflects an ideal image, whose perfection exposes through contrast one’s own deformities (34).

An example is *The Mirror of Martyrs* (1613), an abbreviated version of Foxe’s *Actes and Monuments*, which according to the cover page is a “short view lively expressing the force of their Faith, the fervency of their Love, the wisdom of their Sayings, the patience of their Sufferings, etc.” The text itself then is the mirror of martyrs since it contains their stories and reflects their lives. Clement Cotton writes that in his little book (for those who cannot afford Foxe’s text) “a Mirror fetched thence, which how so ever regard of the smallnesse, it cannot shew thee all; yet mayest thou here behold the choice of many memorable things, which will yeeld thee sound comfort, and profitable delight” (A4). The little book reflects a portion of the larger one’s contents whose core will exhibit enough of an image to provide a pleasurable and edifying picture. However, if the reader reads the text as a mirror, inevitably his own reflection should show itself in the glass. The text as merely reflecting another text or the state of man is complicated by the reader’s own face implicitly gazing back at him alongside the scene or figure that appears in the glass as he reads.

Shuger astutely notes that the viewer sees a great many things in Renaissance mirrors “but not, as a rule, his or her own face” (22). However, the text as mirror implies the reader’s reflection which he beholds in his mind’s eye as he measures himself against either the paragon of virtue or evil that he views. Some titles reveal this desire even more

explicitly. For instance, *The Mirror of Honor* (1597), is a text intended to teach men in the armed forces the necessary “use of all divine vertues” in all procedures of the “the most honorable affayres of warre.” The cover page describes the text as a “treatise most necessarie, comfortable and expedient for all English subjects, whereby their duties in God, their Prince and countrie, their affurance and safetie, is lively set foorth as in a glasse before them.” The text, containing many examples of warfare, is thus a mirror where an exemplary model is reflected; in reading the text as model, the reader’s own image should appear in the glass to be measured against various ideal examples and the comparison should be cause for self improvement. The mirror image functions in the same way in Robert Greene’s *The Mirror of Modestie* (1584) which tells the apocryphal story of the virtuous Susannah and the lustful elders. The mirror of modestie reflects the supreme paradigm of feminine virtue and so functions similarly to *The Mirror of Honor* as ideal representation, but the cover page explains that within this mirror “appeareth as in a perfect Glasse howe the Lord delivereth the innocent from all imminent perils and plagueth the bloodthirstie hupocrites with deserved punishments.” God’s retribution appears reflected in the mirror of modestie, itself an image of Susanna’s individual story.

The mirror reflected in the mirror instructs the reader in the depths of vision required during self examination -- the center of the image consists of God’s deliverance of the innocent and punishing of the wicked. Protestant hermeneutics which asked the reader to locate the text inside of himself produced a recapitulated experience within the actual lived experiences of the believer. As William Tyndale wrote, “As thou readest therefore thinke that every sillable pertayneth to thine own selfe, & sucke out the pithe of

the scripture” (as qtd in Lewalski 150). In the Geneva Bible’s “To the Christian Reader” the worde of God, among many other things, is also called “the glaffe wherein we beholde Gods face” (A3).

The mirror, not as a reflection but as a relational image, meaning a paradigmatic barometer against which a person might measure his own virtues or vices and gain perspective on how much self-reformation was yet to be done, aimed at improving either through comparison or contrast. The relational image reflected in the glass provided a tangible expression for Protestant self-scrutiny in its particular formulation. Since Israel and England are often paralleled, it is logical that so frequently when England gazes in the mirror it sees that paradigmatic nation. But whether Israel represents an ideal model or a negative extreme will determine, to an extent, how Jewishness is figured in protestant minds. There are many examples of individuals, especially monarchs, compared to biblical figures such as David, Solomon, Deborah, Joshua, Hezekiah, and more, obviously indicating a correlative meant to highlight the contemporary’s greatness and invest him/her with sacred authority. Often, however, when the nation as a whole glanced in the glass, the image of Israel appeared – the prototypical chosen nation, beloved and contracted to God through his covenant until they sinned, rejected Christ, killed God’s prophet, and consequently suffered horrible sieges, famine, exile, and dispersion. Israel’s fate signifies what could happen to England should they not repent. Joseph Ben Gorion’s *History of the Jews*, translated into English and often reprinted during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, details the fall of the Jewish nation at the hands of the Romans. Ben Gorion’s eyewitness account becomes the continued biblical narrative valuable to Protestants as

both biblical history and as a paradigm of God's dealings with his first chosen people. In the Epistle to the Reader of the edition translated by Peter Morwyn, Morwyn writes that people want to read about "the destruction of so famous a commonwele" in English (A2). Who would not be interested in hearing this history of the Jews "that he hath heard so much of, as every man hath read and hearde of the Iewes in the Bible, and otherwyse" (A4)? The story of God's elected people as it continues in post-biblical times represents a precedent for the English Protestant nation, and Israel's destruction serves as a warning to England indicating what could happen to them: "As when thou seest the Iewes here afflicted with divers kindes of miserie, because they fell from GOD: then mayest thou be admonished hereby, to see the better to thyne owne wayes, lest the lyke calamities lyght uppon thee" (A4). The example of Israel symbolizes both election and destruction resulting from sin and ungratefulness which also potentially await unrepentant English sinners. The parallel imagery and language used to describe the two nations moves beyond mere analogy; the next level of correspondence fuses the two equally covenanted nations in one single bond sealed between God and his covenanted people (Collinson, *Birthpangs* 11).

When England looks in the mirror it sees Israel, chosen, beloved, but rejected. The mirror functions much in the same way as Jacques Lacan, the twentieth century French Freudian psychoanalyst, conceived of the mirror-phase of child development. Formulated in two essays, "Le Stade du Miroir" (1936) and "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the function of the *I* as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience" (1949), this stage marks the six to eighteen month old child's initial perception of itself as a coherent

and unified being. Previously experiencing itself as fragmented depending on what part of the body was in immediate sight, the child sees its reflection in the mirror and perceives an “orthopaedic vision of its totality,” an aid to the child’s perception of wholeness. The child sees this whole being as “self” and designates it with the word “I.” In a moment of mis-recognition, however, the child thinks the image is actually the “self,” creating an illusion of an ideal whole being. The mirror stage is the realm of the imaginary and the ideal is internalized and carried within the self. The image in the mirror is always “other” than the child, something outside of its real self; in Lacan’s view then that inner being we designate by “I” is based on an image of otherness. When England looks in the mirror, during a process of repentance, it sees the nation of Israel reflected. The reflected self is not the English self but the Other of Israel, the first chosen nation — a kind of ancestral portrait that mirrors England’s national image.

Many of the England/Israel mirrors however present Israel in its willful stubbornness and represent an ominous warning to English men and women who need to search for and root out sin and faithlessness. William Perkins’ sermon “A Faithful and Plain Exposition Upon the First Verses of the 2nd Chapter of Zephaniah” (1593) forcefully constructs England as a parallel nation to the Jews, warning the English to search themselves and repent. English men and women are guilty of acting as Pharisees who “thinke highly of themselves, and of their owne natures, and their naturall inclinations” (8). Perkins becomes a prophet calling in the name of God and appropriating Zephaniah’s words to admonish England to “*Search O Search yourselves; and thinke it not a matter indifferent to do*” (10). The Jews are no longer “worthy to be beloved” (12) even though

God gave them his covenant of grace and bestowed upon them a superior land which “flowed with Milke, and Honie” (12); but they did not requite God’s love. For this, Perkins calls the Jews vile, wicked, and forward, and yet, these same attributes apply to England: “Nay, I may cry out with as good cause: O England, a Nation not worthy to bee beloved. For, God hath beene as good a God to us, as he was to them and wee have bin as unkinde a people to him, as they were to him” (13). The proof for this is that God has confirmed his grace and salvation with England; his holy word was never better preached and the mysteries never more apparent since the time of the Apostles. In addition “wee have a land also, that floweth with milke & hony we have libertie & peace under a peaceable Prince” (14). Perkins asks his audience to identify with the Jews and to imagine themselves as the embodiment of Israel as he addresses them over and again in biblical language replete with the exclamations and cadences of prophetic discourse; he refers to his audience as “O England,” calling and bemoaning simultaneously, and repeatedly applying the phrase “a nation not worthy to be beloved” to them indicating the elected but degenerate similarity between the nations of England and Israel. William Haller notes that preachers would often adapt (to the same end) biblical style, thought to be “the perfect model of discourse” since the author was God himself (130). However, here not only is the style, language, and feeling of the prophetic text appropriated, but the prophecy is extended into the current Reformation moment where God is offering England the opportunity to repent and remain his beloved nation, thus avoiding Israel’s fate. Collinson explains that this “prophetic mode” was the authentic voice of protestant nationhood since it was judgmental, inward-searching, and self-critical; while God had chosen Israel and

avored it, Israel has so forgotten God that he would visit it with corrective judgements (“Biblical Rhetoric” 24-25).

England is guilty of willful ignorance, mockery, blasphemy, profanation of the Sabbath, and unjust dealing in bargaining between man and man, thereby exhibiting the potential to repeat Israel’s history. Perkins re-tells this history for his audience reminding them of the Jews’ ungratefulness and narrating God’s final destruction of the Temple and dispersal of the nation; as punishment, God has “smitten their posteritie with a blindnes of mind till this houre” (17). Israel signifies the imminent and real future of England should they not repent:

[Y]ea, alas, who seeth not that God hath travelled indeede, and hath brought foorth a fearfull judgement on them [the Jews] and hath made them for these thousand yeares & a halfe, the gazing stock, the by word, and the amazement of all the world. Thus was it threatened to the *Jewes* and thus it is performed: and certainly thus hath it been threatened, & thus shall it bee performed to thee, O *England*, except thou prevent the judgements that are comming. (18)

After almost 1500 years, history can either be resumed or revert to repeating itself. What this effectively accomplishes is to create distance and difference even as a correlative relationship is established between the two nations. England may be like Zion in her glory and promise but definitely wanted to be unlike her in her idolatry, faithlessness, and castigation.

If I Forget Thee, O Jerusalem

If England was Zion then London naturally translated into Jerusalem. According to Patrick Collinson's study of protestant towns it was becoming a vulgar commonplace that London was the city of God, to be elevated as that holy city and wept over for its vices (*Birthpangs* 29-31). England and Israel's incorporated history is made evident in Thomas Nashe's *Christs Teares over Jerusalem* (1593) where repentance is specifically necessary for the city of London compared in the depth of its iniquity to Jerusalem whose destruction signifies the inherited potential of continued sinfulness. This national assimilation manifested God's relation to history which was not at all historical in the progressive sense since Israel and England (and the Church) were presented as contemporaries, *sub specie aeternitatis* (*Birthpangs* 17). Nashe's narrator establishes the prophetic lament and calls this a time of mourning "for *London* to harken counsaile of her great Grand-mother, *Ierusalem*" (15). He argues that God "planted his Church" in Israel, blessing and multiplying the Jews, but they killed the prophets he sent to warn them as well as Christ (17). Through a conflation of historical time, both the insertion of England into past history, and the simultaneous transformation of the present into the Jerusalem of temple times, authorizes and empowers the English inheritance of coveted place of chosen nation from the Jews who forfeited it through sin. This substitution displaces the Jews and replaces England in the historical role of elected nation but also transforms the English into potential Jews who must learn from and avoid the mistakes made by those in whose stead they stand.

At this point in the narrative, Nashe's narrator becomes Christ as he pleads with the Jews and details Jerusalem's destruction. Earlier, Nashe's narrator appeals to the

omnipotent savior in a preacher mode asking Christ to aid his speech so that it will “moove secure *England* to true sorrow and contrition” (16), but as he begins to detail the downfall of God’s “chosen *Ierusalem*,” he shifts from individual supplicant to assuming the voice of Christ. Nashe’s narrator as the Christ-prophet claims that London deserves as great a desolation for “[w]hatsoever of *Ierusalem* I haue written, was but to lend her a Looking-glasse” (80). The mirror positions Nashe’s narrator as a subject who sees the reproduction of the past in the present; when he gazes at the glass, and sees Jerusalem destroyed as the negative ideal against which London must measure and amend itself, his own interior mirror reflects Christ, crying over God’s city. If the “I” of the narrator, looking inward becomes Christ, he is surely one of the elect, the saved, who becomes a prophet asserting the waywardness of London’s deeds.

Israel is to be internalized in the collective unconscious of a nation striving to affirm its faith and live up to its covenant with God – the very same covenant in Calvin’s terms, which binds God to Israel. The Jews represent simultaneous and competing images for England. On the one hand they are embraced, appropriated and inherited for the (unmerited) grace and promise God bestows on them and for the history they embody; on the other hand they are to be treated as a lesson in disobedience and distanced as a nation who, although uniquely favored by God like England, had been unthankful and faithless. The identification and amalgamation of the two nations, by virtue of real imperative and historical instruction, necessitated England’s rejection of Israel for its bad choices even as it modeled itself on Israel’s godly nation image. If England repents it will not become the Israelite face in the mirror but will surpass the Jews and invite the salvation of the world.

The focus on Israel's destruction and the graphic details of divine punishment that Nashe delineates in *Christ's Tears* is intended to expose his reader's own faults. He specifically gives the example of Miriam, a matron "of great port" who when starving during the siege on Jerusalem, kills, roasts, and eats her only son. He continues, "Mothers of LONDON, (each one of you to your selues) doe but imagine that you were *Miriam*, wyth what hart (suppose you) could ye go about the cooquerie of your own chyldren" (71)? The empathetic instruction, "doe but imagine," puts the maternal audience in the position of prognostication, of projecting into the mirror and seeing themselves as the starving mother with the potential to alter the story's end. Nashe accuses London of numerous sins including usury, greed, disdain, prostitution, and adultery. Again, prophetic rhetoric and discourse are adopted and manipulated to describe London's pending punishment, "For this, O London, if (like Zaccheus) thou repentest not, and restorest tenfold, thy house shall be left desolate unto thee." The language, analogous to that of the biblical prophets, is meant as a mirror image, anticipating future disaster available in the history and scriptural parallel of Israel's destruction. If this image is made real and visible, then perhaps England will repent: "[E]xcept thou amendest, *Ierusalem, Sodome*, and thou, shall sit downe and weepe together" (108). In addition, London is being punished with plagues that reflect the manner of punishment detailed in the Old Testament: "In diuers places of our Land it hath rained blood, the ground hath been removed, and horrible deformed byrthes conceived. Did the Romans take it for an ill signe, when their Capitol was strooken with lightning, how much more ought *London* to take it for an ill signe, when her chiefe steeple is strooken with lighting" (172)? Divine

displeasure constructs England as another Jerusalem paying a similarly severe penalty.

At the end of *Christ's Tears*, the narrator no longer identifies himself as Christ comparing Jerusalem and London but becomes once again an individual supplicant who prays to Christ on England's behalf. He says, "No image or likenes of thy *Ierusalem* on earth is there left, but *London*. Spare *London*, for *London* is like the Citty that thou louedst. Rage not so farre against *Ierusalem* as not onely to desolate her, but to wreake thy selfe on her likenes also" (174). The idea that London would be punished for Jerusalem's iniquity assimilates the two cities into one and confirms the tropology of the mirror image; yet, simultaneously, Nashe claims London as Jerusalem's "likeness" or representation. Jerusalem is recognized as London's reflection at the same time that London is demarcated as a separate subject, altered by its potential for deliverance. When the prophecy is completed, the narrator reverts back to praying to Christ as opposed to articulating Christ. Both London and the narrator are not precise reflections of Jerusalem and Christ. Rather what they see in the mirror are reflections of the Jewish other, nation and city, related and contemporary; England is privileged in its knowledge and comfort of Christ and its historical existence post-Israel and post-Old Testament so that the image of destruction can induce change, invoke repentance, and stimulate the achievement of salvation.

In a manner of speaking if sinners continue in their errant ways, what awaits them is not only destruction, death, exile, etc. but the risk of becoming Jewish implicit in the reflected image of exiled Israel. The image signifies the incorporation of the biblical Jew into the Protestant psyche as a memory of itself at an earlier stage of existence. In this

way Jews and Jewish history are foundational to England's self-comprehension, and yet Jewishness, which also signifies sin and exile, is an element that needs to be distanced, reformed, and re-shaped. The narrative poem *Canaans Calamitie, Jerusalems Misery and England's Mirror* (1598) by the dramatist Thomas Dekker tells of the destruction of "fair Jerusalem" by Titus "wherein is shewed the wonderful miseries which God brought upon that City for Sin, being utterly Overthrown and destroyed by sword, pestilence, and famine" (Title) functioning similarly to *Christs Tears*. The country of Canaan, the city of Jerusalem, and the text which tells their story are a glass for England. The explicit analogy is not made within the content of the poem although the letter to Gentlemen readers warns that the Jews should be an example to Christians "lest following them in the like sin we feel the like smart" (A2[v]). Only the last two lines of the poem bring the reflection into the scope of the viewer's own face, "God grant we may our hateful lives forsake / And by the Jews a Christian warning take" (F2). The language of these two lines assimilates Jewish and Christian error but as corrective example; by not making the same mistake as the Jews, the penitents will distinguish themselves as Christians. This delicate negotiation of identities exposes the difficulty in identity-appropriation. England is like Israel, parallel to the Jews, almost merges with them, but can eventually surpass them, overcome its Jewishness, and emerge as a newly formed nation that has taken the best of Israel and redeemed it through Christ.

The Jewish mirror image was pervasive enough that, in November 1558 when Queen Mary died, John Knox, the Scottish reformer, addressed a letter to the English nation from Geneva calling for repentance and urging reformation. In this letter, "A Brief

Exhortation to England, for the Speedy Embracing of the Gospel Heretofore by the Tyranny of Mary Suppressed and Banished” (1559), he parallels England and Israel in both their national election and sinfulness. The “long sufferance and careful calling” of the “unthankful people” of the Jews is due to their original election and despite their murder of Christ, God’s eternal goodness “once executed” is “yet remaining upon that rebellious people” (4). Knox sees God keeping the “same order” with “happy and most unhappy England” since God delivered them from many strange nations, and yet England is also “unthankful and rebellious” (4). He draws on the example of the plagues and punishments visited on Israel as a warning for England. These judgments in Leviticus, Jeremiah, and Kings are also inescapable possibilities for an unrepentant England:

For these severe judgements, once executed against Israel and Judah, may be to you, who once have professed yourself subject to God, and have unthankfully departed from his service, and yet of mercy are called again:

to you (I say) May those severe judgements be a mirror and glass, in which you may behold what shall be your final and miserable destruction, if by unfeigned and speedy repentance you remove not the vengeance which hangs over your head. (6) [emphasis added]

Recalling the sins of Israel enumerated in the prophets, such as idolatry, deceit, avarice, and murder, while quoting various prophets such as Jeremiah and Ezekiel, Knox appropriates the prophetic voice. The symbolic mirror allows him to construct England as Israel and himself, like Nashe’s narrator, as a contemporary prophet:

This is the glass, this is the mirror, O England! in which I would that

daily you should behold what shall be the final end of those that do
 abuse the long-suffering of God, most mercifully calling all to repentance .
 . . . No other assurance will I require, that your plagues are at hand,
 and that your destruction approaches. (11)

He gives them a list “in the name of the Lord Jesus” (15) of requirements for reformation; composing his castigatory warning in visionary speech, his message comes directly from God.

Knox’s exhortation concludes with two “songs” from Isaiah expressing joy in the salvation of God: “This, I say, shall be the song which, in experience of the Lord’s deliverance, your hearts shall sing, even when God’s most severe judgements shall, in your eyes, be executed against the ungodly; and therefore call you for strength to continue to the end” (18). Knox’s statement here proves Patrick Collinson’s argument for the fractured image of national unity that emerges from the paradigm of chosen Israel. Collinson argues that the prophetic mode of preaching writes the nation off as wholly redeemable “save for the godly remnant: which was the eschatology of the Old Testament prophets themselves” (“Biblical Rhetoric” 36). At the same time, however, by repeating Isaiah’s songs in the contemporary moment, Knox displays how the new covenant and new nation continue and fulfill the old. In adopting Israel’s history and learning from its mistakes, England erased Israel’s Jewishness, sanitized its sinfulness, and incorporated election.

Staging Repentance

Preachers spoke to England as a new Israel and England saw its spiritual

advantages, recent history of deliverance (1558, 1588, 1605), and happy land as evidence of its holiness; yet its wickedness matched Israel's as well (McGiffert 1153-1154); this polarized identification was available in more than one cultural medium despite the rivalry between preachers and players. Both were perceived as revealing the method and spectacle of the mirror of nature. In the Induction to Ben Jonson's *Every Man out of his Humour* (1599) the satirist Asper says,

And to these courteous eyes

oppose a mirror

As large as is the stage wheron we act;

Where they shall see the time's deformity

Anatomized in every nerve and sinew,

With constant courage and contempt of fear. (Induction 116-120)

The purpose of playing, Hamlet claims, as he directs the players who come to Elsinore is to hold a "mirror up to nature; to show virtue her feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure" (3.2.22-24). As we will see with Lodge and Green's *A Looking Glasse*, presenting a play against which the audience can measure their own vice or virtue translated into the palpable creation of a large scale mirror as it functioned in Renaissance culture. The result was hopefully a modification of one's own behavior and an interiorization of the model produced on stage.

Drama also provided audiences with the theatricality that reformers had banished from religious observances while appealing to the demand reflected in preachers' sermonizing for examination of character and motive (Rozett 22). Huston Diehl in her

book *Staging Reform, Reforming the Stage* convincingly argues that Shakespeare and his contemporaries “use the theater to dramatize the divisive conflicts and explore the central controversies of the re-formation” (64). Thus, despite the “secular” nature of many Elizabethan plays, they participated in a larger cultural conversation about sin, retribution, election, and iconography. Protestantism had become “a central feature of the national consciousness and culture” and the theater was a place where it was manifested as well (White 174): “Through the pulpit and the press, the attitudes of the preachers and the language that attached to those attitudes passed onto the culture and became the common possession of playwrights and audiences alike” (20).

Plays, themselves mirrors of nature, were an excellent method of making visible both the parallel between Israel and England and the need for reformation. Protestant drama in these later years is no longer didactic, instructing the audience in the doctrines of faith, but instead is used as a mirror, an image of idealism or depravity, meant to show people to what they must aspire or fall. In Thomas Lodge and Robert Green’s drama *A Looking Glass For London and England* (1594) London is compared to Nineveh, accused of many of the same vices listed in Nashe’s *Christs Teares* — usury, adultery, injustice, arrogance, and disdain. The events in Nineveh unfold to show its depravity to London. Oseas, a biblical prophet placed several chapters earlier than Jonah’s story in the Old Testament, is brought by a divine angel to hover over the stage and periodically interject with prophecy directing London’s self-searching meditation. At the end of each scene producing murderous usury or lascivious behavior, the audience can depend on Oseas to say something like: “*Sin raignes in thee o London euery houre, / Repent and tempt not*

thus the heauenly power" (1.3.423-424). Oseas is figured as the anachronistic prophet of London's future in order to demonstrate the temporal and spatial assimilation of divine history.

The prophet who belongs in this story is Jonah; he flees God's command to warn Nineveh, fearful that the strict punishment will both incite Ninevites to more sin and "publish to the world" his country's (Israel's) blame. Desperately escaping on a ship, Jonah is thrown overboard by the sailors when it is determined by lots that he is responsible for the ship's peril. A merchant from the ship narrates the story; the audience does not witness the miraculous event for themselves but must rely on the relayed narrative where faith in God is centered as the story's lesson. The merchant now claims that he will honor the Hebrew God, "For we haue vowd, that saw how wondrous workes, / To cast away prophaned Paganisme, / And count the Hebrues God the onely God" (4.1.1432-1435). The events surrounding Jonas and his warning that Nineveh has forty days left to repent serve as mimetic example to the play-going audience, while Oseas' preaching voice, focusing attention on each sin Nineveh commits and claiming London guilty of the same, provides the diegetic example. Oseas is also told that Nineveh will be an example to the Jews in Jerusalem when it is destroyed for its sins; Jerusalem will compare itself to Nineveh and realize that it, at least, has the benefit of prophets.

Nineveh's King Rasni's sin is that he thinks of himself as "God on earth" (1.1.30). In the course of the play he marries his sister Remilia and after she is "strooken" by lightning takes the King of Paphlagonia's wife, Alvida, despite the fact that the King is still alive. Rasni values pride above all else and praises his counselor Radagon for refusing

to aid his starving parents who are “base and beggarly.” He tells Radagon: “I like thy pride, I praise thy policie” (3.2.1199). The additional sub-plots primarily between two poor men and a usurer who mercilessly cheats them out of money and a fair trial, and between a smith, his wife, and his man, Adam, reflect the hubris and corruption of the king. Even the smith is raised to the level of a God claiming he is “lord of the four elements.” In this topsy-turvy world, Adam speaks with the same authority and power as King Rasni. The nation and king are corrupt and sin is pervasive.

According to Radagon, the “brightness” (1.1.124) of the King’s majesty “[s]hadow his deeds from being counted faults” (1.1.125). The hubris of man is symbolized by Remilia’s gift to her brother of a globe seated on a ship, signifying the worldly ventures of merchandising, travel, and exploration as the source of power; man controls the world as opposed to nature or God. Adam wields his rhetorical authority with kingly strength as well. He orders the best ale and wench with the egocentric self-entitlement characteristic of Rasni, who, glancing at Alvida concludes, “She smiles on me, I see she is mine owne”(2.1.582). Adam’s arrogance serves to undermine even further the king whose discourse and power he mirrors. Adam’s claims that ale without a wench “tis / like an egge without salt, or a red-herring without / mustard” is actualized in Rasni’s quick replacement of Remilia with Alvida and his need for a feminine complement to his majesty (1.2.278-280).. The king is already guilty of “foul incest” and adultery, but his magisterial authority is further subverted by Adam’s corresponding behavior. Regardless of class or position, society is mired in sin; England should envision itself as a whole society in need of reformation regardless of station or class. The identification of London

with Nineveh and by extension, Jerusalem, was intended to unify Londoners in their perception of themselves as a godly city, who even though chosen, needed to repent.

The figure of Adam, serves however to rupture this sense of unity as he refuses to be absorbed into the whole or accept upon himself the responsibility of the faithful. God demonstrates his anger with Nineveh with visible retribution. When Radagon refuses his parents food or aid, his mother, Samia, curses him and entreats heaven to pour down a plague on her unnatural son's head. A flame of fire suddenly does appear and swallows Radagon; his mother's justified anger is not only acknowledged by God but catalyzes divine retribution. Despite the fact the Rasni's Sooth interprets this event as an accident of nature, it is fairly obvious that God's wrath is displayed. Rasni's priests also report that ghosts howl in the city, statues are being thrown down, the altars are stained with blood, and a hand with a burning sword is seen emerging from a cloud. God is definitely angry.

Adam, on the other hand is unrepentant; he continues sinning and even uses religion and religious discourse for personal profit. When the Smith confronts his wife and Adam about their adulterous relationship, his justified fury is frustrated by Adam's conclusion that the Smith should repent for the sin of jealousy he exhibits. Adam begins to sermonize, appropriating the preacher's discourse to expose the faults and sins of his bewildered master; this religious rhetoric, although bordering on ridiculous, convinces the Smith of his own sin so definitively that he offers Adam a farm in gratitude for saving his soul. Having declared himself a "correcter of vice" it becomes evident that Adam's sanctimonious use of religion undermines the entire objective of Jonah's trip to Nineveh – which is repentance. Adam persists in his sin even at the moment when God is flexing his

muscles. When “one clad in diuel’s attire” (4.4) tries to take Adam to hell, Adam first offers him a pot of ale and then attacks him, refusing to believe he is truly the devil. In a bizarre moment, the devil runs away crying that Adam is trying to kill him; as this does not appear to be the reaction of any real devil, Adam’s refusal to believe is affirmed as a practical approach. His pragmatic disbelief discredits traditional authority even as God displays his putative power all around him.

Adam, out of love of food, refuses to participate in Nineveh’s penance. His successful ability to sin and use religious rhetoric to justify his actions is upheld even at the end of the play where amidst Nineveh’s praying, fasting, and earnest repentance, Adam is found eating meat. He moralizes that fasting is contrary to his nature: “Well, good-man Ionas, I would you had neuer come from / Iury to this Country, you haue made me looke like a / leane rib of roast beefe, or like the picture of / lent” (5.4.2239-2242). Labeling his body a “picture of lent,” Adam inscribes himself within religious tradition even as he undermines it. When the searchers come to his house, find him eating meat, and declare he will be hanged, Adam inquires how many days of fasting are left; he decides he prefers hanging when he hears that five days of fasting are still ahead: “[C]ome lets away, and yet let me be put in / the Chronicles” (5.4.2309-2310). It is possible that this humorous malapropism mocks his intention to say manacles but it also ironically implies his historicization as the one Ninevite who refused to fast and participate in saving the entire city from destruction; the desire to record this subversive voice which manipulates religious language and undermines both religious and monarchical authority gestures to the fiction that every individual in the nation will be elected and saved. The play manages

to register in the mirror image both the idea of the entire nation as called upon and the idea that only some individuals will heed the call.

At the end of the play, Jerusalem's fate is yet undecided as it remains an unrepentant city, while Nineveh has atoned and been saved. Jonas laments to God:

Where is thine arm to lai reuengefull stroakes
 Vpon the heads of our rebellious race?
 Loe *Israel* once that flourisht like the vine,
 Is barraine laide: the beautifull increase
 Is wholly blent, and irreligious zeale
 Incampeth there, where vertue was inthroan'd
 Ah-lasse the while, the widow wants reliefe,
 The fatherlesse is wrongd by naked need,
 Deuotion sleepes in sinders of Contempt,
 Hypocrisie infects the holie Priest. (3.1.957-966)

To be Jewish is to be rebellious, the state currently inhabited by English sinners. The play offers England a vision of complete reformation in Nineveh and contrasts Jerusalem/London in their still-sinning state. The alignment and affiliation of the two nations occurs through rebellion; to reform, repent, and prevail over Israel's fate, is to erase Jewishness as a distinct identity and to amalgamate its history with Christianity. If Israel can be outdone, it will have proved useful in determining and advancing salvation history.

At then end of the play, Jonas also emerges out of his own story to chastise the yet

unrepentant London which becomes another Jerusalem with the potential to be saved.

Listing English sins again he says, “Thy neighbors burn, yet dost thou scare no fire / Thy preachers crie, yet doest thou stop thine eares” (5.5.2396-2397). If London does not repent Christ may fail “[t]hat she may bide the pillar of his Church, / Against the stormes of Romich Antichrist.” (5.5.2406-2407). The devastation that London will endure will be to fail in its reforming faith and bring about the apocalyptic success of the anti-Christ in the form of the Catholic Church. London is mirrored in both Jerusalem and Nineveh, but repenting Nineveh represents the desired outcome; Jerusalem, in its status of holy but remorseless city reflects London’s current state.

John Foxe and the Christening of a Jew: A Model of Self-Examination

The parallelisms between Israel and England elevated Israel to the status of a real historical entity as opposed to a merely allegorical one. This result of Protestant hermeneutics invariably raises the question of contemporary Jews and what their current role entails. If Protestant culture appropriated the images, language, and even history of Israel, how do Jews, although not a visible community in England, “fit” in its vision of divine history? Chapter Eleven of Paul’s Epistle to the Romans where Israel is metaphorically described as the root of a cultivated olive tree becomes a popular trope for describing Israel’s contemporary situation. When speaking to the Gentiles, Paul claims that they are the branches of a wild olive tree grafted in amongst the branches broken off of the Jew’s root as a result of Jewish “unbelief.” He cautions that the Gentiles could fare no better should they not believe: “For if god gave not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either” (11:21). God could graft the Jews in again, he forewarns, since

Israel will eventually be saved as “the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.” Do not boast against those branches which have been cut off since “you do not support the root, but the root supports you.” Despite their current faithlessness and blindness, the Jews remain the root of God’s special relationship with elected people and nations. The image of the olive tree serves the same purpose as the mirror since it binds the histories and covenants of Israel and England to each other. In Peter Morwyn’s Introduction to Josephus Flavius he tells readers to see in the calamities that befell the Jews the error of their own ways; he warns the same tragedies may befall England unless “thou be so fonde to thynke God wyll spare thee, whiche art but a wylde Olive, and but graffed into the slocke of fayth, yf thou bryng eyther noughtie fruite or no fruite, then he dyd the naturall braunches of the Iewes, whiche sprang naturally of the roote it selfe” (A4).

The image of the olive tree with the Jews as the root provides an assimilationist metaphor, one where all of God’s chosen and faithful people throughout history become bound together through the reformed faith. John Foxe, reformer, martyrologist, and preacher, delivered a sermon at the christening of Yehuda Menda, a Portugese Jew, in London, 1578. The sermon was repeated and printed at the request of Sir Francis Walsingham, principal secretary to Queen Elizabeth, who could not be in attendance due to illness. Foxe hopes that the sermon and the spectacle of the converting Jew standing at his side will not only “allure the whole remnant of the circumcised race” but that all nations, Jews and gentiles, will consequently be united into one “sheepfold” with one voice glorifying Christ (A1[v]). Foxe repeats and explicates the verses from Romans, emphasizing the fact that despite the pruning and cutting of the olive tree (Israel), it is

never plucked by its roots and remains eternal:

That no such thought enter into any our minds, as though the Jewes are so altogether forsaken of god, and dispoyled of ghostly consolation, as that no sparkle of mercie is reserved in store for them to hope upon: Neither that the whole stocke of that Nation is so altogether supplanted, that no remnant of all the roote thereof, hath any droppe of moysture layed up for them in the fountaine of Gods free election. (A8)

Foxe's tone changes however as he begins to discuss the Jews' faithlessness. In vituperative language he describes the "laughter and blood and blasphemie and most despitful execrations" with which the Jews persecute those who do believe (B3). More "noysome than any pestilet botch," Jewish Infidelitie is an "inheritable disease" whereby the Jews "from their mothers wombe, naturally caried through perverse frowardnes, into all malicious hatred, a contempt of Christ, & his Christians" (B3). Taking issue with many of the Jews' claims and tediously challenging them with exegetical arguments from the prophets, he often addresses his audience as "you Jews." At one point, Foxe asks, "What extreme madnes is this in you, to persever still in so deepe a slumber, dreaming yet about your olde rotten tabernacles, your forlorne Temple, your carnall worshippings, and moth eaten sacrifices" (K5[v]). Surely there were no Jews standing at St. Paul's listening to this sermon except Yehuda Menda who had already been persuaded of the error of his ways and was ready to convert. James Shapiro contends that the real target of the sermon was Christians and not only Catholics but all those whose faith had been undermined by the

Reformation and Counter Reformation (141). At the end of the sermon Foxe makes the comparison between Protestants who need a boost of faith and the Jews: “We should become more circumspect and learn from their ruin what we ought to fear” (M3[v]).

Yehuda Menda, who was standing next to Foxe as he delivered his lengthy sermon, signified Jewishness of many different varieties – he is the Israel of old (beloved but cast away), the persistent Jew, and finally the converted Jew. Much like the penitent who often stood beside the preacher at Paul’s cross, the disgraced, the other, is the spectacle of display and here the successful spectacle of repentance. Foxe’s sermon can be broken into two halves with the first half representing the importance of the Jew as the root of the olive tree, elected by God but cast away for sin. The second half is a diatribe that is meant for the Jews as a conversionary sermon. He speaks to the Jews for the benefit of the Christians, not in lieu of or as symbolic representation of, but as an example for the sinners and those who have yet to wholeheartedly embrace Christ. The sins of which the Jews are guilty (although possibly read as a more general disbelief) are in their historical specifics, *Jewish* sins. Murdering God’s prophets and particularly Christ, a refusal to believe that the messiah has come, and a ridiculous attachment to antiquated rituals and practices could in many ways represent Catholic practice, but Foxe does not lead his audience at all in making this connection.

The physical presence of an actual Jew who is converting to the godly faith makes available to Foxe an entire nation of unrepentant sinners and although he does not, as Achinstein notes, display the biblicalism that equates England and Israel, his strategy is to set the nation of Jews and the individual Jew named Menda up as an example of the

atonement potential that yet awaits both Christians and Jews as they are bound together by the covenant of God. Yehuda's presence makes tangible the apocalyptic possibility of history finally culminating in the joining together of Judah and Israel to acknowledge the savior (N2). Menda's confession, which is attached to Foxe's sermon, reduces the difference between Protestant and Jew, claiming they both eschew idolatry, believe in the sole authority of God, and the promise of "mashiach" (B2[v]). Foxe blames Catholic idolatry for preventing the conversion of the Jews but says it is not too late for the "remnant." The extreme identification in the Protestant guilt-conscious mind with sinning Israel finds a recuperative image in the Jew's conversion. Along with the godly, remaining Jews can alter the image of themselves painted so frequently in Renaissance mirrors, join the true Christian community, and be restored. Although 1578 represents an early date in millenarian belief, Foxe's *Actes and Monuments*, in its successive editions, re-contextualizes itself with fifteen hundred years of church history in an apocalyptic account and is concerned with the imminent return of Christ and the end of days. It is logical then that the theological amalgamation of Jews with Christians, the incorporation of Israel and the Church, whose image is manifested in the olive tree, becomes significant to Foxe.

The fury with which Foxe attacks the Jews reverberates with the same zeal and anger that permeates so many other sermons directed at Protestant audiences whose sins are enumerated with scorn and disdain. The popular tradition of preaching created a demand for a penetrating analysis of character since the preachers wanted hell sinners to be able to detect sin in themselves and in others: "They preached against idleness, waste, extravagance and license, and for thrift, sobriety, and honesty. They preached extreme

social conservatism, from the time of Tyndale and Latimer” (Scarisbrick 179). They wanted to “provide a mirror for the individual consciousness of spiritual stress, to convince the individual of sin in order to persuade him of his grace, to make him feel worse in order to make him feel better, to insure piety in order to purge him of those passions” (33). If the Jews are to be re-ingrafted, they need to engage in the same self-scrutiny as Protestants and become the target of careful introspection. Foxe saw Yehuda Menda as just the beginning. His ranting against the Jews is not an outpouring of anti-Semitic sentiment as much as it is an attempt to force them to see the error of their ways, to heed the call, join the godly, and fulfill history.

Gerontus: A real live Jew

Dramatic figures such as Barabas and Shylock seem to provide a very powerful rebuttal to the argument for a positive affiliation (as well as the negative) that grows out of the Israelite paradigm and mirror image. Such figures, as Peter Berek has argued, create a seemingly new stereotype altogether that develops from the early modern fear of marrano dissimulation and self-fashioning. He specifically raises the specter of Roderigo Lopez, the Queen’s physician, as a real Jew who is indistinguishable as a Jew until he becomes a traitor and is executed for his apparent plot to kill Queen Elizabeth. Berek focuses, as does James Shapiro whose work he cites often, on the “real” Jew whose foreign covert nature, unreadable or knowable to surrounding Englishmen, produces anxiety. Berek claims that this anxiety is not as much about Jews as it is about “cultural change and a fluid sense of self that one could call ‘modern’” (158). In all probability real stories of marranos, dual loyalties, and spying probably did contribute (as Shapiro

documents) to a fearful image of the Jew, but to privilege this representation at the expense of a culturally pervasive identification with Israel is to reduce the varying ideologies that co-exist even in opposition to each other during any given cultural moment; the Bible was the most popular book in a word-centered culture and despite the fact that it competed with other genres such as historical chronicle in generating ideas, to ignore the widespread value placed on Israel in early modern England overlooks a substantial counter-image which offers an associative, even border-line positive, representation.

A play closely contemporaneous with Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*, which is left out of the long list of dramatic works listed by Berek as including Jewish characters is Robert Wilson's morality play *Three Ladies of London* (1581); full of corruption, dissimulative practice, murder, greed, and hypocrisy, London is sorely in need of reformation and finds an example of good behavior only in the Jew, Gerontus, who lives outside its borders. The example of corrupt London provides recognizable images for the audience, a glass in which they are meant to see and examine their own actions. Love and Conscience are no match for Lucar who "rules the rout" (1.6) together with Usurie. Not only are Love and Conscience reduced to poverty, but all the other "borderline" neutral figures such as Simplicitie, the Lawyer, and Sincerity, tired of being poor, sue to serve Lucar: "For almost euery one, true loue, and pure conscience doth deny: / So hath Lucar crept into the bosome of man, woman, and childe, / That euery one doth practise his deare friend to beguile" (2.806-808). Part of Lucar's corruptive force is an introduction of people, practices, and races into England that are religiously and socially threatening. It is because

of her that foreigners come to Malta from “cuntryes straunge and farre,” from places such as “Italy, Barbary, and Turkey”; even the “pagan himselfe” comes to get a look at Lucar. These strangers also drain the economy. Artifex complains that he cannot feed his wife and children because there are “such a sort of straungers in this cuntry / That worke fine to please the eie, though it be decitfully” (2.467-468).

Mercadore, an Italian Christian who has just arrived from Turkie, is the perfect example. He has no allegiance to parents, country, or religion -- a machiavellian figure motivated only by greed: “What is dat for loue of Lucar me dare or will not doe: / Me care not for all the world, the great Deuil, nay make my God angry for you” (2.400-401). He carries English commodities such as grain, leather, tallow, beef, bacon, etc. out of England, and in exchange purchases “trifles,” baubles, coloured bones, glass, beades, amber corall and christall — things which are pretty and pleasant but appeal merely to Englishwomen’s vanity and wantonness. Mercadore is a merchant whose merchandising fleeces England of useful goods and introduces objects in exchange that encourage conceit and waste. In fact, whenever merchants are mentioned in the play they are guilty of corrupting society. Symonie tells how he came from Rome where he was invited to a banquet by monks and friars with other English merchants who take Symonie with them as he is the source of the church’s riches (2.282-309). When Mercadore tells Lucar that some knave in parliament will introduce a bill forbidding the importation of these “bables” to England, Lucar assures him that merchants know how to make it seem the store has been long in the country and will top it off by giving the searcher a bribe (2.427). Love of money is blamed as the primary source for the immoral state of England and the result is a

permeation of its borders, economy, and religious and national unity by foreign and corruptive influences and people. Lucar is loved in England “[a]s was not in Europe and the whole world beside” (2.286).

In addition, as Sincerity notes, no one even listens to the “Divines that do preach the word of God.” Conscience represents the Protestant voice of admonition; she tells Simplicitee, Fraud, Symonie, and Usurie, “Think you not God knowes your thoughtes, words and workes, / And what secret michiefes in the heartes of you lurkes? / Then how dare you to offend this heavenly maiestie, / With your dissembling deceite, your flatterie and your usery” (2.199-202). She reminds them that God is ubiquitous and calculates all their actions. Her admonition takes on a more godly tone when she tries to persuade Usurie against cutting Hospitalitie’s throat: “Is the feare of God so farre from thee that thou hast no feeling at all? / O repent Usurie, leaue Hospitalitie, and for mercie at the Lordes hande call” (2.1048-1050). Conscience unfortunately is reduced to selling brooms until Lucar paints her face with spots, representing abominations. Her fate illustrates the impossibility of remaining pure and pious in an environment where Lucar is all powerful.

Daryl Palmer argues that the Turkish setting where Mercadore purchases his baubles and meets up with a Jewish usurer, Gerontus, to whom he owes 3,000 ducats, “disrupts the morality play” by staging characters who are “marked by history and society, commerce and race” (46). However, it is at the crossroads of these two worlds where meanings in the play are determined. Turkey, a world here peopled by Turks, Jews, and Italians is traditionally depicted as the ultimate “other” space demarcated by barbarity and alterity but here constructed as the corollary to England. The Jew in Turkey is a different

kind of usurer altogether from the allegorical English vice, Usurie; despite his “unchristian” profession, Gerontus is more than eager to forego the interest and finally the principal altogether if Mercadore will remain a Christian and not turn Turk. Gerontus says, “I would be loth to heare the people say, it was long of me / Thou forsakest thy faith, wherefore I forgiue thee franke and free” (2.1753-1754). The Turkish Judge realizes that Mercadore’s motive for conversion was “greediness of money” but the Jew remains strangely unaffected by this greed causing the Judge to comment, “One may iudge and speake truth, as appeares by this, / Iewes seeke to excell in Christianitie, and the Christians in Iewishness” (2.1753-1754). This comment problematizes stable identity and identifiers. What does it mean to be Jewish, if Christians, caring more for money than their souls, behave Jewishly? Does Christianity get redefined as avariciousness? The fact that allegorical figures such as Sinceritie and even Love, who is married to Hypocrisie, are corruptible by Lucar reveals the instability of all identities since Sinceritie can no longer be sincere if he will do anything for money. The allegorical names which determine these characters are no longer applicable once they are employed by Lucar and act in her service. In this play only Lucar, Usurie, Dissimulation, and the like remain true to their evil professions (and names) besides the Jew and Turkish Judge who are just and objective. Gerontus says to Mercadore: “Surely if we that be Iewes should deale so one with another, / We should not be trusted againe of our owne brother: / But many of you Christians make no conscience to falsifie your fayth and breake your day” (2.1243-1246).

In addition, the Turkish Judge is well respected and honest, and he seems naively surprised at the fact that a Christian would convert for the sake of money alone; his

characterization invalidates many of the stereotypes presumed of Turks. Palmer argues that conversion here is exposed as a theatrical trick, but as the judge makes clear, it is identifying labels that are exposed as inaccurate signifiers of greed or justice, good or evil. The Jew remains a Jew and usurer at the end of the play, and yet, in contrast to the figures residing in England, behaves admirably for the benefit of Christian society. He cannot believe that Mercadore would “forsake his faith so lightly” and so although he is not of the faith he certainly symbolizes faithfulness. Even Conscience, the Protestant voice, is converted to the religion of greed and yet Gerontus can resist this conversion and remain a faithful Jew. Lady Lucar sends Mercadore a letter telling him to “cossen de Jew for love a her” but this usually well deserved action (cheating the usurious Jew who cheats others) becomes a basely criminal act since Gerontus is not a greedy cozener at all. His advice to Mercadore when they part is, “Seek to pay, & keepe day with men, so a good name on you wil go” (2.1758). In this extremely ironic moment, Gerontus the Jew tells Mercadore the Christian how to deal properly with other men. If service to Lucar destabilizes the identities of the allegorical figures, it is Gerontus’ lack of avidity that destabilizes the Christian/Jewish binary.

At the end of the play, the Judge condemns Lucar, Conscience, and Love to hell but London is left in the same depraved state as it was when the play began; the only example of faithfulness and morality is exhibited by a Jew in Turkey. To the audience watching *Three Ladies*, London seems doomed by the vices that overrun her and the playgoers, witnessing pernicious evil overtake their city, should begin to feel the responsibility of sin penetrating their consciences. The Jew here, as opposed to so many of the looking

glass images we have addressed until this point, represents an ideal. Both Gerontus and the Turkish judge not only show the English audience to what depths they have sunk by being better than the Christians, but are elevated images, at whom the Christians may glance as examples.

What is especially interesting about this play is its genre as morality and its sixteenth century setting; biblical references and contexts are notably absent. Gerontus is a Jew whose identity is produced in the “real” world so to speak, the same one inhabited by Berek’s anxiety producing marrano. I think it is more than plausible that this play fills a gaping lacuna that exists like a broken track between the sermon literature and early Protestant plays, and the later drama consisting of Jewish characters. Protestant affiliation with Israel generates the image of faithful Israel in the contemporary milieu, producing a real Jew such as Gerontus who lives in the early modern world but exemplifies the characteristics of the Old Testament Jews. What Gerontus signifies is a successful amalgamation of the past and the present in one of its many forms and manifestations.

King David, Queen Elizabeth, and Me

The positive representation of Jews was facilitated through identification that maintained rather than split the binding of the two nations of Israel and England as beneficiaries of God’s covenant and promise. As opposed to focusing on the rejection and exile of Israel, texts which focus and instruct identification reveal the way in which not only identification but incorporation with Israel is achieved. King David in particular possessed all of the necessary traits, talents, and history to bind both the queen and nation in holy purpose, guide individual believers, and assimilate the elect and sacred image of

Israel into the national consciousness. For instance, Anthony Munday in his *The Mirrour of Mutabilitie, or Principall part of the Mirrour for Magistrates Describing the fall of diuers famous Princes and other memorable Personages* (1579) quotes Marcus Tullius Cicero and his prescription for a virtuous life as the avoidance of vices as the inspiration for his “discourse.” This discourse he calls “a plain and sufficient example to all ingenerall, wherein they may see, the dissolute life of diuers personages forepassed, as the Scripture by credible authoritie maketh deliberate mention” (A). Munday’s text functions as a magical kind of glass in which magistrates and readers may gaze and see biblical personages speak of the particular vices they are brought to exemplify. King David is the exemplar of Lechery and in alternately rhyming quatrains he tells of his seduction of Uriah’s wife Bersaba and his subsequent murder of her husband in the front lines of battle. He confesses his sin and expresses his sorrow and contrition as he craves forgiveness of God, Bersaba, and the slain Urias. He warns:

You princes great that rule in regall state,
Beholde how I did blindly run astray:
And brought my self unto destructions gate,
But that my God redeemd me thence away. (C2)

God’s mercy combined with his own “sorowing teares” permit him to make amends for his sins. Monarchs should read David’s story and perceive within it both the potential sin that greatness can engender and the means to penance. The character of “Author,” after hearing each historical example of a respective vice, comments and glosses the verse in prose; he is astounded particularly at “how sorowfully he bewept” and “how earnestly he

craved pardon for his lewd offense” (C2[v]). David’s significance is not only in his sinning, representing a cautionary tale to those who think themselves above desires of the flesh, but also in his sincere manner of repenting. Inga-Stina Ewbank, in her comparative study of the House of David in Renaissance drama, highlights David’s appeal as both representative sinner and archpenitent (9). David then tells the Author that he hopes his disobedience to God’s commandments “may be a mirrour unto all to beware how they fall in to the like, and thee my freend and all other, I wish wisely to foresee unto your selves, be fervent in prayer, and continuall in contemplation” (C3). As Deborah Shuger argues, the mirror image here does not reflect the subject’s own face, indicating self-reflexive knowledge, but instead, mirrors a relational person or image. Before the seventeenth century this relational method of self-knowledge does not distinguish between self and other, God, ideal, cultural types, or individuals to whom we are related or whom we care for (“I of the Beholder” 38-39). What is especially interesting about the image of King David in the mirror is that he represents both sin and penance, signifying through example, the impulse to look inside oneself, locate sin, be genuinely contrite, pray, contemplate, and rely on God’s grace and mercy.

It is undoubtedly for this reason that the daily recitation of various psalms takes up the space of roughly fifty percent of *The Book of Common Prayer* with a detailed chart of which psalms should be recited on various holy days as well as throughout the week at morning and evening prayer. Through reading and contemplation of the psalms, the interior scrutiny of the soul becomes the reflection in the mirror and at the heart of that searching is the individual’s own personal struggle. David’s sacred poetry signifies a

method or hermeneutic key to introspection. In Greenblatt's discussion of Wyatt's psalm translations he argues that embedded in the psalms are both "expressions of soul-sickness" and fear of physical pain inflicted by David's enemies and by God himself. Despite the fact that there are expressions of a communal and national character in the psalms, society is reached only through the isolated suffering of the individual penitential soul (116).

Luther's identification with David and his psalms as he composes his commentaries shifts his identification as individual Christian from Christ as model to the faith of the Old Testament people transformed into the post-biblical landscape in the form of "the Faithful Synagogue" (Preus). Calvin writes that David is like a mirror in which believers can contemplate everything (about themselves) that should lead them to prayer and praise of God; he even finds the recapitulation of David's experience in his own life: "Yit did it greatly availe mee to beholde as it were in a Glasse, bothe the beginnings of my vocation, and also the continuall race of my ministerie" (as qtd in Lewalski 133).

This direct correlation or assimilation indicates not only reflection as we may understand from the mirror image or even necessarily a window or mere painting, but a process of seeing and understanding that leads to assimilation of a paradigm (or even a destructive image) into the conscience of the gazing subject – this assimilation, once he reads and absorbs its value, should provide a constant defining barometer against which the individual can measure his own deeds. An interesting example is the poem "Dauid and Bathsheba," composed by Francis Sabie and published with two other Old Testament poems in 1596, "Adams Complaint," and "The Olde Worldes Tragedie" (the story of Noah and the Ark). The largest portion of the poem, written in rime royal, narrates the

story of David and Batsheva until God sends the prophet Nathan to David to expose his sin through the parable of a thief who steals a poor man's only treasured sheep; even after Nathan tells David that God has pardoned his sin and that the resulting punishment will be the death of Batsheva's unborn child, David continue his mournful weeping:

And then in heart as lowly as a childe,
 Betakes him to his chamber all alone:
 There weepeth he before his maker milde,
 And oftimes sobbing, maketh piteous mone,
 Complaining other help it he hath none.

Thus in the end distressed as he stood,

He tooke his harpe and warbled out this Ode. (G2)

At the moment of extreme penance and introspection, Sabie himself becomes the Psalmist and does not paraphrase but puts his own ode in rhymed nine line stanzas in the mouth of David. It seems more than arrogant for a poet to assume the paradigmatic holy poet's voice and replace his penitential poetry with one's own. It is however less arrogance and more correlative identification that permits Sabie his creative license.

Moreover, the ode does not indicate the specifics of David's lustful sin, but instead, throughout the thirteen stanzas, repeats the ingredients of the protestant doctrines of the sinfulness of man, the grace of God, and the power of true penance. The poet's own plaintive ode is constructed as both the generic sinner's and King David's. He asks God, as both the penitent poet and the King, to release his sin through prayer and holy verse:

My tongue vntie, my lips (O Lord) resolve,

thou art the key:

So will my tongue thy mercie great reuolue,

from day to day.

Then fhall the wicked learne by mine example,

To keep thy statutes which be sweet and ample

And seeing me,

Shall turne to thee,

And in the right way learne to trample. (G3)

The mirror implicit in the wicked who learn by the example of “seeing me” fashions the poem as embodying the image of penitent sinner. The verb “seeing” is used as opposed to “reading” since the reader will presumably approach the ode in the same manner as he does the psalms or for that matter any scriptural text whose sacred words, if read properly, became part of the believer. This in turn leads to a transformation whereby the sinner will turn to God. The “me” who the sinner will see here is ambiguous as it certainly represents David but concurrently indicates the poet himself whose appropriation of the Psalmist’s voice is itself the goal of persistent psalm reading. By becoming David, the Christian becomes godly and inscribes himself within a direct line of communication with God. The last stanza of the poem reverts back to the rime royale, demarcating the shift from interior consciousness invoked by reading David’s story, back to the story itself; here the narrator claims that David still “kneels before his makers throne. / At midnight sends he manie a grieuous grone” (G4). By repeating the psalms and merging with David,

David and his recapitulation of that example to produce his own penitential impulse in poetry.

For Protestant commentators David and his psalms, both in their demonstrated faith and historical context, were a parallel to England and a manifestation of the doctrine of promise. David became an Old Testament “type” not in the medieval typological sense but as an example of faith and teachings that continue under the new covenant (Gosellin). As I have already argued, reading the Old Testament as paradigm is much more complicated in Protestant thought than mere imitation; the hermeneutic involves being or becoming what one reads. Barbara Pitkin, writing on Calvin’s exegesis of David’s Psalms and his use of the Israelite king as a paradigm of faith, raises an important question regarding the validity of David’s paradigmatic status considering he lived under the old dispensation without a clear manifestation of the mystery of Christ. She argues that Calvin purposefully avoids making David into a kind of proto-Christian and focuses instead on the historical context of David’s faith; he assumes that history is meaningful since every age contributes to God’s redemptive history (860-862). Regardless of the delicately negotiated hermeneutic balance that takes place in reformers’ correlations of the two covenants, however, it is evident that the protestant believer, through reading the psalms, assimilated into his own consciousness the identity and struggle of the Jewish king. Unlike the national image of Israel which alternatively invited association as chosen nation and condemnation as sinning faithless, David’s poetry and experience, incorporated as voice and lesson, are for the most part positive ideals of Jewishness. His universal appeal generated an indirect identification with Jews and their history. Appropriation of

the psalms regardless of how personally suited their meaning did not disengage them from the Jewish history in which they are imbedded. Protestants could very easily feel close to Israel through a repetition of and meditation on the psalms.

Patrick Collinson has argued in more than one place that the “Israelite paradigm” of nationhood so often employed by preachers as a means of consolidating the nation in the renewal of its national covenanted relation with God, created a fictive “imagined community” that could never truly exist (*Birthpangs*, “Biblical Rhetoric”):

However, the preachers seem to have known (for it was built into their biblical-prophetical sources) that they would *not* evoke a national response, that God’s covenant would be honoured not by the whole nation but only by a remnant, a remnant which might for a time redeem and preserve the nation, but which would also survive the temporal ruin of the nation.

For this was the experience in the Bible of Israel and Judah.

(“Biblical Rhetoric” 20)

Collinson asks how a theology of the nation related and reconciled itself to that theology of the individual confronting God which is assumed to be the main focus of protestant Christianity (“Biblical Rhetoric” 26-27). I would like to suggest that in the late sixteenth century, King David offered an incorporation of the concerns of the elected individual with that of the nation, since they are embodied in him; he is both searching believer and holy King.

David figured as a type of Christ was a commonplace, but his identity as Jewish

king of the Old Testament was insured by the “literal” and historical hermeneutic. What then does it mean when the Queen of England and her sacred kingship find their most apt and paradigmatic model in King David of Israel? How are Elizabeth and England transformed or perhaps made Jewish by such a close affiliation and recapitulation of David? By repeating his poetic psalms and meditating on his condition and faith, one is brought to the proper trust in God and understanding of one’s own position; this includes all kinds of readers whether they are commoners or the Queen herself. David becomes everyman’s conscience – he is incorporated into the minds and hearts of English believers -- he is a model, a conduit for the sorry soul, a voice of penance, and a means to good government. He serves to unite the nation as individuals with the Queen who incorporates the whole mystical body of her people.

The Genevan exiles dedicated their version of the translated psalms, *The Booke of Psalms* (1559) to the young Elizabeth I, making explicit the comparison between the Queen and King David. Their parallel histories and experiences are represented. Elizabeth has felt “and shal continually fele” the reverberations of David’s own life, his “perils and persecutions,” the “assistance of God in the same,” the “tempestes” (*3[v]) raised against him both by foreign enemies and his own subjects, and “how God neuer forsoke him, but was present with him in his greatest afflictions & deliuered him from all dangers, because he put his whole trust in him alone” (*4). The translators direct Elizabeth to find in David not only a parallel but a source of faith and strength enabled through recitation of the psalms where she can also find “like comfort.” In searching out her own conscience and in sighing and sobbing to God she will gain insight into herself

and those around her. With charged rhetoric the translators instruct Elizabeth in her purpose of rooting out papistry, vice, and heresy; meditation on the psalms and David is a means of accessing God's grace in an equivalent manner for her own kingdom:

Thus if God moue your heart (as our prayer for the same is moste fervent) to humble your selfe in the meditation of his worde, & that you set your whole delite with Daud in the Arke of the couenant, the tabernacle of the Lord & in mount Zion, that is, in the Churche of God & in his holy Congregation, counting it better therin to be y least mebre, then to be y highest in all worldely pompe & dignitie: then shal you be assured of Goddes mightie protection to defend you against all aduersaries & dangers, his merciful fauour to comfort you in all troubles & aduersitie, & his holy Spirit to gouerne and direct you in the true obedience of his blessed worde, to y glorie of his diuine Name, the quietnes of your conscience, the comfort of vs your subiectes & the good example of all forayn countreys. (*7[v]-*8)

Elizabeth, as devout reader, finding herself and her own sins in the words of David's psalms, merges with Israel's king and is transported back in history, taking delight in the Ark of the covenant containing the two tablets Moses brought from Sinai; once this identification occurs, both the faith and tangible representation of God's covenant are projected back into the future in the Church and its members. If Elizabeth can carry David's words, faith, and tabernacle within her meditative mind, incorporating not only

herself but all Christians, she will be treated as David, protected by God and governing through God's direction. Her godliness, originating in her conscience, but absorbing David's words, faith, and even history, will spread outwards affecting her subjects and even people outside England who will "forsake their darckenes" (*8) and "imbrace the light of Gods mercies reueiled" (*8[v]).

William Leigh, in the first sermon of three entitled *Queene Elizabeth, Paraleld in her Princely vertues, with Dauid, Iosua, and Hezekia* (1612) similarly comments on the necessary benefit of princes reading the psalms and becoming one with David in order to re-enact his supreme faithfulness:

In a word, hee that feeles with *Dauid*, will bee afflicted with *Dauid*, and seekes y all meanes possible, in his Princely power, how to builde vp a people for his God, how to prepare a place for his Presence, how to perfect and polish the workes, that it may bee to the glorie of God, to the discharge of his dutie, and the saluation of that people, ouer which the Lorde hath placed him. (22-23)

The protestant prince is King David – not only because the King is ordained by God but because he has the obligation to spread God's word and through his own faith and work mold his nation. David's afflictions have troubled the godly "from the daies of *Enoch*, who then walked with God, to the daies of Queene *Elizabeth* who ruleth for God, as they could neuer sway the Scepters of their rule, but with rent of their harts, to see *Sio* desolate, & her stones ly in the dust" (18). The coalescence and continuation of princely efforts on behalf of God, binds Elizabeth to the Old Testament and the powerful image of

divinely ordained kings detailed therein. Elizabeth and David are not only paralleled but identical so that Elizabeth continues David's work. Leigh calls the Queen, "our *David*, dauncing before the Arke" (52) and the country "our English *Iudah*" (45). These amalgamations move beyond the simply correlative into a corporate identity that includes at its spiritual source a king of Israel and the particular Jewish history in which he is fixed.

In Mary Sidney Herbert's Psalm translations there is a dedicatory poem "To the Thrice-Sacred Queen Elizabeth" or "Even Now That Care" (1590) which also unites David and Elizabeth although the poem never reached the Queen herself. Herbert identifies the similar circumstances of both reigns which involve being wrongly oppressed, set upon by foes, blessed by conquest: "Thus hand in hand with him thy glories walk" (73). David and Elizabeth, regardless of the vicissitudes of time and place are equal versions of each other. Davidic faith is not merely appropriated here – instead David as holy king is reincarnated in Elizabeth. Herbert writes,

And who sees aught, but sees how justly square
 His haughty ditties to thy glorious days?
 How well beseeming thee his triumphs are?
 His hope, his zeal, his prayer, plaint, and praise,
 Needless thy person to their height to raise;
 Less need to bend them down to thy degree;
 These holy garments each good soul assays,
 Some sorting all, all sort to none but thee. (57-64)

In Herbert's complex poetry, she maneuvers the relationship between David and Elizabeth

so that the Queen out-does David even at being David. Whoever can see clearly knows that all of David's triumphs, poetry and holiness are signified by the Elizabeth herself. The fact that she does not need to be raised to David's level, nor does he need to be lowered to hers, shows that they are on an equal plane. And yet, the slightly scornful description of the psalms as "haughty ditties" contrasts with the more regal "glorious days" of Elizabeth. Indeed, in the last stanza, Herbert claims that Elizabeth is a "rival" to "Judah's faithful king" (94) and that she surpasses David: "Sing what God doth, and do what men sing" (96). Her actions, fortitude and faith, and her "song" can exceed those of Israel's holy king.

The relational channel is the psalms themselves described in the above-cited stanza as "holy garments," which once spoken, clothe the soul of the speaker in sanctity. The godly individual tries on these poetic clothes and indeed some of the psalms will "fit," meaning the person will be able to reach God via those words and make them meaningful to him; but only in the Queen will all fit, as she is as great and as holy as the Psalmist himself. Implicit here also is the way in which English subjects are incorporate in the Queen, whose soul suits every holy garment that only some subjects can wear. David becomes English: "[T]he psalmist king, / How English denized, though Hebrew born" (29-30). England is God's new Israel and Elizabeth a new King David. The essence of faith that David embodies is English although it was initiated in Israel and in the history of the Old Testament. The inevitable result is a drawing close to Israel as a paradigmatic reflection of the nation's image of itself. Psalm recitation and the identification of Elizabeth with the Psalmist provides England with a unified image of itself that individual

election at the expense of a covenanted whole nation threatened to fracture. Reading King David was to discover both a personal and inward searching medium as well as sacred kingship, incorporating the whole body of the nation.

Not only David's poetry but his life and the events that comprise it as narrated in *Kings* offered believers a positive vision and example of a godly individual who sins, repents, and is granted forgiveness. George Peele's play *The love of King David and fair Bethsabe. With the Tragedie of Absalon* (1599) produces for an audience the double signification of David's sins and repentance as both private and public events. His lust for Bersabe, despite the fact that she is already married to Uriah, and his use of his kingly state to force her to sleep with him is a sin which taints his whole household. When his son Amnon rapes his sister Tamar, Ionadab's words, persuading Amnon to appease his passion, echo David's royal rhetoric of power, "Why should a Prince, whose power may command, / Obey the rebell passions of his loue, / When they contend but gainst his conscience, / And may be gouerned or supprest by will" (259-262). David tells Cusay, his general, that Bersabe is "the flower of Israel, / The fairest daughter that obeies the King, / In all the land the lord subdued to me" (51-53). It is clear then that power has corrupted David's heart and instead of seeing himself as representing the people he focuses on their obedience to him. When Cusay tells Berfabie to trust in David and not to "expostulate with him / For any action that contents his soule" (81-82) since he is "[e]lected to the heart of Israels God" (80) she stresses the responsibility that election entails:

My lord the King, elect to Gods owne heart,
Should not his gracious ieloufie incense,

Whose thoughts are chaste, I hate incontinence. (83-85)

Bethsabe refuses the power of sacred rhetoric as it is here manipulated to hide a lack of self control. Inga-Stina Ewbank argues that the connection between David's adultery, Amnon's rape of Tamar, Absalom's murder of Amnon, and finally Absalom's rebellion shows the successive arrangement of God's retribution. Peele's structure connects David's sins with the sexual disorders within his house as well as the civil strife within his realm as an organizing principle of the drama (20). David's sin is corporate and the Chorus asks: "If holy Dauid so shoke hands with sinne, / What shall our baser spirits glorie in" (543-544)?

It is clear throughout the play that despite the enormity of David's sins and the trickle down effect they have, he is still God's chosen. Sadoc tells David in order to try and lift his spirits, "But be assur'd, that Iacobs righteous God, / That promist neuer to forsake your throne, / Will still be iust and pure in his vowes" (995-996). Ithay also tells him that despite the private rebellions of his children he still has his people and the troops who rely on him:

And turne thy drooping eyes vpon the troupes

That of affection to thy worthinesse,

Doe swarme about the person of the King,

Cherish their valours, and their zealous loues,

With pleasant lookes, and sweet encouragements. (1008-1012)

The relationship between the holy King and his troops is more than dutiful obedience as Ioab makes clear when he calls the rebellious soldiers who had joined Absalom to come

back to their king: “Error hath maskt your much too forward minds, / And you haue find against the chosen state, / Against his life, for whom your liues are blest” (1576-1578).

David’s holiness and election sustain the entire nation incorporate with him who are directed to cry for his sins with him. Sadoc tells Israel to “weepe for Dauids soule, / Strewing the ground with haire and garmnets torne” (976-977). David and Israel are bound together and the initiation of sin by him will result in a sinning nation just as his repentance will raise Israel. David himself says that his covenant with God is founded “on mercie with repentance built” (1300).

In Peele’s play there is no direct reference made to David as Elizabeth. The events found in *Kings I* are presented in their literal form. By 1599 it would have been clear, however, that King David and Queen Elizabeth were synonymous figures, that David’s sincere repentance for the adultery and murder he committed was a model for all sinners, and that his searching psalms were intensely soulful mediums through which all believers, the queen included, could reach the spiritual realm. Peele similarly hopes that the presentation of David and Bethsabe on stage (along with the repentance that David experience) will uplift his audience. The Prologue asks for help from the “deuine Adonay” to conduct “[t]he hearers minds aboue the towers of Heauen.” The historically accurate context of David, “Israel’s fweetft finger,” and his story is maintained. The audience presumably was familiar enough with the associations signified by David without direct explanation from the author as Edmund Bunny’s *The Coronation of David* (1588) makes clear. The *Coronation* narrates the story of David and Saul from *Samuel I* without many explicit references or glosses within the text that read the biblical events allegorically. The

dedicatory epistle mentions the “dangerous, straunge, and unnaturall practices against our Soueraign” (A2) which lead to Bunny’s choice of text in which “we may see, as it were in a table, both what crosses we must looke for to becast in the way of the gospel now” (A3). The reader learns about David, the trials he endured with Saul, and his eventual coronation and will make for themselves the connection between David’s godly kingdom and their own, between the trials that all those who follow the gospel must endure, and the triumph that will come in the end to a holy sovereign. Peele’s David, struggling to resolve the conflict of private and public, ultimately must assert himself as a king whose resolve permits “old Israel, and his daughters sing” (1896). Once David can place dead Absalom in heaven with God, he can prefer Israel’s suit. His personal sin and grief affects the nation and must be resolved for the benefit of that nation that depends on his physical and spiritual strength.

The image of Israel in England’s mirror which seemingly creates a distance between the Christians who can yet repent and be saved and the Jews who have been reduced to a remnant is recuperated in the reflection of godly believer and holy king signified by King David. Both representations co-existed in sixteenth-century English culture and serve to affirm the idea that on many varying levels England consistently constructed itself in relation to and in conjunction with Israel in order to identify its place as God’s chosen. The internalization of Jewish history becomes part of the protestant consciousness, fashioning faith through Israel as opposed to merely against it. Scripturalism and solfideism together serve to re-center Israel and the Jews in the defining and determining search for the godly self and nation. Inevitably, as critical components of

the scrutiny and self-improvement of the Protestant conscience, the position of the Jew in the cultural mind has altered from that of the middle ages. Identification with the Jews does not necessarily translate into philo-Semitism in the tolerationist manner in which we understand such a term. It does mean that English Protestants fashioned a number of versions of themselves in relation to Israel and individual Jews as relayed in scripture dichotomized by the polarity inherent in a religious culture which divided godly from ungodly. The prevalence of particular images of the patriarchs, prophets, nation redeemed, nation exiled, blind pharisee, and various other scriptural examples depended on the religious and/or political purpose during a given moment of identification and indicates a multitude of associations that coexist at any time. The relationship was intensely corporate and empathic although not at all dependent upon the presence of actual Jews. The product of this internalization will emerge and dominate in the seventeenth century, where Puritan belief, sabbatarianism, millenarianism, and sectarianism are cultivated to the extreme as a direct result of the Israelite paradigm of nationhood.

4: Reading the Body, Penetrating the Text, and Vice Versa

Poor nation, whose sweet sap, and juice
 Our eyens have purloin'd, and left you dry:
 Whose streams we got by the Apostles' sluice,
 And use in baptism, while ye pine and die:
 Who by not keeping once, became a debtor;
 And now by keeping lose the letter.

George Herbert, "The Jews"

Ancient Israel served as a paradigm for the Anglican Church and the English nation but simultaneously represented a disobedient and ungrateful nation whose example illustrated England's own need for repentance; this second characterization denotes difference, dissimilarity, and distance, complicating the model of biblical election. England's maintenance of the covenant meant to be like Israel in its glory and to be unlike Israel in its fall. An additional problem for English men and women was to make sense of this paradigm in light of the historically real and aggravating persistence of Jews and their faith who reflected the stubborn blindness recorded in the New Testament. A powerful set of multivalent values can therefore be attributed to what the figure of the Jew suggests. In light of the Protestant sole reliance on faith, grace, and the Word, the contemporary Jew had to be marshaled, dealt with and overcome or integrated in some way that empowered the godly. It is for this very good reason that two of the greatest playwrights in Elizabethan England present Jewish figures who are fashioned through and against election ideology

and covenant discourse. How should the contemporary Jew be read in terms of Protestant hermeneutics? Thomas Luxon in his recent book *Literal Figures* explains the epistemological dilemma:

Thus, when Protestants meditate on the self as flesh (or as not yet fully Christ), they identify with “the Jew”; and when they meditate on the self as fully replaced, reborn as Christ, “the Jew” defines precisely what they are not. “The Jew,” then, is nothing but the self that is hopelessly mired in history, the shadowy type or sign that must be stripped away and destroyed as the self is reborn as eternally Christ. (58)

In Shakespeare’s play *The Merchant of Venice* (1596/97) and Thomas Nashe’s novel, *The Unfortunate Traveller* (1594), defining the Jew invokes Old and New Testament imagery, medieval and early modern representations and stereotypes and, most significantly, Calvinist interpretations of election history. Each text gives voice to the imagined Jewish perspective and claim to chosen status but, ultimately, asserts and privileges Christian election at the expense of the rejected Jew, reducing him through incorporation or demonization. In each text there are moments when the Jew, either through his authorized history or through extreme stereotyping, threatens to subvert the professed chosen-ness of the Christian; despite the fact that the Jew is ultimately contained, his stubborn endurance produces a perpetual problem even for those who think they have resolved his faithlessness.

Marlowe's *Jew of Malta* (1588), on the other hand, takes issue with the attribution of election to any nation or faith. By exposing the hypocrisy of nearly everyone on the island of Malta and turning scripture and the language associated with God's covenant into empty rhetoric, manipulated and used only for personal gain, Marlowe questions the basis of England's very vision of itself and its mission. Although Christianity wins in the end and divine providence appears to sanction the Knights of Malta (to the detriment of the Turks and the Jews), once religion has been exposed and its Word drained of meaning, faith becomes virtually impossible; providence appears to be merely human interpretation or dumb luck. In each of these texts the Jew remains a constant problem and resists integration into an ontological system against which his identity has been fashioned. These plays register the protestant elevation of Israel as godly nation as it appeared through cultural identification even as each play works to undermine this idea in presenting Jews who, even if they periodically signify or speak of election, are ultimately unredeemable figures.

Shakespeare: Inside the Word

When *The Merchant of Venice* (1596/97) begins, the merchant Antonio is in a state of sadness. His friends wonder (since all of his ships laden with merchandise are at sea) that he is not anxious when he sees any reminder of the tenuous venture in which all of his wealth is invested. Salerio remarks that should he be in Antonio's place, the church, "the edifice of stone" (1.1.30), would signal the potential of dangerous rocks puncturing his ship's side. The church building signifies danger and loss instead of providing solace

and comfort. For the merchant, relying on fortune and good winds, the indeterminacy of his position both on earth and in heaven (signified in the image of stones) is cause for anxiety. The possibility of shipwreck leads to the imagined emptying out of cloth and spices into the sea, draining the ship of its economic value and simultaneously creating an absence of meaning: “And in a word, but even now worth this, / And now worth nothing” (1.1.35-36). The object of worth which is suddenly rendered worthless is not specified in the sentence; the suddenness with which the wheel of fortune turns is underscored instead. Anxiety over financial loss and loss of faith are thus bound up together in the sadness which Antonio cannot identify or name.

The two succeeding plots involving Shylock and the bond and Bassanio’s quest for Portia will re-focus faith by referring to, recounting, and re-playing the Word of God, the primary locus of demonstrated election and grace. As *The Merchant of Venice* seeks to reconstitute Christian faith, the Jew will inevitably play a significant role. Shylock is therefore not presented only as a convenient and recognizable villain, but as an essential component in the theoretical and hermeneutic assertions that will reify faith. This chapter will focus on the specific hermeneutic arguments and scriptural basis through which both Christians and Jews construct themselves and define their respective positions. Although discussions of race and ethnicity have proved useful and indeed will determine some of my own arguments, a lacuna has been left open in so many recent analyses of this play that necessarily must be filled by the post-Reformation history of biblical scholarship, intensified focus on the Old Testament, and a stirring of millenarianism that blossoms in

the middle of the seventeenth century. The bible and reading of the bible were central activities that produced both knowledge and a way of acquiring knowledge in Protestant England. These “habits of thoughts” and epistemological methods permeate *The Merchant of Venice* and determine the action of the play.

The suitors who come to hazard all for Portia must decode the cryptic inscriptions on each casket as well as the significations of the caskets’ respective metal. A correct choice exists and the conquest will require hermeneutic skill and discernment. The suitors must arrange all of the “signifying elements” in order to arrive at the answer already determined by Portia’s father (Normand 62). The reading of the caskets thus mirrors the reading of a text which has an ornamental outside and a deeper, more profound inside. The metal and the text accompanying it provide a hermeneutic key that matches the riddle and the corresponding contents of each casket. The litany of ridiculous suitors (from Scotland, Germany, etc.) that Portia describes undermine both her and the audience’s faith in the process and the results that the requisite hermeneutic skill will yield. Nerissa, her maid, reminds Portia that since her father was a “holy” man (1.2.27), the lottery he devised for suitors to choose correctly between caskets of gold, silver, and lead will invariably lead to the proper choice of husband. Like Antonio, then, Portia is also dependant on fate to determine whom she will marry: “I may neither choose who I would, nor refuse who I dislike; so is the will of a living daughter curbed by the will of a dead father” (1.2.23-25). This “dead father” and his connection to holiness, his absolute authority which remains, from the human perspective, inscrutable, symbolizes the

Protestant vision of God, who determines individual lives, choosing whom he will, based on a set of rules incomprehensible to mortals.

The play is both about reading texts and reading bodies in a manner that attempts to expose to view hidden and valuable truths. Protestant reverence for the Word was based not only on the knowledge a reader could glean from the text, but the discernible spirit of God available therein, provided the believer was reading correctly. In this way, the Reformation had effectively transformed the body of God from the altar to scripture — redefining Christ’s Body as a discursive one (Luxon 5). The Scriptures were a place where the reader, according to guide-books such as Nicolas Bifield’s *Directions for The private reading of Scriptures* (1618), could find knowledge, God’s grace, joy, and comfort; he could discern his own sins and find counsel as well as proof texts for the promises awaiting the faithful in addition to warnings against erroneous ways.

Included in the Book of Common Prayer (Book 2, Homily 10) was the homily, “Of them which take offence at Certain places of Holy Scripture” which states that not only the spirit of God, but also the body of Christ is available to each and every reader:

If one could shew but the print of Christs foot, a great number
I thinke would fall downe and worship it: But to the holy Scriptures,
where we may see daily (if we will) I will not say the print of his
feet only, but the whole shape and liuely image of him, alas, we
giue little reuerence or none at all Let euery man, woman,
and childe, therefore with all their heart thirst and desire GODS

holy Scriptures, loue them, embrace them, haue their delight
and pleasure in hearing and reading them, so as at length we
may bee transformed and changed into them. (3-4)

Not only can the godly reader access information about Christ from the Bible but he/she can actually find him “set forth.” He is “speaking vnto us, healing our infirmities, dying for our sinnes, rising from death for our justification” (4). Christ is present for the reader as the reader is present before Christ if he reads with the “eye of faith”-- that specific hermeneutic that makes God real and present through the Bible’s words. This specific Protestant way of reading, as Barbara Lewalski notes, encouraged pious readers to consider themselves “living allegories,” to find themselves in the scriptures and be transformed in an empirical kind of way” (Luxon, *Literal* 16-18). Critical reading meant not only interpretation but a discerning vision that overcame the “carnal sense” of the words and searched out the “inward meaning.”

In the homily, this purely external sense is exemplified by the “carnall Iewes” who, even when Christ was physically present, “could neither heare nor see those things which we may now both heare and see, if wee will bring with vs those eares and eyes that Christ is heard and seene with, that is, diligence to heare and reade his holy Scriptures, and true faith to beleue his most comfortable promises” (3). The Jews are termed “carnall” for their blindness to Christ as the savior in the biblical period itself as well as in every subsequent myopic Jewish reading of the record of Christ’s advent. The correct way of reading perceives the “wisedome hidden in the outward barke of the Scripture” (15) and is

antithetical to the Jewish reading characteristic of “scorners, jesters, and deriders” (15). The ability of the surface text then to reflect the inner meaning is completely dependent upon the reader’s perspicacity. As John S. Coolidge notes, “Thus Bassanio enacts emblematically the choice by which those who are chosen apprehend the true meaning of scripture” (252).

The Merchant of Venice most obviously instructs hermeneutic truth in the casket plot. Portia’s father, reminiscent of God, has predetermined how the casket’s text and constitutive metal operate as a coded indicator of the meaning hidden inside the closed casket. The portrait locked in the lead casket not only represents Portia, but is Portia herself. She tells Bassanio, before he chooses between the caskets, “Away then! I am lock’d in one of them; / If you do love me, you will find me out” (3.2.40-41). Bassanio’s ability to read the signifying metal in conjunction with its message awards him the portrait of Portia, the surface text, which, once in his possession will provide him with the real woman herself. As a result, Portia’s actual body will be given in marriage to the perceptive reader, and her own interior “meaning” penetrated so that a doubly enclosed interior will be infiltrated by the gifted literacy of the winning suitor. The woman’s interior organs, closed and private, are hidden inside the fabricated “text” of the caskets, thus enticing the reader and making “right” reading desirable in a very tangible way. If the right reader does not come, Portia says she will “be as old as Sibylla” and “die as chaste as Diana, unless I be obtain’d by the manner of my father’s will” explicitly linking sex with reading (1.2.106-108). The picture (or text) of Portia, once acquired through understanding the

text/meaning of the casket, yields the substantive woman who will be claimed with a “loving kiss” (3.2.138). This portrait enclosed within the casket exposes the layers of meaning and hermeneutic skill required of one who seeks to understand and acquire the prize – that is, God in his Word and Portia in the casket.

Portia links herself to the message inscribed on the casket in her discussion with a suitor, the Prince of Aragon, to whom she remarks regarding the terms of the contest, “To these injunctions every one doth swear / That comes to hazard for my worthless self” (2.9.17-18). The basis of the contest is “hazard” and her humble description of herself as “worthless” hints at the “base lead” casket as the correct choice. Confident that he will neither hear her nor discern her meaning, she gives him a key to unlocking both the casket and her own self. His immediate response, “Gold, silver, and base lead. / ‘Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.’ / You shall look fairer ere I give or hazard. / What says the golden chest?” (2.9.20-23) shows how obtuse he is; Portia has had a bit of fun at his expense. Aragon describes the lead as “base” and therefore not fair enough for hazard. He can read neither the casket nor the woman and so deserves nothing.

The surface text is ultimately less valuable than the inner meaning buried within. Bassanio, having chosen correctly, looks from person to portrait and is first astonished at the beauty and vitality of the painting. But realizing that it lacks Portia’s spirit, he says, “Yet look how far / The substance of my praise doth wrong this shadow / In underprizing it, so far this shadow / Doth limp behind the substance” (3.2.126-129). The painted text encoding Portia’s true self reveals a lady who is “thrice-fair” (3.2.146) godly and virtuous.

As Bassanio chooses, however, he reminds himself that “[t]he world is still deceiv’d with ornament” (3.2.74) and “the outward shows” are “least themselves” (3.2.73). Bassanio offers a list of examples, beginning with traditional texts in subjects such as law and scripture which may be used to hide corrupt intentions, but then moves to bodies as readable texts. Cowards and beauties, for instance, may deceive readers through external appearances, but their inner truth conflicts with the antithetical external representation.

The end of this speech concludes with the following lines,

Thus ornament is but the gilded shore
 To a most dangerous sea; the beauteous scarf
 Veiling an Indian beauty; in a word,
 The seeming truth which cunning times put on
 To entrap the wisest. (3.2.97-101)

In contrast to Portia whose outer appearance and inner value are commensurate, the Indian beauty is deceptive; however it is not her outer appearance that deceives since anyone viewing her face would presumably perceive the danger of a dark and strange woman. The scarf is the ornament which, designed to hide, occludes the threat of difference. Regardless of how beautiful she may be, the Indian woman does not have the “crisped snaky golden locks” (3.2.92) blowing against a face of “supposed fairness” (3.2.94) described as Beauty’s cunning guise in Bassanio’s earlier example. Her body itself, though attractive, does not hide an interior virtue, but, on the contrary, exposes an interior that is as equally dark and dangerous as her skin color and racial otherness

suggest.

The Indian beauty is one of many “bodies” in *The Merchant of Venice* that signify difference and, consequently, danger, as the ability to read these bodies correctly is problematic. The Prince of Morocco, the “tawny moor” who tries his hand at the contest attempts to reverse the biased difference of blackness that his body symbolizes. The first words he speaks to Portia are a defense, “Mislike me not for my complexion” (2.1.1). He constructs blackness as warmth in his proximity to the “burnish’d sun” (2.1.2) and sets fair whiteness in the North “where Phoebus’ fire scarce thaws the icicles” (2.1.5); Morocco equates his blood, the most interior component, with the reddest blood of the “fairest creature northward born” (2.1.4). His manner, however, and the implications of sexuality implicit in his declaration that the “best-regarded virgins” of his “clime” (2.1.10) have adored his valiance as well as his rather grand way of casually mentioning Turks, Persians, and lions, position him in a permanent place of regional and racial otherness. He asks for Portia to look beyond the surface, but himself proves inept at the kind of “deep” reading required to win her. Upon first weighing the inscriptions and three caskets, Morocco narrows his choices to the silver and gold based on the inscriptions, but he eventually disregards the inscriptions completely and decides on the gold because of the signifying metal alone: “[N]ever so rich a gem / Was set in worse than gold “ (2.7.54-55). He commits the error of being deceived by ornament; so intent on validating his exterior, Morocco contradicts the unbiased objectivity with which he hopes his blackness will be treated. He shows himself to be hermeneutically handicapped and affirms for Portia that

he is a readable figure whose lack of wisdom is immediately indicated by his blackness: “A gentle riddance. Draw the curtains, go. / Let all of his complexion choose me so” (2.7.78-79).

The Moor, as racial other, is constructed as all surface, completely readable; his dark skin signifies a body that hides no godly truth. While the play warns against trusting the “goodly outside” which might occlude a rotten interior, it advocates discriminating against those figures whose “outside” signifies difference. These bodies do not conceal a more profound meaning, to be searched and sounded out; they are carnal texts, all body, representing at once an exterior and interior that are equally matched. Lynda Boose suggests that Morocco and the Prince of Aragon “are set up along some implied moral continuum leading up to Bassanio,” the white European suitor (39). Since Aragon is a Spaniard, perhaps not really black or white, but somewhere in-between, he might symbolize a kind of “white moor,” a geographical and racial median between Morocco and Bassanio (Boose 38). Of all the suitors of varying nationalities who come to seek Portia’s hand it is these two “racial” others who take the risk and leave Belmont having sworn perpetual celibacy, fated never to reproduce themselves (Boose 39). Boose discusses the existence of numerous and competing (even contradictory) discourses about race and ethnicity in early modern England, arguing that ideas about race only evolve in the sixteenth-century. What *The Merchant of Venice* certainly repeatedly produces, however, are othered characters who do not have a spiritual interior, who are all body, and whose colored exterior is a readable text producing anxiety and distance in the

reader/audience. In a critical moment when the situation requires hermeneutic skill, reading becomes the very act that restricts these others and that simultaneously makes visible their lack of spiritual depth.

The “disqualifying” features of “prominent outsiders” in Shakespeare’s plays do not extend to the female characters included within the othered group. The otherness of Jessica, for instance, is presumed to be convertible; once she marries Lorenzo she will be incorporated through marriage and childbirth (Boose 40-41). Even after Jessica absconds with Lorenzo, Shylock alternatively asserts that she is his flesh and blood – that is, not only is she his genetic daughter, but she is internally Jewish, however such racial characteristics are determined. Solanio responds, “There is more difference between thy flesh and hers than between jet and ivory, more between your bloods that there is between red wine and Rhenish” (3.1.39-42) --the polarity sustained here, of antithetical measures, black and white (the privileged color, the color of fairness), and red and white wine construct the bodies of Jews as readable --the external body exposes the internal, and reveals instead of hides the difference underneath. Shylock is figured in dark hues with red blood, linking him to the black Prince of Morocco, described as tawny colored, and calling for his detractors to cut his flesh and see how red his blood runs. The converted Jewess is white with pure blood running through her veins. Solanio voices the belief that once the Jew converts her internal nature and physical constitution has been altered.

Full conversion, however, is complicated by the seeming un-assimilability of Jews in the fifth act. Although Christian society requires the full conversion of Shylock and

Jessica for purposes of integration, *The Merchant of Venice* suggests that alterity persists regardless of the terms, beliefs, or persuasions working to erase it. Jessica claims she is the “daughter” to her father’s “blood” but not to “his manners” (2.3.18-19); Jewish blood and personal traits are separable so that marrying or becoming Christian will erase her Jewishness: “O Lorenzo, / If thou keep promise, I shall end this strife, / Become a Christian and thy loving wife” (2.3.19-21). Notably though, when Jessica flees her father’s house, she disguises herself as a boy. Her disguise, designed to keep her safe from her father, mirrors Portia and Nerissa’s disguises as lawyers – disguises which prove indispensable in their case against Shylock. Dressed as a lawyer and clerk, the two women are able to free Antonio of his bond, provide for Jessica and Lorenzo, disarm Shylock, and finally convert him. Before she marries Lorenzo, Jessica too must disguise herself and render herself unreadable as a woman in order to convert. Like Portia, she offers her lover a casket that once belonged to her father; the casket that signals her transference to a husband is likewise filled with gold, and contains not a portrait of Jessica but ducats signifying the economy of marriage, particularly as it involves a Jew. Jessica tells Lorenzo to wait for her: “I will make fast the doors, and gild myself / With some moe ducats, and be with you straight” (2.6.49-50). She becomes the gilded ornament that is so suspect in the casket scene which directly follows. The scroll inside the gold casket erroneously chosen by Morocco reads, ““Many a man his life hath sold / But my outside to behold. / Gilded [tombs] do worms infold”” (2.7.67-69). The terms of the play’s discourse require that Jessica’s gilding of herself engenders distrust and a suspicious desire to hide with

ornament what lies beneath. Under the ducat-gilded surface of Jessica's figurative form are the actual garments of a boy, revealing another layer of disguise, intended to distract from what truly lies beneath. Gratiano, upon witnessing Jessica steal the ducats, says, "Now by my hood, a gentle, and no Jew" (2.6.51). Her actions (and disguises) seemingly erase whatever Jewishness, figured as blood or manners, problematically constitute her in her father's terms and definitively constitute Shylock in Venice's terms.

Jessica is glad that "love is blind" and she relies on the fact that "lovers cannot see / The pretty follies that themselves commit" (2.6.36-37) — her disguises as boy, torchbearer, and gilded supplier of ready cash serve to occlude her Jewishness and make Lorenzo into the blinded reader who cannot see the truth. Lorenzo responds with a series of statements that seem to comprehend or read his affianced as worthy, but are each falteringly qualified by some hesitation or uncertainty:

Beshrow me but I love her heartily,
 For she is wise, if I can judge of her,
 And fair she is, if that mine eyes be true,
 And true she is, as she hath prov'd herself,
 And therefore, like herself, wise, fair, and true,
 Shall be placed in my constant soul. (2.6.52-57)

He identifies her in terms of his own ability to read her actions correctly. His mind and eyes decipher the signs that her rejection of Shylock, desire for conversion, and offering of gold signify. She is reconstituted as "herself," wise, fair and true and is therefore nestled

in the interior soul of Lorenzo's body, although he can never be completely certain. There are layers of external disguise that must be peeled away to reveal Jessica, however, and when they are, what is exposed beneath?

When Lorenzo prepares to help Jessica flee, Lorenzo and Gratiano both use the word "fair" to describe her as a characterizing/racial identifier aimed at erasing her otherness: Jessica's letter is written by a fair hand, "[a]nd whiter than the paper it writ on / Is the fair hand that writ" (2.4.12-13). Mary Jannell Metzger claims that it is in part Jessica's "fairness" or whiteness as well as her femaleness that make her an integratable body (57-58). And yet, her whiteness, her external beauty cannot overcome the racial otherness of her blood. Lorenzo says of his future wife,

If e'er the Jew her father come to heaven,
It will be for his gentle daughter's sake,
And never dare misfortune cross her foot,
Unless she do it under this excuse,

That she is issue to a faithless Jew. (2.4.33-37)

Shylock can be elevated by his daughter's faith, indicated with the pun on gentle/gentile. Of course this pun is indicative of a liminal status somewhere between Jewishness, read as faithlessness, and Christianity, true belief. It is her status as a gentile, neither, nor, that makes her vulnerable still to her blood ties to her father. Regardless of her own beliefs, Jessica is still the offspring of a "faithless Jew" and depending on God's will, can either pull Shylock up or be dragged down by him. It is not her will, but God's grace that will

determine her position. Even her husband can understand that she may be punished for her blood connection to Shylock which persists as an unshakable identifier of racial difference regardless of personal intention or faith.

Despite Jessica's denial of her religion and father, her Jewishness is therefore maintained. Launcelot, who parodies and sustains biblical allusion, reminds her that "the sins of the father are to be laid upon the children; therefore, I promise you, I fear you . . . for truly I think you are damn'd" (3.5.1-6). Jessica complains to Lorenzo that Launcelot has told her there is no mercy for her in heaven "because I am a Jew's daughter; and he says you are no good member of the commonwealth, for in converting Jews to Christians, you raise the price of pork" (3.5.33-36). Launcelot's practical approach to conversion, that is that Jessica remains a Jew and that conversion upsets the balance of the economy, indicates a resistance to the Christian desire for Jewish conversion so prevalent amongst Protestants. Lorenzo, as we noted earlier, understands that Jessica is irrevocably tied to her father and that the judgment will be upon her head. His only answer is to respond that converting a Jew is more productive than the mulatto offspring Launcelot will produce with the pregnant Moor who is his mistress. This *tete-a-tete* does nothing to disprove either statement that Launcelot made to Jessica.

The ensuing discussion becomes merely a contest of verbal wit and punning. Launcelot answers, regarding the pregnant Moor, "It is much that the Moor should be more than reason; but if she be less than an honest woman, she is indeed more than I took her for" (3.5.40-42). The black woman with no name is mentioned only as a pregnant

signifier who will present numerous difficulties for the “commonwealth” on racial, social, and economic lines. The word play leads into a discussion of preparations for dinner and consumption of food where Launcelot plays on the words “stomach” and “cover” (cover the table, put on your hat) producing an excess of meaning, all in the context of eating and consuming. Both Jessica and the Moor will consume, digest, and subsequently drain the means of the commonwealth without necessarily contributing to it. Shylock too is associated constantly with feeding off of Christians. He will go and meet with the Christians “in hate, to feed upon / The prodigal Christian” (2.5.14-15) he tells Jessica and takes the bond in order to “feed fat my ancient grudge” (1.3.47). When speaking to Bassanio about the bond, Antonio’s entrance prompts Shylock to tell him that he was “the last man in our mouths” (1.3.60). Others are figured as consuming, taking from Christian society, in a way that diminishes without replenishing.¹⁰

The resistance to literal meaning in these lines is a purposeful confusion that appears to be mere festive punning; but Launcelot’s refusal to “understand a plain man in his plain meaning” (3.5.57-58) displays the impossibility of pinning down slippery meanings initiated by the discussion with which the scene began – whether or not Jessica is damned. Jessica’s verbal wit shows her dissimilarity to her father, whose discourse is characterized by plain speech and staccato repetition of words; his language is in fact so basic that it strips itself of any meaning (Rosen 69). Her “Christian” wittiness marks her

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For more on the Moor, images of consumption, and racial difference see Kim F. Hall, “Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner? Colonization and Miscegenation in *The Merchant of Venice*,” *Renaissance Drama* 23 (1992), 87-111.

as un-Jewish in the same external way as does her beauty and fairness.

Until act three when Bassanio wins Portia and the two plots converge, the play's movement alternates evenly between the casket contest and Antonio's bond. Yet when Bassanio realizes the hermeneutic ideal required for choosing the correct casket, Christian (specifically Protestant) reading and history have triumphed over their primary adversary. Bassanio's personal ordeal is integrated into Christ's victory by which humanity is freed from the confines of the Law (Coolidge 252). The court scene logically follows where the Jew, through a misreading of the "law," the bond which he himself has penned finally falls. The play then, as a whole, is a hermeneutic drama, staging the contest between Christian and Jew for the possession of Hebrew Scriptures -- an essential dispute that must be resolved for the establishment Christian inheritance (Coolidge 243). Virtually all kinds of misbelief and apostasy were understood as resulting from an inadequate understanding of "the one true literal sense of God's revelation in Scripture" (Luxon, *Literal* 24) but Jews were seen as purposefully blinding themselves to the truth of history and Bible. Luxon quotes Augustine who compares a Jew to "a blind man with a lantern who shows the way to others but doesn't see it himself" (*Literal* 25). Tyndale claims that the scripture and word of God "may be so locked up, that he which readeth it or heareth it, cannot understand it" (4). He continues by arguing that Christ himself testified that the Scribes and Pharisees had locked away true meaning and thrown away the key and despite the fact that the Jews "thought themselves within" they were yet locked out and "are to this day that they can understand no sentence of their scripture and their salvation" (4)

Shylock the Jew and Antonio/the Christians are set up as adversaries from the first moment they negotiate the bond. Shylock clearly wants revenge for the ill treatment he has received at Antonio's hands and Antonio has clearly abused Shylock for being a Jewish usurer. Shylock claims to want to feed fat the "ancient grudge" he bears Antonio as well, invoking an entire biblical history of contest for the position as God's people. His reference to catching Antonio "upon the hip" (1.3.46) recalls Jacob's wrestling with the angel who wounds him in Genesis as he escapes his twin brother Esau, whom he tricked out of the blessing of the first born. After this wrestling match, God changes Jacob's name to Israel and promises his children will be a great nation chosen as God's.¹¹ The biblical background then, the textual ground on which Shylock and Antonio are to meet is the original story of two brothers, one supplanting the other as heir to God's elected family; Shylock initiates a scriptural debate with Antonio, asserting the Jews' possession of the promise and an aborted attempt to justify usury :

When Jacob graz'd his uncle Laban's sheep—

This Jacob from our holy Abram was

(As his wise mother wrought in his behalf)

The third possessor; ay, he was the third— (1.3.71-74)

Shylock begins by establishing himself and the Jews as descendants of Jacob, chosen by God (as opposed to Esau, who was rejected). Jacob's election evolves from his father

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For a lengthier discussion of the Jacob/Esau connection see John Scott Colley, "Launcelot, Jacob, and Esau: Old and New Law in *The Merchant of Venice*," *The Yearbook of English Studies* 10 (1980): 181-189.

Abraham's chosen-ness and the wisdom Rebecca, his mother, receives from God. As Shylock is about to iterate Jacob's inheritance of God's promise, he is cut off by Antonio who wants to avoid the Jew's self-constructive hermeneutic: "And what of him? did he take interest" (1.3.75)? Antonio's question is meant to displace Shylock's (hi)story of election with the Jewish corruption of scripture for his own profit. Shylock hovers on the narrative brink of marking and telling over the biblical text claiming God's promise for Israel. Re-telling the story of Laban and Jacob and the rapid reproduction of "the earlings which were streak'd and pied" (1.3.79) that constituted Jacob's wealth will presumably justify and authorize Shylock; but he is interrupted again when Antonio notes that Jacob's particolored rams were only so numerous because the breeding was "sway'd and fashion'd by the hand of heaven" (1.3.93). Shylock's full explanation is never revealed, but Antonio assumes the Jew's misreading of scripture when he quips, "Was this inserted to make interest good? / Or is your gold and silver ewes and rams" (1.3.94-95)? Shylock's answer, "I cannot tell, I make it breed as fast" (1.3.96) angers Antonio not only because of the justification of usury but because Shylock links those practices to Jacob's election and God's blessing. Antonio's highlighting of Shylock's erroneous reading of both the Laban/Jacob story and of his own position in divine history, underlines the Jew's perpetual sin -- his hermeneutic myopia. Thomas Luxon's reading of *The Merchant of Venice* accurately re-defines anti-Judaism in light of recent critics who have ignored the "powerfully ambivalent role played by the figure of the Jew in the Elizabethan Protestant imagination" ("Second Daniel"). In doing so, he argues that hermeneutic myopia, the

inability of Jews to read scripture properly, defined Jewishness. Shylock's carnal and self-serving interpretation of Genesis would have seemed typical to Shakespeare's audience since God's Israel had become willful and stubborn misbelievers ("Second Daniel" 3). Shylock reads the "carnal" words of scripture but does not discern God's "spirit":

The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose,
An evil soul producing holy witness
Is like a villain with a smiling cheek,
A goodly apple rotten at the heart.
O, what a goodly outside falsehood hath! (1.3.98-102)

The Jew's "misuse" of scripture is evidence not only of his inability to see God in the text, but of his own rotten interior. Shylock's body is transformed into the Judaized text, one which possesses the carnal qualities of the words but reveals only perversity beneath – in effect the scripture for the Jew is mere ornament.

Once the hermeneutic dispute ensues, Shylock constructs himself as a descendant of Jacob while the play produces competing images of him as Laban, Esau, and a reprobate figure. After the bond is sealed, Launcelot Gobbo is seen debating with himself as to whether or not he should leave the service of Shylock his master. His debate signifies the transference of promise; his conscience tells him to stay with Shylock signaling a reluctance to leave the original source of God's grace. But since the Jew has rejected Christ and become a reprobate, he is figured as the very devil himself. After Launcelot determines to leave the Jew's service, the transference of blessing to Jacob at

the expense of Esau is parodied. Launcelot's blind father does not recognize his son requesting his father's blessing. Even when Launcelot reveals his identity to his father, Old Gobbo cannot be certain that the man standing before him is actually his child. Finally Old Gobbo exclaims, grasping Launcelot's head as he kneels before him ready to be blessed, "I'll be sworn, if thou be Launcelot, thou art my own flesh and blood. Lord worshipp'd might he be, what a beard hast thou got! Thou hast got more hair on thy chin than Dobbin my fill-horse has on his tail" (2.2.91-95). Like Isaac who does not recognize Jacob dressed in animal skins and come to trick him into bestowing the blessing of the first born, Gobbo does not recognize his son when he grasps the back of his head. The whole humorous scene repeats and parodies the Genesis story, the biblical axis on which Christians' self-validation as elect nation turns; Jews are now reprobate, excluded from the blessing as is Esau. This exegetical moment mirrors Shylock's claim that Rebecca had divine knowledge regarding the election of her younger son and was therefore "wise."

Once a discussion over supplanting and representation is initiated between Shylock and Antonio, Launcelot and his father are transformed into the actual story with Launcelot as Jacob and his father as Isaac. In choosing to replace Shylock with Bassanio as his master, Launcelot re-enacts the Christian version of history whereby God replaces his original chosen nation of Jews with the Christians. Launcelot, begging employment of Bassanio, says, "The old proverb is very well parted between my master Shylock and you sir: you have the grace of God, sir, and he hath enough" (2.2.149-151). Whatever wealth Shylock in fact possesses is removed from the grace of God, symbolic of the blessing that

has passed to Bassanio and by extension the Christian community. Shylock's wealth does not signify election but the less valuable purely material substitute to grace. The fact that Launcelot, a clown who when he speaks either puns, derides, or stumbles over his own words, is the symbolic vehicle for this transference may serve the purpose of either calling into question the complete transference or may serve to show how pervasive, regardless of class level, the blessing, sanctioned by God and scripture, is. Both readings are plausible and both in fact are offered by the play.

Shylock constructs himself as a descendant of Jacob, swearing by "Jacob's staff" and attempting to displace the Christian representative in the Jacob story, Launcelot, as rejected when he refers to him as Ishmael, "What says that fool of Hagar's offspring, ha"(2.5.44)? The Christian is cast, in the Jew's version of biblical history, as the displaced reprobate, while Shylock/Jacob remains chosen. Shylock's late wife's name, Leah, who was the first of Jacob's wives, further enforces the Jew's claim to the patriarch Jacob and his chosen family. Jessica's betrayal and conversion to Christianity creates a competing narrative, however, challenging the Jewish version and positioning Shylock as Laban, a figure recognizable for his avarice and cheating. Like Laban's daughter Rachel, who marries Jacob and flees with Laban's idols, Jessica runs off with Shylock's ducats and Lorenzo, thereby weakening the biblical version Shylock generates (Coolidge 248). Lars Engle focuses on the fact that the Launcelot/Gobbo scene exposes Shylock's inability to control the interpretation of the text he cites, especially since he "becomes Laban" (32). Yet reiterated within the play are both Christian and Jewish claims to chosen status as

determined through different interpretations of the very same Genesis stories. I would argue that they exist simultaneously, empowered by their reproduction, quotation, and reference, competing for validation as truth.

Launcelot, a son who neglects his filial duty and mocks a blind father, represents a Jacob not quite deserving of the blessing. His immediate reasons for leaving the Jew are that he is famished in his service -- hunger representing a kind of spiritual starvation; but at the same time, he wishes to serve Bassanio because he gives new "liveries." His fear that he will turn Jew if he stays in Shylock's employ transforms Jewishness into a disease that can be caught regardless of the victim's personal beliefs. This racialized depiction of Judaism as a sort of plague competes with the idea that the essential difference between Jews and Christians is hermeneutic and theological. The positioning of Jews as infective others turns religion into an irrational force that does not distinguish between personal desire and knowledge. Physical proximity can thereby enforce Jewishness on a Christian.

When Jessica is ready to abscond with Lorenzo, Launcelot classifies her as a "most beautiful pagan, most sweet Jew" (2.3.11) and puts two phrases together that will be used throughout the play to describe a Jew who behaves in a righteous manner -- pagan Jew or gentile (gentle) Jew. The ultimate goal for the Jews from a Christian perspective is conversion; when Shylock offers the "merry bond," Antonio claims, "the Hebrew will turn Christian, he grows kind" (1.3.178). The fact that the word "Hebrew" is used here, and not Jew, recalls the biblical nomenclature and invites the audience to contemplate the hopeful conversion of Jews and Gentiles that will bring about the second coming. The

term “gent[i]le Jew” defines a place between Jewishness and Christianity; the fact that the noun “Jew” persists but “gentile” becomes the adjective demonstrates the erasure of what is unchristian – be it stubbornness, blindness, or unbelief. At the root, however, of the desired identity is the Jew.

Israel, chosen by God and redeemed, is a paradigmatic image for English Protestants. Although Israel had sinned and rejected Christ, those who would eventually return were the core, the source, the root of spirituality — the gentiles are grafted in amongst them. Calvin separated the Jews into those who were elected and those who were rejected. He quotes St. Paul:

All they which are of Iacob after the flesh, are not for all that true Israelites: that is to say they are not the people of God, for he had two names, as we shall see hereafter to wit, Iacob, and Israel. And that is so, before the children were borne, loe God, which serveth the one from the other, and sheweth that this is not one body, and that they were not united together, but that one was reserved and the other rejected. (*Institutes* 209)

The spiritual inheritors of Jacob are thus separated from the carnal heirs, the Jews. This distinction which seemingly erases the elected status of Jews conflicts with the literal way in which Protestants read the Bible and identified with the Jews of the Old Testament. As Thomas Luxon argues, Protestants (and especially Puritans) alternate between identifying themselves as the Israelites of the Old Testament and perceiving them “as the

quintessential misbeliever, Christianity's perennial constitutive other" (*Literal* 25). Calvin continues, "See therefore a second favour that was in Abraham's family: that is, that God held to himselfe, those that he thought good. Of Iacob was at the roote of his stock which sprong afterwarde, and farther marke for what cause all these were figured in his person" (211). Although the Jews rejected Christ, the model of chosen Israel presents a compelling and vivid alternative image, one which, in Paul's "olive root" image, posits them as a source, a point of origin to which God and history will eventually return.

In John Weemse's extensive set of instructions on how to read, point, translate, and collate Scripture with Scripture (Old and New Testaments), he works to establish the connections both in content and meaning between the two texts. He uses Talmudic statements, Hebrew etymology, and Jewish commentary to explain the proper sense of scripture. The name of the text itself, *The Christian Synagogue* (1636), has at its root the synagogue, a Jewish house of prayer. In order for God's spirit to be revealed, the Christian community must incorporate the synagogue but maintain Jewishness at its root. Like the term "gentile Jew," "Christian" becomes a description in Weemes's title, and Jewishness a modification of that which pre-exists the Church and now requires refinement. In the Epistle to studious young divines, Weemse connects Protestant and Jewish purpose:

It was the earnest prayer of the Iewes (deare Bretheren) that,
Aarons rod might flourish (that is) the Children of the Priests
might prosper when Aarons rod flourished, it was a token

that the priesthood should continue. It is my hearty prayer to God that Aarons rod may still flourish, that there may be a hopefull seed to succeed, and that the Schooles and Vniversities may be like Pom-citren, that goodly tree, which beareth apples at all times, some falling off, some ripe, and some budding out: So, as many notable lights decay, others may supply their places. Now that this may be effectuate, first is requisite, that ye study to be holy: for as the ornaments which Aaron the high priest put upon him, were nothing, of he had not HOLINESS TO THE LORD written upon his forehead in a plate of Gold: So, of yee should speake with the tongue of Men and Angels, and be profane, what availeth all your learning? Salomon saith, that beauty in a woman without goodnes, is as a Ring in a Swines snout: So is learning without grace in a profane youth. (Epistle 1-2).

Seeing himself and his fellow divines as God's priests and identifying them as the buds on Aaron's rod, Weemse fashions the godly learned as the contemporary priesthood who have inherited Aaron's vocation. The divines' actions are analogous to the plate of gold on Aaron's forehead inscribed with the name of God which enables his engagement in the sacred rituals of the Holy Temple. This plate, signifying divinity and providing a text whereby Aaron's body and actions may be properly interpreted, reflects Aaron's holy purpose. Not merely ornamental display, the plate reading "Holiness to the Lord" defines

the man himself and accurately identifies the internal and complete dedication Aaron has for God. The divines, on the other hand, who preach Gods word but act in a profane manner, possess a goodly outside (ornaments) that reflects a corrupt interior (absence of God's name). The golden plate translates into internal godliness – intention, desire, thought -- which the perspicacious reader will see as clearly as Aaron's gleaming plate; if not, the divines' will be as discernible as a swine's true identity regardless of how bejeweled he may be. Interestingly then, the goal of the godly is to have a corresponding interior and exterior where godliness is pervasive, the body that when read as dedicated to God truly incorporates God within and does not hide anything beneath.

Learning is an ornament -- words spoken which become a signifying text that construct the speaker as faithful. The audience of Protestants who will hear a divine speak, will read him not according to his speech but in combination with the internal demonstrated grace; these readers will expose him should he be unlike Aaron and not be turned into the godliness he preaches. The election and godliness of the divines is dependant upon the image of Israel and particularly the priesthood for success and promise. Aaron is not just a precedent but an actual forebear from whom English Protestants may inherit. Weemse counsels the divines to learn Hebrew and Greek in order to be able to read scripture in the original language and hear God himself speaking:

[A]nd that the proverbe in the Talmud, may not be applied to you,
Benzoma semper soris est, this man is never within; for to reade the
Scriptures without considering the originall, is nothing but

standing in the doore, and never entering within the house, you

either cannot, or else will not. (Epistle 2)

The Scriptures are a structure with an interior, which when discerned and entered, provides a place for the entire body of the reader to stand. Without the linguistic key to unlock the meaning of the text, found in the etymology itself, the interior is closed. "The Christian Synagogue" is thus an edifice that on the ornamental outside appears Christian, but once penetrated, read, entered, is fundamentally Jewish. Since Scripture is compared to a house, the foundation, the grace and spirit of God, which the reader must search out, has a fundamentally Jewish nature. Shylock is concerned with shutting the doors of his house against the sound of the masques scheduled for the night Jessica runs off with Lorenzo: "But stop my house's ears, I mean my casements; / Let not the sound of shallow fopp'ry enter / My sober house" (2.5.34-36). Shylock's lonely, sober house, stands as a body, a space which refuses to be invaded by the music and cavorting of "Christian fools" (2.5.33). In the speech where Shylock warns Jessica to protect this sacred space, the house/body that encloses the Jew and the only Jewish woman (and reproductive source) in the play, he invokes Jacob's "staff," reminding the audience of his hermeneutic and ancestral prerogative.

Launcelot tells Jessica to look out the window, the osmotic barrier through which eyes, vision, and even bodies may pass: "There will come a Christian by, / will be worth a Jewess' eye" (2.5.41-42). This line recalls both the Old Testament penalty of an eye for an eye, as well as Matthew's injunction, "If your eye offend against you, pluck it out"

(5:29) implying that Jessica will have to pay for Lorenzo by surrendering her Jew's eye, the organ that generates desire (Isaac 359). Included in the biblical allusion is the idea that the Jew's desiring gaze incorporates the whole body of the Christian. Jewish desire, determined by sight and defined by blindness to the truths of scripture and Christ, once it sees truth, loves a Christian; she sacrifices her Jewish vision -- a refusal to read or see the truth. Alternatively, the entire Christian is worth only the Jewess' eye, an organ that sees but cannot function or act without the rest of the body.

As Shylock bids Jessica farewell, he again tells her to shut the doors, "Fast bind, fast find" (2.5.54) against the Christian masques, hoping the music will not seep through the walls or openings of his home. In the fifth act of the play, when Lorenzo and Jessica, now married, sit at Portia's house in Belmont, Jessica claims she is "never merry" when she hears "sweet music" (5.1.69). Lorenzo explains that the power of music is a conversionary or transfiguring one, such that "wild and wanton" herds and "youthful and unhandled colts" (5.1.71-72) when they happen to hear a trumpet sound or any music, will suddenly stand still "[t]heir savage eyes turn'd to a modest gaze" (5.1.78). Despite the natural "hot condition of their blood" (5.1.74), these animals can be transformed from savage to modest by the power of music. Moreover, it is their gaze or vision, their way of seeing, that requires civilizing and refinement, much like the hermeneutic myopia of the Jews. These animals, now converted from their wild nature, present a parallel to Jessica, a Jewess by blood who can be converted by the soothing, civilizing power of Christianity; music has the power to permeate the body's borders, moving from outside the listener

through the ear and transforming the interior state. In Lorenzo's second example, when Ovid's Orpheus plays music, he affects the trees and stones and alters their essential nature. The alternative is Shylock, alluded to in Lorenzo's explanation as the "man that hath no music in himself, / Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds" (5.1.83-84); he is "fit for treasons, strategems and spoils; / The motions of his spirit are dull as night, / And his affections dark as [Erebus]: / Let no such man be trusted" (5.1.85-88). The reference to hell invokes the frequent identification of Shylock with the devil and the fiend, elucidating Lorenzo tutelage as providing Jessica with a method of conversion that will alter her "nature," and somehow erase her Jewishness. The fact that she does not enjoy music, problematizes her internal transformation and conversion to the spirit of Christianity.

Only a few moments later, Portia and Nerissa return from their success in the Venice courtroom, and Portia immediately notes how beautiful the music she hears emitting from her house sounds, even sweeter than by day. Shylock's conversion and the displacement of Israel as God's chosen nation are metaphorically alluded to as her mission to Venice is completed. She tells Nerissa that at first the light of the candle visibly burning in the hall of her house and casting its light into the darkness seems a great illuminator until the light of the moon above eclipses the smaller candle:

So

doth the greater glory dim the less:

A substitute shines brightly as a king

Until a king be by, and then his state

Empties itself, as doth an island brook

Into the main of waters. (5.1.93-97)

After Shylock's defeat, Portia can neatly assert the substitution of Christians for Jews as God's chosen nation. The king symbolizes Christ whose spirit pervades the "main" of the world, creating a new precedent for election. The very next words Portia speaks, are, "Music, hark!" (5.1.97) emphasizing the association between music and the godly spirit enunciated only moments earlier by Lorenzo. The Jews with their dull spirits and blindness have been symbolically and literally overcome, although the unwillingness with which Shylock will approach the font as well as Jessica's struggle to "mark the music" (5.1.88) indicate that conversion will neither be wholehearted nor complete. The convertibility of the Jew, especially in the case of Jessica, who desires conversion and incorporation, remains problematic.

Despite the ambiguity of conversion and its ability to change the "nature" of the Jew, *The Merchant of Venice* ends with Christian triumph as Antonio's liberty and wealth are restored, the couples happily matched and married, and the racial and religious others made powerless through celibacy or conversion. Providence smiles on Christians as Portia tells Antonio of his argosies miraculously come to port. Lorenzo and Jessica receive Shylock's money as "manna" divinely dropped in the way of starved people. The Christian community seems cohesive and whole and any racial or religious threats have been destabilized or excised, making Shylock's claims to election appear baseless. God's working in the history of this play favors Christians.

Thomas Nashe: The Power of Words

Once Jessica flees Shylock's house, his behavior turns severe and as he whets his knife on his shoe during the courtroom scene, confirms the worst fears about Jews as homicides and ritual murderers; Antonio becomes at that moment a palpable Christ figure. These stereotypical but powerfully influential images undermine the contemporary continuation of Jewish election. Thomas Nashe's picaresque novel *The Unfortunate Traveller* (1594) begins with Jack Wilton's antics during England's war with France (1513) and takes the reader on a fantastical and anachronistic journey back and forth through various times and countries, ends with a series of horrifying episodes in Italy specifically involving some a sadistic pair of Jews.

Wilton's reference to his history as "this Acts and Monuments" (208), parodying John Foxe's influential *Actes and monuments of these latter and perilous dayes touching maners of the church*, the early modern English appendix to the Bible, seemingly indicates the association of events brought together by a unifying theory or goal to produce a single vision. Foxe's text transformed fifteen hundred years of church history into a meaningful plot, its chapters consisting of the ongoing warfare between the false and visible church and the true church, persecuted and hidden (Collinson *Birthpangs* 4). The stories included in Foxe's book, "help confirm a powerfully contested construction of reality" (Helgerson 256). As Richard Helgerson explains, "They reassure the suffering elect that the deaths of their fellow Protestants have not been in vain, maintain the apocalyptic hope on which such self-sacrifice depends, keep believers believing" (256). Wilton's parodic text, on the

other hand, seems to have no single coherent ideology or *raison d'être*, except perhaps the power of language itself as a productive energy. Although they both share what Helgerson calls "the narrative impulse," Foxe's text reveals each martyr's participation in an imagined community (267) while there seems to be no order to or relation to the events catalogued in Wilton's travels. Arguably it is the focus on the Word of God, in its vernacular and accessible form circulating in Protestant England, that authorizes Jack's personal desire to narrate his story. Instead of self-sacrificing acts in the name of religion, however, Jack performs tricks for his own amusement:

What stratagemically acts and monuments doo you thinke an ingenious infant of my yeeres might enact? you will say, it were sufficient if he slur a die, pawn his master to the vtmost peny, and minister the oath of the pantosle arteficially. (209)

Thus Jack's actions and narrative are emptied of the sacred purpose invested in Foxe's text while maintaining the narrative impulse present in Foxe and in the print culture exploding in England. Instead of a cosmic history threading and ordering the narrative, however, random events occur in no chronological order; only language and the words spoken by Wilton to the reader determine the next chronological episode in Wilton's seemingly random journey. His description of an event, re-telling of a conversation, memory, or comment can have the effect of initiating the next event or occurrence that Wilton (and the reader) will experience/witness. In this way language determines the action of the novel.

After visiting Erasmus, Luther, Muenster, and many more important men and historical events, Wilton enters an Italian world of the chronological present which turns out to be peopled by monstrous figures — murderers, rapists, cruel Jews, and nymphomaniacal women. He will become a Jew's anatomy subject and a whore's sex slave. This world is one of inversion where God is powerless and the Pope, Jews, and murderers wreak havoc on Rome. These narratives result in the torture, execution, and detailed martyrologies of a Jew and killer, modeled on Foxe's *Actes and Monuments*. What these events succeed in relaying to the reader is both the affirmation of the stereotypes of Jews, Catholics, and unruly women as well as the repudiated truth of those stereotypes by means of their extremity. That is, in the unbelievable horrors he details, the retelling renders the events almost fictional.

His last set of travels begin with a rejection of the Israelite model with which the English godly identified and a reiteration of the devilish almost medieval homicidal ritual murderer to which *The Merchant of Venice* only gestures. Wrongfully accused in Heraclide's rape and imprisoned, Wilton meets an Englishman who helps delay his trial during which time Jack's innocence is discovered. Wilton has put himself, according to the banished earl, in the position of an Israelite, exiled from his land:

God had no greater curse to lay upon the *Israelites*, than by leading them out of their owne countrey to liue as slaues in a strange land. That which was their curse, we Englishmen count our chiefe blessednes; hee is no bodie that hath not traueled: wee

had rather liue as slaues in another land . . . than liue as freemen
and Lords in our owne Countrey. (297)

England is compared to Israel and the English made analogous to the Jews with the added grace of God's blessing. The Jews are punished by God and exiled; the English are blessed by God and yet they exile themselves. In this context, the Israelite model with which England identifies itself does not provide intimacy with God but, on the contrary invokes a history of rejection, exile, and resulting deformity of character. True to his reputation as quarreling wit, Nashe, through Wilton, rejects the Israelite image central to Protestant England's claim to God's covenant.

Traveling through other countries necessitates the traveler's adoption of the negative qualities of each places he visits; Wilton catalogues in detail the evil habits and duplicitous means the voyaging Englishman will develop. The traveling state requires that one "[b]eleue nothing, trust no man; yet seeme thou as thou swallowedst al, suspectedst none, but wert easie to be gulled by euerie one" (298). In addition, the traveler "must licke, he must crouch, he must cog, lye, and prate, that either in the Court or in a forren Countrey will ingender and come to preferment" (299). Wilton claims it is not possible for any man to obtain great wit by travel; he only learns the experience of many evils: "What is here but we may read in bookes, and a great deale more too, without stirring our feete out of a warme Studie" (299)? In order to learn about the evils committed in various countries one may remain at home in his study reading about them, but actual travel into the stories and engagement with the people transforms the traveller into the thing with

which he comes in contact. This reflects and inverts the Protestant Bible reader's engagement with Scripture where he is meant to be transformed into that which he reads. Englishmen are enslaved by the values of the Italian and the Spaniard who easily dominate them, since the English are "the plainest dealing soules that euer God put life in" (298). When the banished earl is removed from his country he compares himself to a fish out of water, a lamb fed on the milk of a she-wolfe. The paradigmatic exiled nation is Israel, exiled ever since being led to a strange land and so logically, the Jews have adopted all of the negative characteristics of the various countries in which they have resided since then. The earl relates, "Beleeve me, no aire, no bread, no fire, no water doth a man anie good out of his owne country" (302).

The subversion of the Jewish ideal requires Nashe to fashion a Jew whose character represents the very worst and depraved nature, one who draws on medieval stereotypes, threatens Christians bodies, and is guilty of every crime of which he has been accused – one whose contemporary character bears no resemblance to the Old Testament Israel which England imagines itself as replicating. The very next adventure that Wilton experiences is falling into a Jew's cellar where he is found by Zadoch and then sold as an anatomy subject to another Jew, Zacharie. The following two plots, interweaving Wilton's imprisonment by the Jew and his powerlessness at the hands of the Pope's concubine who desires his youthful body, serve to feminize Wilton; his body becomes the subject of Zacharie's probing and the object of Julianna's uncontrollable lust. Zacharie and Juliana exist outside the boundaries of the normative, defined as all body themselves.

The attention Zacharie gives to the naked Wilton, piercing his arm to see how the blood runs, presents an invasion that is a kind of anatomizing. He makes use of all left over things, including bodily fluids:

Not the verie crums that fall from his table, but *Zacharie* sweepes together, and of them moulds vp a Manna. Of the ashie parings of his bread, he would make conserue of chippings. Out of bones, after the meate was eaten off, hee would alchumize an oyle . . . His snot and spittle a hundred times hee hath put ouer to his Apothecarie for snow water. (306)

The Jew, the exile, the greedy churl, has adapted himself by making use of every object or crumb in his possession. The boundaries of inside and outside the body are erased by his actions so that internal fluids are bottled and ingested by his patients. Juliana's possession and rape of Wilton similarly reverses gender roles, sexual positions, and the direction of desire. This final section of the novel, begins with a fall into the "hell" of the Jew's cellar and continues to produce a place peopled by monsters who know no physical boundaries. The Jew as dismemberer is distinguished by the Pope himself, who, believing himself nearly poisoned by his own physician, Zacharie, issues an edict proclaiming "all fore-skinne clippers, whether male or female, belonging to the old Iurie, should depart and auoid pain of hanging, twenty daies after the date thereof" (307). The wording of this edict indicates the deformative power associated with the Jew. Despite the fact that circumcision is a ritual performed only on male Jews, the action becomes a potential

menace to Christians as well and a crime perpetrated by Jewish men and women. Thus regardless of gender, the ritual action becomes a behavioral norm that threatens all bodies, even those not confined to the old Jurie.

The stereotypical representation of the Jewish physician evokes the typological figure often constructed in the Middle Ages of a faithless Jew-- who, through abusing Christian bodies, is able to replay and recall the crucifixion. The double perversity combines sexual perversion with the scourging and whipping usually performed on the body of Christ; Wilton's still-captive courtesan is the object of the Jew's sadism:

Vnder shadow of enforcing her to tell how much money she had of
his prentice so to be trayned to his cellar, hee stript her, and scourged
her from top to toe tantara. Day by day he digested his meate with
leading her the measures. A diamond Delphinicall drie leachour
it was. (309-310)

The reader thus comes to see Zacharie as the satisfactory fulfillment of all of the worst stereotypes of Jews, just as the Pope, Juliana, Cutwolfe, and Esdras are animate productions of rumors, accusations, and speculations about what Rome and its insidious corruption offer the eyes and ears of Protestant England.

The Jews are expelled, and their repetitive history iterated: "Marke the ending, marke the ending. The tribe of Iudah is adiudged from Rome to bee trudging, they may no longer bee lodged ther, al the Albumazers, Rabisacks, Gedions, Tebiths, Benhadads, Benrodand, Zedechiases, Halies of them were banquerouts and turned out of house and

home” (310). Nashe uses familiar Jewish names to localize Jews and place them within a larger history of exile illustrated by the sackcloth and ashes Zadoch wears, traditional signs of mourning and symbolic of the destroyed Temple. The mourning Jew sets himself in opposition to the Christians who worship “that crucifide God of Nazareth” claiming that here in the displacement of the Jews is the “fruits of their new found Gospell” (310).

Despite the fact that the Jews are not guilty of the crime of the Pope’s attempted murder, their general guilt here seems reason enough for their punishment. Zadoch’s vituperative monologue listing all the crimes he will commit (those traditionally attributed to medieval Jews), are exposed as pure rhetoric by Zachary himself, who tells Zadoch, “[T]hou threatnest the aire, whilest we perish here in earth” (311). The fervor of his ranting, the cruelty of his proposed action, and the venom he claims elemental to his blood render his depiction so extreme that it borders on the ridiculous. He suggests,

I haue a leg with an issue, shall I cut it off, & from his fount of
corruption extract a venome worse than anie serpents? If thou wilt,
Ile goe to a house that is infected, where caching the plague, and
hauing got a running sore vpon me, Ile come and deliuer her
a supplication and breath vpon her. I knowe my breath stinkes
so alredie, that it is within halfe a degree of poison. Il paie
her home if I perfect it with anie more putrifation. (311-312)

Zadoch’s leg, an expendable appendage that discharges fluid, can double as a toxic weapon. He can also use his body to carry the plague from an infected house to Julianna

through the medium of a running sore. The Jew's body has no boundaries, can be dismembered, and become the site of exchanged fluids and mobile plague. The internal poison native to the Jew can be released through amputation, and utilized. His breath itself, when exhaled, approaches poison. The unbound Jewish body can infect and disease people in the same manner as the plague but will be directed through malevolent Jewish desire.

Nashe thus voices and makes real the most excessive images of the fiendish Jew while simultaneously exposing and undermining this image as a fiction. Wilton tells the reader, regarding Zadoch's whipping Diamente, "Of an ill tree I hope you are not so ill sighted in grafting to expect good fruite: hee was a Iew, and intreated her like a Iew" (309). The "like a Jew" stereotype serves as an antithetical representation to the figure of the Jew in Romans recalled often in Protestant theology as the original olive tree planted and elected by God into which the Christians will be grafted. Wilton's parodic question, subverts the possibility of this positive Jewish image even as he reduces the negative stereotype throughout his extreme depiction of Zadoch and Zacharie.

Zadoch is caught and tortured by the Pope's executioner. His detailed execution parodies the Protestant martyrologies recounted in Foxe's *Actes and Monuments*; those detailed accounts served to undermine the consensual unity of the Catholic church at the same time that they created a Protestant historical narrative. As Greenblatt argues, each public and horrific exercise of violence suggested to onlookers that the Church "depended not upon its truth but upon its power" (79). The vision and narration of Zadoch's death,

however, does not effect any kind of change or realization in those who witness it, record it, or read about it. The roasting of his flesh, rending of his fingers, breaking of his toes -- are all justified responses to the tortures he himself devised for others. In corresponding measure, he is stripped and scourged just as he has stripped and scourged Diamante. The attachment of "streaming fire-workes" to his "priue members" likewise appears to be just punishment for the sexual perversion he enjoyed as a master-whipper (316). The torture becomes a parody precisely because the agony and duration of the victim's pain seems warranted; the detailed infliction of torture in Foxe's text, laid out for the reader with the intention of evoking horror, here provides satisfaction and a sense of righteous retribution despite the fact that the Church once again is shown to misuse its power and subvert its own verity. The absence of meaning to the Jew's pain places it within a signifying context of martyrology, recognizable to all English Protestants and meant to highlight its antithetical relation to the pain and sacrifice of the godly. The Jew's body dismembered causes nothing, adds to nothing, and is isolated from any larger story. By making him a mock martyr, his removal from the story of election even as he gives his life in a similar manner is made manifest. Sharon Achinstein has in fact recently written that careful reading of Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* reveals Foxe's belief that although both ancient Israel and early modern England might be "elect nations," the modern elect nation supersedes the ancient Hebrew one and in fact the Jews are no longer God's chosen people (99). Foxe included medieval stories of blood libels and pogroms, the massacre at York (1190) and varying other such incidents, portraying them as a threat and never sympathizing with

the Jews' plight as does Holinshed in his account (Achinstein 96-98). Clearly depicted as a rejuvenated medieval type, Zadoch's role as contemporary Protestant (even if only in the manner and description of his death) signifies nothing. There is no place for the Jew in such a cosmic/apocalyptic, drama and Nashe demonstrates this through a discursive model, one which was the most popular, widely read, and most significantly contemporary version of sacred history.

Wilton calls this horrible execution a triumph for women, since it was manipulated by Juliana in revenge for her self and her maid. This implies Wilton as well since he has occupied the position of the abused and exploited woman and can identify firsthand with Diamante's violation. He reveals that for "[n]ere a sixe houres but the Countesse cloyd me with her companie. It grew to this passe, that either I must finde out some miraculous meanes of escape, or drop awaie in a consumption, as one pinde for lacke of meate: I was clean spent and done, there was no hope of me" (316). Ill used, sick, and starved, Wilton does not divulge the details of his rape; instead, he says, that "[h]owe she came, in what manner of attyre, with what immodest and vncomely wordes she courted me, if I should take upon me to inlarge, all modest eares would abhorre me" (314). The absence of detail both occludes and exposes the immodesty and effeminization that he experiences. Like the rape victim, he feels guilt at his participation — this he calls "inconuenience" and complicitly claims he can never "repent" enough (314). Interestingly, Jack's own rape is enfolded within the embarrassed guilt he professes, in stark contrast to the rape of Heraclide which he narrates in detail. The suspense builds as Heraclide presents a list of

desperate arguments to defend herself against the impending assault; finally, Esdras, tired of talking, uses his knee like battering ram to graphically force her. The Jew's actions as well, of stripping, poking, and whipping evoke both horror and anticipation in the reader.

Wilton's debasement by both monstrous woman and Jew produces figures of excess that sustain the traveler's ability to captivate and horrify his audience and become in fact the main focus of the text's narrative. The reader reads for the pleasure of pain demonstrated by the public spectacle of execution and implicates himself thereby in the subjection of the criminal's body. Such disclosure of horror is the explicit appeal of much travel writing. John Taylor, the self styled water-poet in his *Three weekes, three daies, and three hourse: Observations and Travels From London to Hambvrgh in Germanie* (1617) claims the privilege of the traveler "who hath authority to report all that hee heares and sees, and more too" (C3[v]). This text, appealing to popular crudity, promises his readers all the excitement and gore of a horror movie; his subtitle reads, "Amongst Jews and gentiles, with descriptions of Towns and Towers, Castles and Cittadels, artificiall Gallowses, Naturall Hangmen" guaranteeing a second-hand look at the macabre.

The Jews he speaks of are seen in Alton on the way to Hamburg and are all physically deformed, reflecting the spiritually graceless state in which they exist:

[S]ome with one eye, some with hare-lips, crooks backt, splay footed, half-nozed, or one blemish or other. I admiring at them, was told they were all Iewes, wherein I perceiued the Iudgement of the high Iudge of all, that had permitted Nature to deforme their formes,

whose Gracelesse mindes were so much mishapen through want of
Grace. (B2-B2[v])

In this fantasy of physical signification, the deformed bodies of the Jews reflect and expose their distorted beliefs. The Christian traveler can read his own spiritual superiority in the disfigured forms of the Jews. As Taylor describes the Christian violation of the Sabbath day via playing, buying and selling, bowling, dancing, and drinking, he contrasts these Christians with misbelieving and faithless Jews who yet (he observes) refrain from all “human affaires” on Saturday, their Sabbath (B3). Appalled at this Christian irreverence, Taylor inserts a ten line poem into his text warning against the abuse of the Sabbath day and arguing that such laxness makes Christian a scorn to Jews and Turks. As a result of such conduct, Christians are refashioned as types of Jews: “You stealing Barbasses beastly Race, / Rob God of glory, and your selves of Grace. / Thinke on the supreame Iudge who all things tries, / When Iewes in Iudgement shall against you rise” (B4). The apostrophic “you” to whom this warning is addressed are the Christians who through their faithlessness behave like symbolic Jews, represented most accurately by the criminal Barabas, released by the Jews in Christ’s stead. Real Jews demonstrate “feigned truth” while you Jewish Christians know the truth but will not “know it,” that is verify it with your actions.

By identifying Christians who break Sabbath with faithless Jews, the infected image of the deformed Jews is immediately recalled by the reader. Jewishness then becomes an immoral and ungodly state which can affect even Christians; implicit in this

depiction is the eventual physical deformity which mirrors the corrupted interior Jewish state. Again Jewish bodies are readable in a way that erases the boundaries of inside and outside, corrupted belief is reflected in the mangled Jewish body and vice versa.

In addition to various other minor observations, an execution and the details of why and how people are executed (“strange torments and varieties of deaths” [C3]) are included at length in Taylor’s narrative; much like the world Wilton falls into, the scene evokes horror in Taylor’s reader. Thus the Jews, ancient and dispossessed, and violent death are yoked together in both texts by the traveler for the advantage of a curious reader. The body afflicted and in pain signifies difference, both religious and geographic; compared to the German execution Taylor witnesses, “our English hanging . . . be but a flea-biting” (C3) The travel narrative incorporates the traveler’s choice observations, specifically those that he feels will be appealing to his readers. Early modern travel narratives thus reveal as much about English culture and desire as they do about the people whose customs and beliefs are cataloged in their pages. Taylor’s text calls attention to itself as a mirror of his own and England’s desires and presumptions. He himself says in the last lines of his text that he spent a neat three weeks, three days, and three hours traveling to Hamburg and back to London, “gathering like a busie Bee all these honyed observations, some by sight, some by hearing, some by both, some by neither, & some by bare supposition” (F2[v]). After reading the tale, the reader is no longer sure which bits are “true,” that is, factual. Everything that has been told was either witnessed, heard second hand, heard as a commentary on an event the traveler did witness,

fabricated, or assumed. The traveler's confession then both asserts and subverts his authority as story-teller. What will the reader now recall of the narrative he has read as true and what as made up? He can never reverse his reading and separate out the truth from conjecture, fact from fiction. The honey Taylor offers tantalizes the reader with its mysterious and fantastical potential and the suggestion that there really is no difference between actual and imagined events. The German monstrous Jews then may or may not really exist, but the idea of their faithlessness as readable, as disfiguring potential, persists as a truth that is independent of material reality.

Taylor's literary adversary (at least from Taylor's perspective), Thomas Coryat, also narrates an encounter with Jews when he goes during his Italian travels to visit the Jewish Ghetto of Venice. In Coryat's *Crudities*, the traveler attempts a much more objective and almost ethnographic voice as he describes the varying peoples he encounters and events he experiences. Although he begins his description of the ghetto depicting the Jews' prayer services, appearances, and customs, his own English suppositions interject themselves as defining terms, ultimately affirming notions of otherness even as he tries to remain objective.

Many of the Levantine Jews he sees in synagogue appear to be so "goodly and proper" that he comments on the fallacy of the stereotype of physical disfigurement attributed to them: "I said to my selfe our English proverbe: To looke like a Jewe (whereby is meant sometimes a weather beaten warp-faced fellow, sometimes a phrenticke and lunaticke person, sometimes one discontented) is not true" (372). The proverb shows

a worn exile whose faithlessness translates into a kind of madness, transforming him into a person whose is abnormal, unable to think correctly. When he gets into a heated discussion with a “rabbin that spake good Latin” (374) and encounters complete resistance to his Christian belief in Christ as Messiah, he says, “Thus hath God justly infatuated their understandings, and given them the spirit of slumber (as Saint Paule speaketh out of the prophet Esay) eyes that should not see, and eares that they should not heare unto this day” (376). Their insolence in the course of this debate leads, according to Coryat, to aggressive hostility; as the throng begins to “swagger” with him, he fears they will offer him “violence” (376). Coryat narrowly escapes with the aid if Sir Henry Wotton who happens to be passing by in a gondola. Safely conveyed from “these unchristian miscreats,” the reader is led to understand that a mere discussion about the differences between Christian and Jewish beliefs and the logical attempt at conversion, will cause a reaction in Jews which confirms their identification as blind, deaf, stubborn, and violent (376).

Coryat claims that the only barrier to the Jews’ conversion is the fact that they lose all their material goods (as a sort of purification) upon converting to Christianity. James Shapiro calls attention to the illustration on the cover of *Crudities*, where Coryat is chased by a knife-wielding, turbaned Jew despite the fact that no such incident is recorded in the course of Coryat’s travels. Shapiro finds in this illustration, as well as in the commendatory poems written by Laurence Whitaker and Hugh Holland, the threat of circumcision implicitly present; the “violence” offered Coryat by the Jewish crowd

becomes both ritualistic and conversionary in nature (115). I would like to point to the fact that such an illustration conflates the accounts and depictions Coryat narrates as he ethnographically describes the Jewish ghetto (the rites of circumcision, the Levantine turban, the strict adherence to Mosaic law, and the assertive faith he witnesses) with the fear that such otherness and refusal to accept Christ engenders. The illustration depicts a fiction that is made real through the combination of actual observations and imagined constructions; just as in Taylor's text, a contemporary reader of Coryat would be unable to sift through and separate the fact from the fiction, the real from the imagined, since the travel narrative depends upon the subjectivity of the narrator who will tell what he sees and sees what he tells from his invariably English Christian viewpoint.

In Nashe's narrative, Zadoch's execution is juxtaposed with that of another murderer, Cutwolfe, whose death concludes the unresolved tale of Heraclide, raped by the infamous Esdras. Cutwolfe is brother to Bartol, Esdras' Italian confederate, who chases Esdras around the world in order to exact vengeance for his brother's death. The story is twice told -- once by Cutwolfe on the scaffold to the audience, and then by Wilton to the readers with added commentary to direct the reader's comprehension. This story, through its moralizing, is a text modeled on the religious/scriptural genre, with Wilton's glosses interpreting its significance. He tells his readers, "Prepare your eares and your teares, for neuer tyll this thrust I anie tragedie matter vpon you" (320); this story much like Foxe's stories of martyred individual promises to be both tragic and sacred.

Heraclide is a "guiltless soul" who cries to God for justice. In Cutwolfe's story,

Esdras finds himself in exactly Heraclide's position, begging for his life while naked in his bed and craving time to save his soul; when he sees his pleas go unheeded, he then offers instead to "subuert the whole state of christendom" by murdering cities-full of men, women and children (325). This offer stuns the listener who momentarily imagines Esdras acts on a guilty conscience. Cutwolfe tells him to curse God and beg never to be forgiven; afterwards, he shoots him in the throat. Esdras, as unrepentant killer, and Cutwolfe, as triumphant avenger ("There is no heauen but reuenge" [324]), signify sinners with whom English Christians were familiar. The extreme universe peopled by dismembering Jews and avaricious whores is completely alien and other to Wilton, but an unrepentant killer and a faithless manipulator of revenge signal identifiable vices. It is for this reason that Wilton, upon witnessing Cutwolfe's execution, is incited to lead a straight life, marry his courtesan, perform alms deeds, leave the Sodom of Italy, and return to the service of his king currently in France. Cutwolfe's confession and execution, in contrast to Zadoch's, approach Foxe's martyrologies in that the audience is inspired to repent. Only in opposition to Zadoch's execution, which evokes no recognition or identification, does Cutwolfe's achieve its efficacy.

The final step to repentance is leaving Italy. Wilton says that he will "swear vpon an English Chronicle never to bee out-landish Chronicler more while I liue" (328).

Wilton's travels have been both out-landish in that he travels out of England and in the astonishing and unbelievable events he witnesses and transcribes. He learns the lesson that the banished earl teaches him of the value of remaining inside England's geographical and

ideological borders. Swearing on an “English Chronicle,” either refers to the vernacular Bible, calling attention to England’s national self-fashioning, or Foxe’s *Actes and Monuments*, calling attention to his travels as parody. In the “Induction to the Pages,” Nashe tells his readers that it is “lawfull for anie whatsoeuer to play with false dice in a corner on the couer of this foresayd Acts and Monuments” (208). This turns the entire genre on its head and sets Nashe and his text in opposition to the “English Chronicle” he offers to swear upon. To be out of the land of England is associated with seeing fantastical things, unhallowed, immoral, and maybe even fictional. Nashe makes his Jew radically evil in an Italy of radically cruel others, but through Wilton, a lying trickster, manages to call into question the truth of this depiction even as he narrates his story.

Marlowe: Words Alone

The Jew of Malta, like *The Unfortunate Traveler* contains a stereotypical Jew but registers and rejects the Israelite model based not only on the Jew’s reprobate status but on the impossibility of anyone’s election in a debased world. Unlike *Dr. Faustus*, where the individual’s confrontation with his own sin and possibly predetermined damnation is examined, the world of Malta and its various inhabitants/visitors can only pay lip service to true internal striving. Language is emptied out of the sacred meaning it signifies and elected status is re-defined as wealth and power. Barabas, the Jew and arch-villain, endorsed by Machiavel, is an integral part of the world he both mirrors and embodies. As Stephen Greenblatt notes, “Barabas’s avarice, egotism, duplicity, and murderous cunning do not signal his exclusion from the world of Malta but his central place within it” (204).

The grounds on which he justifies his fortune and on which Ferneze legitimizes his tyrannical power are religious in nature; each character appropriates the doctrine of election for himself, employing godly rhetoric, quoting Scripture, and even identifying with and being cast as various biblical figures. Divine grace is most emphatically championed to advance personal gain and ultimately reduces all faith to profit and greed.

Scholars such as G. K. Hunter, R. M. Cornelius, and Sara Munson Deats, have written extensively on the textual moments where Barabas is figured as Job, Christ, or the Anti-Christ. Ithamore chosen over Abigail becomes Isaac chosen over Esau (mess of pottage signifies the lentil soup for which Esau sold his brother his birthright). Ferneze is likewise constructed as both Pilate and Caiaphas as he speaks lines lifted directly from the Bible. The shifting identities and symbolic scriptural roles that each character plays creates a typological backdrop against which the citizens of Malta “seem shrunken and twisted” (Deats 27). Unlike the “heroic world of the Old Testament, judicious action is difficult and virtue seldom rewarded” in Malta (Deats 41). These biblical events and characters, however, are not just a “backdrop” but a productive source through which the figures in the play attempt to constitute themselves and their own power. Barabas, Ferneze, the friars, and Calymath all, to some extent, appropriate the rhetoric and blessing of promise that Protestant belief awarded those individuals selected by God’s predestined favor for themselves. This “blessing” or election is, according to the various characters who claim it, measured by individual wealth or power. Barabas therefore claims that the riches he acquires through merchant venture “are the blessings promised to the Jews / And

herein was Old Abram's happiness" (1.1.103-104). The wealthy but despised Jew is contrasted with the poor Christian -- poor not only in wealth but in faith -- which Barabas claims is clearly revealed through their "malice, falsehood, and excessive pride" (1.1.115). Ironically, however, he exemplifies the very traits he himself identifies as specifically Christian.

In terms of Israel as elected nation, Barabas says, "They say we are a scattered nation; / I cannot tell, but we have scrambled up / More wealth by far than those that brag of faith" (1.1.119-121). He claims that the historical punishment of dispersion meted out by God to the Jews for their misbelief is inscrutable. Barabas questions the attribution of the dispersion to divine punishment since he translates election into wealth. Feeling confident in his "chosen" status, Barabas calls on God to hail down all the curses and plagues of the Old Testament on the Christians of Malta. When confronting Ferneze and his extortion racket, Barabas curses him with the infliction of the "plagues of Egypt, and the curse of heaven" (1.2.163). Similarly when Barabas waits for Abigail to retrieve the hidden treasure from his house-turned-nunnery, he says,

O Thou, that with a fiery pillar led'st
 The sons of Israel through the dismal shades,
 Light Abrahams' offspring, and direct the hand
 Of Abigail this night! (2.1.12-15)

The heavy hand of the God of the Old Testament, who brought plagues on Egypt and guided the Jews in the desert is called upon with the resounding assurance of an Israelite.

Barabas seems sure that he will not be turned away and that the power of his invocation is sustained through his ancestral tie to Abraham. This possibility, available in Protestantism's affiliation with Israel, is erased by Barabas' greed.

Calvinist belief however dictated that not all blood heirs to Abraham received the blessings promised to him and his offspring. Christians were figured as spiritual inheritors of Abraham's promise. The literal, historical truth of the Old Testament and the miracles that God performs on behalf of the Jews become the literal assurance that empowers Barabas. Later in the play as Barabas tells the audience he will murder Lodowick and Mathias, he creates an analogy between the blessing of manna in the desert and the future deaths of Abigail's two Christian suitors: "As sure as heaven rained manna for the Jews, / So sure shall he and Don Mathias die" (2.3.249-250). The word "sure" here is used to connect the two events through providential purpose. The literalization of the Old Testament as history permits Barabas to actualize that power for his own use. Literal hermeneutic is reduced to literal murder. God's sustaining of Israel in the desert provides Barabas with a historical precedent; he equates the miracle of manna with the death of two suitors who represent a threat to his daughter, the reproductive force of the Jewish nation. His comment, however, serves to reveal his twisted, machiavellian perspective as he equates God's beneficence with cruel murder.

The literalism through which Barabas operates and the simultaneous depiction of him as the stereotypical Jew (as usurer, poisoner, traitor etc.) proves Judaism as not only a "moral condition" (as Greenblatt argues) but a hermeneutic position. Barabas calls

Mathias an “offspring of Cain,” and a “Jebusite” who “never tasted of the Passover / Nor e’er shall see the land of Canaan / Nor our Messiah that is yet to come” (2.3.302-305).

Although not at all an observant Jew (in fact he spits in the charity bowl) he is empowered by the reality of the Old Testament. He advises Abigail to use Lodowick as a “Philistine” (2.3.229) since he is not “of the seed of Abraham” (2.3.231). The terminology serves to indicate the extent to which biblical language and reality construct and determine meaning for Barabas. Lodowick as an adversary is labeled a Philistine instead of a Christian since it is from this biblical landscape that Barabas acquires his power and his perceived elected status. Christians and in fact everyone else who are not Jews, are “heretics” (2.3.312).

What Marlowe reveals is the failure of scriptural literalism to translate into the contemporary landscape. Regardless of the rhetoric Barabas employs, he is too far removed from the ideal paradigm to access any of God’s redemptive power.

When Ferneze extorts the Turkish tribute from Barabas and the other Jews of Malta, he authorizes himself through the same discourse of election. He blames the Jews for the fallen state of the world, calling them infidels: “For through our sufferance of your hateful lives, / Who stand accursed in the sight of heaven, / These taxes and afflictions are befall’n” (1.2.63-65). Ferneze feels justified in demanding the tribute or conversion since, as the First Knight points out, the Jews are “poor and scorned of all the world” (1.2.109) because of their “first curse” (1.2.108) and “inherent sin” (1.2.110) which obviously erases their elected status. The radical otherness of the Jew is also figured in biblical terms by Katherine, Mathias’ mother who interjects in a fabricated textual dispute between her son

and Barabas, warning Mathias not to converse with the Jew: “[H]e is a cast off from Heaven” (2.3.159). Barabas pretends to speak with Mathias about “the comment on the Maccabees” (2.3.155) which would serve as a topic about which the Christian and Jew might converse. The source of an imagined relationship is a biblical commentary, a real hermeneutic affiliation used here as a ruse to occlude the exchange of Abigail from father to suitor, in effect to hide the commodification of the woman and, on a deeper level, Barabas’ murderous intent. The exchange takes place at the slave market, highlighting the hypocrisy of all those who profess religion, directly after Barabas rehearses a catalogue of all the cunning duplicity which he (and all Jews) engage in. This duplicity is displayed in his relationship with Lodowick who sincerely wants to marry Abigail and is completely unaware of Barabas’ dangerous side comments which condemn him to death, mock his religion, and cause complicity in the chuckling audience.

The scene begins with Barabas’ aside informing the audience that he still possesses his wealth despite recent events:

In spite of these swine-eating Christians—
 Unchosen nation, never circumcised,
 Such as, poor villains, were ne’er thought upon
 Till Titus and Vespasian conquered us—
 Am I become as wealthy as I was. (2.3.7-11)

Wealth is again figured as a signifier for divine attention and blessing. The Christians are the unchosen nation whose history placed in a metaphorical parenthesis only rises because

of the Jews' displacement. The Christians were never "thought upon"-- in other words God did not regard them at all and implicit here is the notion that if God regards them now it is only as a second choice. This explanation of exile is bracketed by Barabas' personal story of wealth despite all odds, implying that chosen-ness, specific to the Jews and indicated by circumcision, sticks to him still.

At the same time that Barabas revels in his "election" he works to undermine the authority of Judaism itself. He tells the friars who confront him with his crimes that he has been "zealous to the Jewish faith" (4.1.54) which translates into being "[h]ard-hearted to the poor, a covetous wretch, / That would for lucre's sake have sold my soul" (4.1.55-56). When Abigail cries because she does not want to marry Lodowick, Barabas fashions a new custom -- a "Hebrew guise" whereby engaged girls weep. And then of course, when speaking to Lodowick, Barabas explains turning away to speak an aside:

'Tis a custom held with us
 That, when we speak with gentiles like to you,
 We turn into the air to purge ourselves;
 For unto us the promise doth belong. (2.3.45-48)

This invented custom of expelling gas, turns the idea of chosen-ness into something physical and distasteful. At the same time that Barabas indicates superior election he reduces the Jews' figuring of this election to a disgusting carnal experience. He subverts his own questionably elevated position and displays the carnal tendencies which Christians use to de-legitimize Jewish faith (letter versus spirit).

In the last scene where the trap Barabas sets for Calymath becomes his own, Barabas is defiant until the end, using his last words to accept culpability for the murders he commits and strategies he plots. He constructs himself in opposition to the “[d]amned Christians, dogs, and Turkish infidels” (5.5.85). Barabas’ defiance and need for resolution before death, represent qualities of both Machiavel and the elect (Rozett 207). Puritan rhetoric and Marlovian protagonists are alike in their sweeping phrases replete with the sense of the individual self’s unlimited capabilities (Rozett 47). In the Elizabethan age, which equated heroism with bold action and saw the elect as “resolute and unyielding,” the revenger such as Barabas, who acts decisively, holds a very ambiguous position (Rozett 208). Barabas’ curses, comic appeal, and “heroic” qualities are ultimately not as effective as Ferneze’s ability to rewrite Barabas’ treason in religious terms and the right his victory awards him in defining its signification. He tells Calymath that his troops have all been blown up by bombs secretly planted by Barabas. His response to the astounded Calymath is that this massacre is “A Jew’s courtesy; / For he that did by treason work our fall / By treason hath delivered thee to us” (5.5.107-109). The generic Jewish “courtesy” is that of treason against Christ, whose betrayal and crucifixion simultaneously delivered the world from sin. Ferneze’s appropriation of biblical history and rhetoric to explain and give meaning to the re-capturing of Malta by the Christians, establishes the election and chosen-ness of the Christians over the Jews and Turks. This event then is given sacred power through its incorporation into a continuing biblical history.

Ferneze claims that “come all the world” (5.5.118) to rescue Calymath “[a]s

sooner shall they drink the ocean dry / Than conquer Malta or endanger us" (5.5.120-121). Even if the Turks had superhuman powers nothing can put a dent in the divine protection that has been displayed by God against the forces of the "uhallowed" Jew (5.5.91). The man-made cauldron in which Ferneze will see Barabas' "treachery repaid" (5.5.73) and the personal grant of life he offers Calymath ("I have rather chose to save thy life" (5.5.93) position Ferneze as a godly, giving figure whose actions are observed by the gaze of heaven. This protection is amplified in the last line of the play, when after claiming noone can harm Malta, Ferneze says, "So, march away, and let due praise be given / Neither to fate nor fortune, but to heaven" (5.5.122-123) Barabas' has been graced "as he deserves," but the ambiguity of who exactly is elected and the seeming absence of God from the play, calls into question the possibility of any person or nation as chosen. The misuse of scripture and the casting of figures such as Barabas and Ferneze in biblical roles de-legitimizes the Word of God as well; nowhere in the play is the Bible quoted correctly and for some virtuous end. When "religion / Hides many mischiefs from suspicion" (1.2.282-283) it becomes mere "policy." Greenblatt attributes this is in part to Protestant and Catholic polemicists' demonstration of religion as a "cunning theatrical allusion" in the name of real religious truth; the skepticism such religious dismantling invites is evidenced in Marlowe's plays (219).

Abigail is the only character in *The Jew of Malta* who approximates true faith, but she cannot endure in Malta, and so dies with the rest of the nuns whom Barabas poisons. Significantly he murders them with a "mess of rice porridge" (3.4.65-66) which recalls the

sale of the birthright by Esau to Jacob. This transference of blessing introduces a whole biblical history of predetermined election, but in offering the pot to the nuns, the Christian acceptance of the chosen status will end in cruel death. There can be no benefit anymore to being chosen. Marlowe chooses a converted Jewish woman as the symbolic true believer. Her body is contained in the house, itself a symbolic body, that used to belong to Barabas but now encloses the bodies of nuns. Abigail's body itself is a house shut against all men and physical entry. She tells the friars before she dies, "and first know / That in this house I lived religiously, / Chaste and devout, much sorrowing for my sins" (3.6.12-14). Only when removed from the "follies of the world" (3.3.60) to which she had previously been chained and shut in a cloistered space can the values of Malta be erased.

She once converts on false pretenses and so calls attention not only to apostates such as the marranos whom Shapiro mentions (138) but to the false world which she inhabits. She comes to her faith not because of the greedy friars so eager for Barabas' conversion or because of the faith exhibited by the nuns whom she temporarily joined, but because of "the difference of things" (3.3.62) she sees as a result of her experiences "purchased with grief" (3.3.61). She rejects her faith and Islam as well, since she is direct witness to Barabas and Ithamore's scheming: "But I perceive there is no love on earth, / Pity in Jews, nor piety in Turks" (3.3.48-49). It is thus the pervasive cruelty of the religions around her that drive her to consideration of Christianity. Her own conversion though is suspect as it seems that she converts because the difference between Christians and Jews/Turks does not really exist. As Jeremy Tambling points out, there is no

difference found in considering religious profession. He calls her last line, “ My sinful soul, alas, hath paced too long / The fatal labyrinth of misbelief, / Far from the Son that gives eternal life” (3.3.63-65), “colorless,” suggesting that the absence of meaning is what she calls difference (96). Her answer is so perfect in fact that Friar Jacomo asks her, “Who taught thee this” (3.3.66)? When Abigail responds that it was the Abbess of the house, her zealous admonition indicates that in the female world of enclosure exists a more perfect ideal of religion that cannot exist in the real world of Malta. Abigail’s answer is received as mere rhetoric, as a practiced response to faith, but the difference she perceives which leads to such “perfect faith” can only happen once she untangles herself from the actual world. Despite the dark and cynical leanings of Marlowe’s play, it is the Jew, Abigail, who retains some remnant of election, who, once converted, provides an image of true godliness. The fact that all the other characters “misread her” – the friars as a sexual body, her father as a traitor and heretic, and Mathias as a “tale of love”– shows their own lack of perception. The image of Abigail as true believer, a converted Jew, female, enclosed, chaste, persists as the only alternative to the godless world of Malta.

Each text discussed here both records and resists the English Protestant appropriation of Israel’s identity and the close affiliation that resulted. Despite the fact that Shakespeare, Marlowe, and Nashe seem to reiterate and even create new negative stereotypes of Jews, their incorporation of scriptural and hermeneutic defense of the yet elected Israelite even as they contest it displays the variety of reactions to early modern Judaism. The images that converge as protest take up the issue of the contemporary Jew

(as opposed to the idealized Israelite) as he was known often through historical chronicle, perpetuated rumors, and old stories. Such images, bred before the Reformation, do not die, but get circulated in new contexts in opposition to emergent ideas that argue for the spiritual value of Jews. These plays then record for us an acceptance and simultaneous refutation of a more philo-Semitic approach to real Jews that was the potential outcome of an affiliation with biblical Israel.

Epilogue: England and the Real Jewish Presence

O then that I

Might live, and see the Olive bear

Her proper branches! which now lie

Scattered each where,

And without root and sap decay

Cast by the husband-man away

And sure it is not far!

Henry Vaughan, "The Jews"

And yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, nor will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them: for I am the Lord their God. But I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God: I am the Lord.

Leviticus 26:44-45

The next few chapters which should logically follow, examining the tumultuous events of the first half of the seventeenth century and their effect on scriptural hermeneutics, England's identification with Israel, and emergent images of Jewishness are glaringly absent from this project. To skip ahead to the mid-1650's is to overlook the growth of puritanism and sectarianism, the execution of Charles I, England's civil war, and

the way in which these events re-fashioned English identity and especially, for my purposes, the identification with Israel as elect model. Much scholarly work has already been done, especially by historian David Katz, on the millenarians who worked to bring about Christ's second coming and the end of days and the Sabbatarians who in accordance with Mosaic law kept Saturday as the Sabbath day. Katz cites numerous examples of Sabbatarians such as John Traske who in 1618 was punished for his Judaizing (including Sabbath observance and the Passover) with the branding of the letter "J" on his forehead (*Philo-Semitism* 21), men such as Thomas Tany who announced that he was the high Priest to the Jewes and the prophet of Jesus," John Robins who called his redeemed self John the Baptist and Christ, and all the other men of Puritan leanings whose declarations border on clinical insanity, making evident a radical movement to literalize the Old Testament in a way heretofore unseen (Katz, *Philo-Semitism* 109-126). The writings of believers such as the martyred Francis Kett in *The Glorious and Beautiful Garland of Mans Glorification Containing the Godly Misterie of Heavenly Jerusalem* (1589), Francis Draxe in *The World's Resurrection* (1608), Henry Finch in *The Calling of the Jews* (1621), and Robert Maton in *Israel's Redemption* (1641) all argued for Jewish restoration as a necessary element of Christ's second coming which was imminent.

Both the rise of millenarianism and the sense that history was coming to an end can be seen as a by-product of the identification of England with Israel and more generally the literal hermeneutic with which Protestants approached God's word. The absent chapters here would examine early seventeenth century texts to reveal the hyper-literalist hermeneutic that defined Puritan reading. This idea has been dealt with

extensively by Thomas H. Luxon in *Literal Figures: Puritan Allegory and the Reformations Crisis in Reformation*, where he explains the tensions inherent within Protestant typology and specifically the way such tensions are played out in the writing of John Bunyan. For our purposes, however, it is important to reiterate and summarize some of his arguments and see how hyper-literalism not only forces the issue of the real, contemporary Jew as opposed to merely the Israelite/biblical Jew, but at what expense such a real Jew was to be addressed.

Luxon contends, that despite Protestant identification with the Israelite of the Hebrew scriptures, the Israelites' faith according to the Reformers (Luther and Calvin) is only conceived through figures whereas the Christians can point to the crucified body of Christ without any mediating tropes; regardless of their location on the same spiritual and ontological plane as Christians, Jews immediately slip back into the obscurity of figures, types and shadows where they always exist as merely potentially Christians. Inherent then is a Protestant form of typology which continues to allegorize the Jews for the benefit of Christianity's survival. Protestantism produces a re-allegorization of the wayfaring Christian pilgrim, whose self in this world is never his true self but whose life in this world is an extended figuration of his life in the next. The old self is an allegory which is made equivalent to the Old Testament and the Jews. The Reformation Christian is now seen not as fulfillment but as promise and so deferred in the world to come. He, like the Israelite, dwells in the shadow of unfulfilled promise (25-27):

Thus, when Protestants meditate on the self as flesh (or as not yet fully Christ), they identify with "the Jew"; and when they meditate

on the self as fully replaced, reborn as Christ, “the Jew” defines precisely what they are not. “The Jew,” then, is nothing but the self that is hopelessly mired in history, the shadowy type or sign that must be stripped away and destroyed as the self is reborn as eternally Christ. Once this is accomplished, Christians live in a new (non)history and in a new (non)world order, which turns out to be the real reality that history and the world only dimly prefigured.

(58)

It becomes apparent that what seems to be identification and a merging of history is a means not of literal interpretation in its purest form, but on the contrary, of creating a unity between Israel and English Protestants that still involves deferral of fulfillment. The Jew can only achieve this fulfillment when he converts, something impossible to ask of the abstract and corporeally extinct Old Testament Israelites but most assuredly possible from contemporary Jews.

An understanding of scripture in its plainest sense, unmediated by interpretation or allegory, erases many of the effects that identification and correlation between Israel and England produce. The results of such a hermeneutic or lack of hermeneutic or hyper-literalism, whatever the term, can be readily seen in many millenarian tracts and discussions of the Jews’ restoration. Election and redemption, central to the Old Testament, were recapitulated in the contemporary world but in ways that re-established Israel as God’s nation. Henry Finch, for instance, and his publisher William Gouge in *The World’s Great Restauration. Or the calling of the Jews* (1621) claims that the Jews will

shortly be gathered into their own country and will enjoy spiritual grace, prosperity, joy, and sovereignty over all the world. Finch specifically notes that he is not speaking allegorically, but refers literally to the actual Jews descended from “Jacobs loynes” (6). In their zealous anticipation, Finch and Gouge, predict that every monarch will acknowledge the Jews’ greatness and bow in submission (for which both men were thrown in prison until they recanted) (Katz, *Philo-Semitism* 95-96). Not every millenarian subscribed to the belief in complete restoration, but the idea was potent enough to cause controversy. Luxon argues that typology and the re-allegorizing of the Jew arrest complete de-allegorization and the full effect of reading literally. If de-allegorizing the Israelite is carried to its logical extreme, he continues, as some antinomians and millenarians did, the need to be Christian evaporates completely (58): “Chiliasts discarded the notion of two Israels, one carnal and the other spiritual, just as they discarded the notion of a God without a body. Millenarians announced the imminent arrival of the apocalypse, the end of allegorical ontologies” (108). The search for an Ur language, perhaps Hebrew, and the recovery of the original *lingua humana* can be understood in part as a desire to find a radical language so suited to the essence of things that figural language would be rendered completely unnecessary (108-109).

It is this unorthodox, indeed radical literalism that motivates these Puritans in their messianic and philo-Semitic endeavors; it is evident from their extant writings that in order to be literal and desire the real Jews to either return to England and fulfill the prophecy in Daniel of Israel’s dispersal to the four corners of the earth as precursor to being gathered in again at the end of days (“And when the scattering of the holy people shall have an end,

all those things shall be fulfilled” (12:7)) or to aid the people of God in any way possible, Israel had to be de-allegorized; England’s humility to God’s first chosen nation accompanied such a restoration of Israel’s status. Recuperating Israel not as a parallel but as the literal representation of elect nation elevated Jews and their designated history as the tangible evidence of God’s actions in the world; puritans reasoned that each nation’s and individual’s treatment of the Jews would subsequently determine God’s treatment of them respectively at the end of days. The retributive impact of England’s conduct towards the Jews is detailed by Edward Nicholas, in his pamphlet *An Apology for the Honourable Nation of the Jews and all the Sons of Israel* (1648), where he makes a direct causal connection between the tribulations suffered by England and English maltreatment of the Jews. Citing Romans 11, Nicholas reminds his readers that God “yet owns” the Jews for his people (6) and in rejecting them “we highly incense the Majesty of Jehova: whereas we ought rather to honor them who God honoreth” (5). Brimming with messianic expectation, he states that God will bring us and the Jews to the “holy mountain.” Nicholas exalts the crucial role of the Jew within millennial history and wants to assure that England is viewed with analogous love by God. He sees England not only as comparable to Israel but as corresponding to it with Israel as the privileged nation. He reasons, “We have great and important cause to take heed, lest we of the Kingdom of *England*, putting from us and abandoning these people of God, we separate our selves from God’s favor and protection” (8).

The prophesied future of the Jews involves great joy as “they are esteemed by God, as the spouse to the Husband” (Nicholas 8). England’s enemies such as Spain and

Italy alienate themselves from the divine and are labeled “barbarous Infidels” by Nicholas since they cast out and persecuted God’s holy people (11). Hoping for “better things of our Nation” (11) which God has “exceedingly blessed” above all others (14), Nicholas wants to befriend God’s people. He suggests that England’s receiving them in again may be an example to other nations who have wronged the Jews “till which time (God putting their tears into his bottle) God will charge their suffering upon us, and will avenge them on their persecutors” (15). Nicholas’ suggestion of readmission is based on religious zeal and a tangible fear of divine retribution for violating the Jews. Clearly Nicholas and millenarians of his brand accepted God’s Israel as both flesh and spirit; England was now holy not just via assimilation of Old Testament imagery and spiritual inheritance but in willingly acknowledging that their own holiness, perhaps even their lives and well being, were dependent on the recognition of Israel as a real and material entity returned to her former glory.

Such a belief in God’s contingent treatment of all other nations was firmly sustained by those millenarians who had faith in Israel’s restoration. In the same year, 1648, expatriate widow Johanna Cartwright and her son Ebenezer sent a petition to Thomas Lord Fairfax and the Council of State from their home in Amsterdam entitled “The Petition of the Jewes for the Repealing of the Act of Parliament for their banishment out of ENGLAND” likewise declaring the holiness of the contemporary Jews. Having spoken with Dutch Jews and heard their complaints of past maltreatment in England under Richard the Second, both she and they are concerned that the Jews should be readmitted after 350 years since “the time of her call draweth nigh; whereby they together with us

shall come to know Emanuell, the Lord of life, light, and glory” (1); England together with the inhabitants of the Netherlands “shall be the first and readiest to transport IZRAELLS Sons & Daughters in their Ships to the Land promised to their fore-Fathers, ABRAHAM, ISAAC, and JACOB, for an everlasting Inheritance” (2). Cartenwright prays that the cruel banishment of the Jews be repealed and they be allowed to trade and live in England; if this is done, England can be assured of God’s blessing and consequently avert punishment:

By which act of mercy, your Petitioners are assured of the wrath of God, will be much appeased towards you, for their innocent bloodshed, and they thereby dayly enlightened in the saving knowledge of him, for whom they look dayly and expect as their king of eternall glory, and both their and our Lord God of salvation (Christ Jesus). (3)

The elected Israel (who presumably have some inside information) are waiting for the Messiah to come at any moment; the Christians have been grafted into a primary Jewish scheme and must look to them for signs of the world’s fulfillment. It is not only the promise of the Messiah’s imminent coming that the Jew’s daily “looking” signifies, but the “looking” ahead to the future order, when biblical prophecies are fulfilled and the Jews reinstated as God’s people. This reinstatement will bring about retroactive punishment, the “wrath of God,” on behalf of a people, who although temporarily cast off, are nonetheless eternally elected. If England (and the Netherlands) position themselves as believers and doers, ready to transport the Jews into their future, then God will smile on them as his own faithful helpers.

One of the motivations for embracing the Jews is therefore the anxiety and fear produced by the thought of God's displeasure for which there were numerous dreadful examples in the Tanach. This anxiety produced by the superior holiness of Israel existed alongside the sincere belief by many millenarians in the necessary conversion of the Jews in order for complete fulfillment to occur. As we have seen throughout the sixteenth-century, antithetical images of Israel and the Jews almost always inhabit the same cultural space. The fear of the Jews results from a de-allegorized image of them as elected and holy, whereas the desire to incorporate them, attempts to allegorize Israel into potential Christians. Menasseh ben Israel, the Portugese rabbi from Amsterdam had numerous vital relationships with millenarians, philosophers, and thinkers both English and other; some examples are Robert Boyle (an Arminian), Nathaniel Homes and Henry Jessey (millenarians), Antonio de Vieira (a Jesuit and millenarian preacher). These friendships signify the extent to which Ben Israel was familiar with and understood the potential benefits for Jews escaping the Inquisition that the millenarian yearnings of his time and a new, sympathetic approach to the Jews as the yet unrejected people of God could offer (Fisch 233).

Ben Israel's relationship with Englishmen such as Homes, Jessey, and John Dury centered around a conversation about messianism and the potential return of the Jews to England. In fact, in 1650 an English delegation came to Holland to negotiate a trade agreement with the Dutch, during which time they also visited Menasseh Ben Israel at his synagogue and discussed the possibility of the Jews' return to England; he was invited to come to England that year but waited until 1655 because of tense relations between

Holland and England (Katz 144-145). Their early interest in Menasseh involved his second-hand account of the Ten Lost Tribes who had been carried away by King Salamanasser in 72 A.D. and had never returned, re-discovered in America by Antonio de Montezinos. In 1644 Montezinos came to Amsterdam to inform the Jews, testifying under oath before Rabbi Menasseh Ben Israel and other prominent men from the Portugese Sephardic community, as to his discovery in South America (Van der Wall 174). The interest in this account caused John Dury, chaplain of Mary Princess of Orange, to write to Ben Israel and verify the report. As a result, the story, first appearing as an appendix in (Dury's friend's) Thomas Thorowgood's book *Jews in America* (1650), was published by Menasseh in his own version a few months later in *The Hope of Israel*. In 1650, following the Puritan revolution and newly raised discussions about the return of the Jews to England, Ben Israel dedicated his Latin edition of the book to the British Parliament.

At the heart of the intense interest in the ten lost tribes is history's finale, with God's nation, hidden away, finally gathered in and restored. What this means for many Protestants, even those advocating readmission, is the conversion of the Jews. As Rivka Schatz notes, millenarianism was widespread in England, and about seventy percent of all clergy during the 1640's and 1650's counted themselves among those whose goal was the uniting of all Christian churches including the incorporation of Jews for the future establishment of a Christianized kingdom of Israel. Obviously, by mid-century the godly have moved passed merely identifying with Israel, and begin to take an active part in fulfilling history. This leads to a difficult problem since from the Christian perspective the

final condition to the Jewish-Christian collaboration and salvation was the Jews' faith in Christ as the Messiah (250). It is evident from much of the pro-Jewish literature leading up to the Whitehall Conference convened by Oliver Cromwell in 1656 to debate the question of Jewish readmission that those who embraced and desired to readmit the Jews implicitly understood that such a gesture would lead to conversion; whether the Jews were still Jewish because of the bad example of the Catholics, because England in the past had treated them cruelly, or because the messianic moment had not arrived until now, integration into the Church was widely held to be the penultimate step to the second coming.

England's instrumental role in effecting this conversion is the crucial readmission issue from the perspective of many millenarians. Those who are against admission often believe that redemption is near but do not believe that admission into England will facilitate the Jews' conversion. Thomas Collier in *A Brief Answer to Some of the Objections and Demurs made against the coming in and inhabiting if the Jews in this Common-wealth* (1656) dedicated to Oliver Cromwell, cites the elected and future status of the Jews as delineated in Romans 11 to refute these objections. In a brotherly fashion, he argues that all has proceeded according to divine plan -- the Jews' crucifixion of Christ was "the counsell and determination of the Lord" and Christians must feel pity and compassion for the Jews (from whom Jesus came) whom God still "ownes for his own people" (16). Conversion is something, he says, which needs come slowly: "God may meet with some of them (though not with all) in drawing them to the faith, why may we not expect that as the times draw near of their general call, God may make a beginning

work with some of them first in order to it” (12). He asks whether, now that their deliverance is near, “we may not expect that an act of mercy of this kind be very acceptable to the god of mercy, who will have mercy on these people, and they that upon a good account do show them mercy, shall obtain mercy” (24). Demonstrated compassion must come before conversion, and in return, the English will benefit from like mercy at the hands of God. Although sinning, the Jews are positioned at the center of divine history and are privileged as a people who, whatever their shortcomings, as “Abraham’s natural seed” (20) will be redeemed and returned to “their own Countrey.” Collier appeals to Cromwell as a “nursing father” (Epistle 3) who can help forward the conversion but also help Israel return to Zion. Although conversion is clearly a goal in Collier’s text, it is a goal that corresponds to pity and compassion, recognition of the impending advent, avoiding God’s ire, and faithful belief. He says,

And why should we be so faithless as to exclude our selves altogether from having any part or lot in this business, *viz.* in their conversion.

And lastly if none of them should come to the faith, yet we have done our duty, we shall acquit our selves from the guilt of their blood, which otherwise may ly heavy upon us, they offering themselves unto us. (12)

Collier demonstrates a kind of intermediate stance, content in continuing to allegorize the Jews as Israel; he is willing to try kindness first but imagines that he and England can then extricate themselves from their identification with an Israel who will not convert.

In arguing the Jews’ case, Menasseh ben Israel had to very carefully sidestep the Christian call for conversion and so his approach to millenarianism has been often called “a

riddle” (Schatz 244). The caution with which he approaches what would today be called inter-faith dialogue and a shared sense of history reveals not only the extent to which he understood protestant ideology but the political goal he could effect by manipulating it to the Jews’ benefit. *The Hope of Israel* records a story crucial to the messianic story and is used by Menasseh to empower the Jews at the center of his text and the story of salvation. Conversion is not mentioned at all; instead Menasseh emphasizes God’s love of the Jews’ and the mystical power which their election will soon reveal. The story demonstrates both God’s anger at those who hurt the Jews and his sustained love of them, tapping into the anxiety felt by millenarians who believed in the complete restoration of Israel. Focusing on the restoration image as opposed to the conversion one allows Menasseh to speak on behalf of the Jews and empower them through restoration rhetoric familiar to a number of the godly English. Harold Fisch argues that it is possible that the discovery of the Ten Tribes in America had messianic significance, or not, but what was significant to ben Israel was the interest generated in England by Montezinos’ story:

Menasseh had read the signs correctly, not the signs that Montezinos had recorded in South America, but the signs produced by the reading of Montezinos in England. This is not so much millenarianism as what may be termed meta-millenarianism. He sensed that Puritan England with its new energies, its liberation from traditional political and theological inhibitions, might have a role to play in furthering the ends of Jewish polity. (Fisch 235)

Ben Israel can use the story of the lost tribes, fashion it as proof of God’s favor towards

the Jews and downplay conversion as a central focus of the messianic arrival.

In re-narrating the story of Antonio Montezinos (aka Aharon Halevi), the Jewish traveler's encounter with Indians in South America claiming to be descendants of the lost tribe of Reuben, Ben Israel constructs England as the wicked Indians who repeatedly attack the hidden Jews until they are punished by God. Appropriating the very rhetoric of English millenarian anxiety, Ben Israel produces the story as a sign signaling both the imminence of the redemption and the re-institution of Israel. The Indians with whom Montezinos originally travels fear the great tempest that rises when they cross over the Cordillera Mountains. The storm is interpreted as a warning sign from God who is displeased with the Indians' ill treatment of his holy people; submissively, the Indian group with whom Montezinos travels accept this punishment for their sins. After being imprisoned by the Inquisition, Montezinos seeks out the Indian with whom he first traveled, Francisco, and admits himself to be a Hebrew. Francisco leads him to the hidden people and reveals to him the divine power invested in this hidden tribe. He discloses the patriarchal narrative detailing how his forefathers attacked the Jews three times and were decimated, at which time the Indians desisted from cruelty and declared the following:

That the God of those children of Israel is the true God; that all that which is engraven upon their stones is true; that about the end of the world they shall be the lords of the world; that some shall come who shall bring you much good, and after that they have enriched the earth with all good things, those Children of Israel going forth out of their country, shall subdue the whole world to

them, as it was subject to them formerly. *You shall be happy if you make a league with them.* [emphasis added] (110)

The Indians' deduction that Israel's God and Mosaic law is "true" seems a logical conclusion in the face of defeat; acknowledging the Jews' future restoration, both in status and to the land of Israel, as well as their final sovereignty when the messiah comes, however, seems a bizarrely informed and conveniently supportive conclusion, neatly available for Ben Israel's service. For this reason, scholars such as Rivka Schatz and Harold Fisch have argued that Menasseh adjusted the details of Montezinos' story to suit the setting of English millenarianism. The last line of the Indian declaration seems to be directed at an unidentified audience. Who is the "you" who would benefit from making league with the Jews? Within the context of the narrative, is the instruction for the benefit of the defeated Indians' descendants? Or is this exhortation directed at the "you" listeners of other nations and generations who hear this story told? The reader of the transcribed legend relates the Jews of Europe, whose glory remains hidden, to these more supernaturally connected Jews whose power and intimate knowledge of the future are evident.

The narrative records the Indians' appreciation of the hidden Jews as the people of God, keepers of his Word, and eventual sovereigns of the earth, producing an image that both resonates with scriptural prophecy and contemporary English religious politics. The imminence of the advent is declared when three of the Indian-Hebrews embrace Montezinos and tell him that after they have finished the business they have with the "wicked Spaniards," the lost tribe will bring the Jews out of their "bondage, by God's

help” (111). The alterity and wonder of Montezinos’ tale captivates the reader as he is led to identify with the Indians, as first oppressing the Jews but later deferring to them; the time for England to alter their approach towards the Jews and recognize their glory is now since Spain (England’s enemy) will be momentarily avenged.

The Latin version of *The Hope of Israel* (1650) dedicated “To the English Parliament,” positions England in a critically determining role due to her valiant actions at which “the whole world stands amazed at these things, and the eyes of all are turned upon you, that they may see whither all these things do tend” (Epistle Dedicatory 100). Implicit in Montezinos’ narrative and in Ben Israel’s commentary is the curse that England will feel should she not help the Jews at the vital moment which “of necessity must be fulfilled.” Menasseh demonstrates the immediacy of messianic fulfillment and then empowers the Jews through this future vision of Israel’s restored glory. He invokes fear of divine retribution, and uses history, prophecy, and Protestant ideology to persuade and even coerce, however eloquently, the English to accept the Jews. Argument number 34 that Ben Israel presents uses the Inquisition and the death or torment that afflicts those who persecuted the Iberian Jews as a study in divine retribution. He first authorizes this causal attribution with Old Testament prophecy and then moves to demonstrate this punishment within historical events:

Moses says in his last song [Deut. 32:42-4] that God would revenge the blood of his people who are scattered. And Jeremiah 2:3 says:
 ‘Israel is the Lord’s holy thing, the first fruit of his increase; all who devour him shall be found guilty; evil shall come upon them, saith the

Lord.’ And that the histories of divers times, even from Nebuchadnezzar, do testify. Have not the monarchies of great princes been destroyed? Consider with me the miserable ends of Antiochus, of Pompey, of Sisebut, of Philip the king of France, of Alfonso the son of Joao II. And we may remember how King Sebastian with his fourth generation, and with all his nobles, was slain in battle of Africa, in that same place in which he caused the Jews to be banished. Ferdinand and Isabella were the great persecutors of our nation, but how did both he and she die? (156-57)

Ben Israel gives several other examples that attribute unfortunate events and circumstances such as cancer, patricide, and infant mortality to divine retribution. At the end of this argument, he asks, “What wonder is it if God has chastised divers kingdoms by sundry ways?” reasoning that the “good, which God as promised, will shortly come. Since we see that we have suffered the evils which he has threatened us with, by the prophets.” Ben Israel associates God’s vengeance with the imminent coming of the messiah, so that those who hurt the Jews surely seal their fate. Indeed points 35 and 36 discuss the scattering (confirmed by the “synagogues found in America”) and re-gathering of all the Jews, ending with the assurance that the time of the redemption is near, and punctuated by the not-so-subtle warning of God’s vengeance on behalf of Israel:

And as they shall be punished by the just judgement of God who wish us evil; so also God will give blessings upon those who

favour us. And those are the trees of the field which then shall rejoice [Isaiah 55:11]. So God said to Abraham (Genesis 12:3):
 ‘I will bless them who bless thee and curse them that curse thee.’
 (159)

The black and white, curse and blessing, formula Ben Israel quotes from Genesis authorizes Montezinos’ tale as true. The marvel of this South American universe, the wonder of the unknown, and the literal scripturalism empower Ben Israel’s Jewish version of history. As a combined narrative of history revealed and history hidden, the Hebrew speaking Indians come to represent all that is unknown relating to the Messiah and Israel as figured in English millenarian images of the de-allegorized Jews restored. By underscoring the anxiety-producing image of glorified Israel, ben Israel hopes to reduce calls for conversion, to make them less voluble although he will never explicitly say this. In his 1655 book *Piedra Gloriosa (The Precious Stone)* dedicated to Jewish messianic interpretation, he discussed the future redemption based on readings of the Tanach and clearly marking Mosaic law as the kingdom’s foundation; *Piedra Gloriosa*, and the traditional Jewish interpretation it encodes, makes evident that Ben Israel’s messianic beliefs did not involve any call for conversion (Schatz 257).

Discussions of the Jewish question were ongoing for several years, when Ben Israel finally arrived in London in late September of 1655. He printed copies of his plea for admission and delivered them to Whitehall himself where the conference debating the issue was in session. In his pamphlet, “To His Highnessee the Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland, and Ireland: The Humble Addresses of Menasseh

Ben Israel, A divine, and Doctor of PHYSIC, in behalfe of the Jewish Nation” (1655), Ben Israel appropriates the Protestant discourse of election and converts it into a Jewish discourse of self-validation. He begins on the common grounds held by both English believers and Jews that everything is governed by divine providence; in his dedicatory letter to Cromwell Ben Israel reminds Cromwell of the Lord Protector’s (humble) role within God’s Jewish-oriented plan. He immediately lists the great monarchs who fall as punishment for affliction of Israel. The examples of King Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Antiochus, Epiphanius, and Pompey, as comparative rulers to Cromwell, whom Ben Israel calls “eminent beyond others,” both accord honor to Cromwell and invoke the possibility of his downfall (A2[v]). Ben Israel reiterates Abraham’s prophecy and validates himself as a Jew who operates under God’s watchful gaze: “And on the contrary, none ever was a Benefactor to that people, & cherished them in their Countries, who thereupon hath not presently begun very much to flourish” (A2[v]). Economic prosperity is a side benefit of the overall blessing that accompanies the Jews wherever they go. While seeking England’s security, he promises divine protection and economic prosperity in return.

In the “Declaration to the Common-wealth of England” (1655) enumerating the seven point plan for readmission, Ben Israel gives three motives for the Jews’ desire to live in England and the order in which he presents them constructs a strong premise on which Ben Israel will make his plea for the benefit of England. His first motive is the building of a synagogue in England wherein Jews can repent their trespasses, thus initiating Jewish restoration. Israel’s direct connection to God will lead to a blessing for England for, in the scripturally adopted language of prophetic fulfillment, “receiving us

into their bosomes and comforting Sion in her distresse” (1). England as a significant living space for the Jews is part of the second motive Ben Israel explains; according to Daniel the Jews must first be scattered to all corners of the earths if the Messiah is to come. Thirdly, England will reap the profit following the “great blessing from God.” Ben Israel stages his plan as a messianic mission with the Jews centralizing the cataclysmic event and England helpfully assisting. The issue of conversion to Christianity remains subsumed within the more powerful possibility of the Messiah’s arrival. Ben Israel says he does not want to dispute matters of religion, which appear petty in the face of his desire “to live with my Nation in the fear of the Lord, under the shadow of your protection, whiles we expect with you the hope of Israel to be revealed”(3); all discussions of conversion are thereby subsumed in the much greater impact of Israel’s restoration. He continues to demonstrate how profitable, faithful, and noble Israel is, basing many of his arguments on the blessing God bestows on those who aid his people and invoking the imminent coming whenever possible. Ben Israel manipulates the fear and awe inherent in the theology of election to end his pamphlet with prophetic warnings to England. Israel is called in the sacred scriptures “the sonnes of God,” and whoever wrongs them “shall be most severely punished” since he “that toucheth them toucheth the apple of God’s eye” (25).

God’s anger at England’s treatment of the Jews becomes the prophetic rhetoric of readmission which Ben Israel hopes outcries the call for conversion. The response to Menasseh ben Israel and to the rhetoric of vengeance he manipulates varies from full-fledged submission to medieval-style anti-Semitism. There are two existing, reliable and

complete accounts of the proceedings at Whitehall which began on December 4, 1655, written by the Baptist Saturday-Sabbatarian Henry Jessey and the other by Nathaniel Crouch, whose pseudonym was Robert Burton. The most compelling argument for readmission, held only by “some” according to Jessey, was religious and messianic. In Burton’s account, although the ministers Mr. Nye and Mr. T. Goodwin feel that “due cautions” are warranted, the duty to “yield” to the Jews, “the Natural branches of the Olive tree,” is great (208). Romans 11 was invoked at the conference itself with the powerful claim that Christians are indebted to the Jews as they hope to “partake of the Messiah, promises, and salvation” guaranteed Israel. The argument is built not only on elected status, which the Gentiles have inherited spiritually, but on the historical parallels between the persecuted Jews and Protestants persecuted under the reign of Queen Mary who were “kindly received as strangers in other countries” (209). English Protestants are able to discern the historical importance of the Jews and the imminence of the chiliastic moment having “more believed the promises of the calling of the Jews and more earnestly prayed for it than any other nation” (209). This special relationship invites the fear that Menasseh Ben Israel exploits. Mr. Caryll, addressing the committee on readmission, reminds them of English culpability in drowning the exiled Jews of 1290:

That the cruel injuries and inhumanities used toward that nation
(and intruded not, but were invited to England) by our kings and
government, whereby multitudes of them were killed, and drowned
in the Thames, the Sea &c. might still lie as a sin upon these
Kingdoms, which our kindness to our survivors and successors,

they make some kind of amend and satisfaction for. (209)

Henry Jessey's account, replete with its biblicalisms and stated hope that England could be "instrumental in so blessed a work" (4) binds the two nations even more emphatically. He quotes part of a letter written in Ligorn, 1652 by a preacher on the Phoenix frigate to a friend in London; the writer laments, "O that ENGLAND may not be slack herein. Shall they be *Tolerated* by the Pope; and by the Duke of FLORENCE; by the TURKS, and by the BARBARIANS, and others; and shal *England* still have laws in force against them? when shal they be recalled" (11)? England has a critical role to play, and the yearning felt by the letter's writer reveals the urgency and immediacy of the expectation of the Messiah.

The fascinating postscript to Jessey's account is included (according to the author) only "to fill up the following Pages, that else had been vacant," but its contents and arrangement display Protestant philo-Semitism (12). The first document is the full list of Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel's proposals. Laid before the reader is the logistical reality of Jewish life in England including the promise of personal protection, a public synagogue, a cemetery, free traffic in "all sorts of Merchandize," and a Jewish judicial system (12). It is noted in the postscript that Oliver Cromwell spoke in favor of "that Nation" (13). The practical issues of Jewish readmission are addressed and made real to the reader. The second text gives authority to the first and to the endeavor as a whole in a letter from Ben Israel dated September of 1647 during the civil war. His words are calculated to invoke the power of contemporary Jews as God's people. England is dependant on the Jews for their current crisis and it is through the Jews that repentance becomes possible:

That is, *Sirs*, I cannot express the joy that I have when I read

your Letters, full of desires to see your Country prosperous,
 which is heavily afflicted with Civil wars, without doubt, by
 the just Judgement of God. And it should not be in vaine to
 attribute it to the punishment of your Predecessors faults,
 committed against ours; when ours being deprived of their liberty
 under deceitfulness, so many men were slaine, only because
 they kept close unto the Tents of *Moses* their Legislator. (13)

Israel is validated by England's misfortune, as punishment is visited on England retroactively for accumulated wrongs against God's people. Ben Israel's letter conveys the idea that repentance and retribution must be made.

The third section of the postscript catalogues the dates and events that mark the progress of English missionizing in the New World. This text certainly seems out of place in the discussion of the proceedings at Whitehall, but Ben Israel's proposals and his apocalyptic reading of England's civil war portend something great in the imminent future of which Indian conversion to Christianity is also a part. England's own role is reified by the success of its missionizing in America, by the spread of the Gospel, and by the ultimate hope of converting the world to Christianity. Menasseh Ben Israel empowers himself through the image of the Jews' election, but the inclusion of the Indian text indicates that Menasseh Ben Israel is being read as a potential convert to Christianity. His ominous letter is sandwiched between his own proposal for readmission and the successful chronology of the conversion of Indians from their native religion; their belief in "*Pawaw* witches" (14) erased, their words "Englished" (13), and their faith in God proclaimed,

Indian conversion is the graph on which Protestants chart a course of assimilation. The Jews and the Indians are notches on England's vision of a universal olive tree soon to be full again (not to mention colonial empire). Menasseh Ben Israel's warning of God's anger is heeded, but incorporated into a larger program of conversion of which he was imagined eventually to become a part.

The debate over readmission materializes as a debate over the authority of texts. Those who advocated readmission were motivated by religious zeal, belief in the second advent, the imminent fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, and the subsequent erasure of the categorization that had kept scriptural Israel and real contemporary Jews as distinct entities. Those who were against readmission did not necessarily refuse the imminent coming; arguments against being able to calculate the exact date, questioning the requisite dispersal of the Jews into England, and the unsteady "general apostacy" of the English people were legitimately advanced. At the center of the two anti-admission texts I will discuss here, historical texts chronicling blood libel and crucifixion cases, accusations of coin clipping, usury, and extortion, and Jewish homicidal tendencies are read as authentic and accurate documentation of Jewish guilt. Adhering to the allegorizing of a fictional Israel as distinct from contemporary Jews the opponents of readmission found other textual sources on which to ground their representations. As Luxon argues, "After 1655, it became clear that orthodoxy was more interested in the Israelite and the Jew as two alternating fantasies instrumental to the Protestant work of self-reading than it was in any actual Jews, especially Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel, who died debt-ridden and disappointed" (109).

William Prynne's anti-Jewish polemic, *A Short Demurrer to the Jewes Long Discontinued Remitter into England* (1655) was written and distributed while the Whitehall Conference was still ongoing and was read by members of the committee determining readmission. Prynne meets a committee member in the street, the minister Mr. Nye, who asks Prynne if there is any law against readmission. When Prynne responds with the aforementioned accusations including the crucifixion of children in England past, Nye questions the truth of such accusations. Prynne's printed attack first scrupulously catalogues famous examples from English history such as Hugh of Lincoln and William of Norwich, citing Matthew of Paris' chronicle as evidence and Holinshed and Stowe as additional proof of the well-deserved persecution of the Jews. The unquestionable verity and objectivity of historical texts is fashioned through their juxtaposition, in the latter half of Prynne's polemic, with scriptural examples of Jewish subversiveness and cruelty. He brings instances from the Old Testament and Exodus to show how stiff-necked and unruly a people the Jews are; God's own judgment on these prophet-killers is evidence enough. The possibility of converting them seems remote: "Or can our despised Ministry in this age, have any hopes of reclaiming or converting such a people, who have thus abused, murdered, stoned their own Prophets in former times, though immediately sent unto them by God himself?" (64-65). He states that only a select number of Jews will be recalled and then sardonically asks why England doesn't invite all the remaining unconverted nations such as the Turks, Tartars, Persians and Chinoys into England as well (90)? The last two quotes authorize his anti-admission stance with verses from the New Testament (Galatians and John) arguing that Old Testament law is useless and whoever does not confess Christ

is not of God, but represents the spirit of the anti-Christ.

Prynne's method is to validate and endorse historical accounts of Jewish cruelty and malice and through this historical lens legitimize the defamation of the Jews as relayed in Scripture. A direct response to Menasseh ben Israel's petition is found in *Anglo-Judaeos or the History of the Jews Whilst here in England relating to their Manners Carriage and Usage from their Admission by William the Conquerer to their Banishment Occasioned by a Book written to his Highness the lord Protector with a Declaration to the Common-wealth of England for their Re-Admission by Rabbi Menasses Ben Israel* (1655) by W.H. whom Frank Felsenstein identifies as William Hughes of Gray's Inn (40). The history of the Jews in England, gathered from the same sources used by Prynne, identifies the universal and transhistorical character of the Jewish people. He begins with the premise that the Jews have been a "people favoured especially by God, and chosen by him above all others" but "have yet in all ages shewn abundance of ingratitude" (1). This ingratitude leads to their scourging beginning in Exodus, and so he focuses on the Jew's unfaithfulness as a determining trait and historical reality. The same medieval accusations that Prynne cites are charged but added to these are early accusations of cannibalism and related monstrosities said to take place after the destruction of and exile from Jerusalem; after butchering people in Egypt, Cyrene and Cyprus the Jews "eat their flesh, besmear themselves with their blood, wear their skins, saw them asunder, cast them to beasts, make them kill one another" (4). This is the preface to their coming to England at the time of William the Conquerer when they proceed to kill children, clip coins, etc. These tales of Jewish cruelty, told in detailed gore, precede discussions of messianic redemption and so

construct a privileged narrative that inspires more fear of God's people than retributive punishment for not aiding them. Such legends, re-told, compete powerfully with the scriptural history narrated by millenarians and by Jews such as Menasseh ben Israel.

Hughes asks,

Its believed that the time of their redemption is near (saith he) and that they must first be scattered throughout the world. What then? therefore if this be true, they must first have a Seat also in *England*. Why, they had a Seat here once before for the space of above 200 years, and must they needs come again or else their dispersion (as to this place) cannot be accomplished? (32-33).

Moreover, their conversion, in light of their lengthy stubbornness would have to be miraculous and sudden:

That the Jews conversion draws nigh, is a greater truth, then that their Reduction hither would be a means unto it. It is not probable that this people, which hath now been blinde for above 1600 years, should be restored to sight by any but extraordinary power, by any work but one miraculous. Its a nation that is rather to be born at once, and whose conversion will be as the resurrection from the dead. (50)

Messianic redemption will invariably come; "truth" as authorized by historical chronicle, however, powerfully modifies the Jew's role in that redemption. For the remainder of the text Hughes catalogues all of the Jews' past and current misdeeds in

various countries, raising the specter of Roderigo Lopez, the Jewish physician executed as a traitor to Queen Elizabeth, twice -- to show how recent Jews have acted in England.

The history of the Jews of England is written indelibly in the minds and hearts of the English people, and it is this memory sealed in historical chronicle, however biased, which overwrites Menasseh Ben Israel's eloquent request for readmission:

[T]he very name of a Jew serving this people as a perfect measure, either to notifie the height of impiety in the agent, or to sound the depth and bottom of an abject worthless and forlorn condition in any patient. Better we cannot express more cut-throat dealing than thus, *None but a Jew could have done so*; lower we cannot prize any one of most abject condition, then by comparing him to a *Jew*. For so in common speech men use to exaggerate enormous wrongs. *This had been enough for a Jew to suffer, or, I would not have done so to a Jew.* (49)

What is recorded here is the way that historical "truth" becomes part of a cultural discourse. The "name of Jew" becomes a signifier for all of the evil behavior the Jews are accused of affecting. Common speech and the history behind it justify themselves, and are ultimately authorized by their speakers -- those who make the accusations, legalize them, punish them, record and chronicle them, and those who re-tell them. Once the story is embedded in language and everyday idioms, it becomes an almost irreversible memory that, in its power, can compete even with scriptural images on which Puritan eschatology rests. Hughes recognizes the future return of Israel as laid out in scripture but qualifies it

with the narratives of Jewish crime recorded in historical texts for which reason the people of England “desired their expulsion above all things” in the thirteenth century.

Remarkably, the image of Israel as a perpetual, elected nation, existing, waiting, as they have done since their initial dispersal in 70 A.D., finds a counterpart in these malicious Jews who must also similarly perpetuate their abominations: “[Y]et they leave not off their extortions, make it their annual practice to crucifie children, conspire against City and people, still clip and spoil the coyn, as very earnest to undo themselves” (Hughes 46). The evidence of this exists in the historical narratives themselves, where stories of Jewish crimes are reiterated, repeated, continuing into the present through continual reading. The historical chronicle becomes an allegorical version of the Jew that parallels the Protestant-styled paradigm of Israel. Strangely enough the source of this typological construction is medieval typology itself and so we have traveled so far in time and history only to be confronted by the same story and version of the Jew with which we began this study. Only this time, the Jew, Menasseh ben Israel, will publish a response to these accusations, one that is logical and erudite. If the same old accusations are leveled against the Jews, progress at least has been made in the discursive power with which the Jew’s voice responds.

Menasseh Ben Israel responds to the slanderous accusations in *Vindicae Judaeorum* (1656), deconstructing Prynne’s arguments by explaining that host desecration and blood libel crimes are specifically “un”-Jewish, by quoting Old Testament commandments, and by discrediting historical chronicles as “not sacred or canonical.” At the center of his vindication, are the competing narratives of divine intervention on behalf

of the Jews that empower Israel once again as a nation elected and guarded. The alternative tales involve the “other side of the story” -- true criminals rightly accused of homicides for which Jews were blamed motivated by “covetous ambition.” Ben Israel reduces the authority of historical chronicles by calling them stories, told from a particular perspective. He quotes Plutarch as saying that love and hatred “corrupt the truth of everything” (12). Truth, then, is subjective: “[W]e see that which come to passe, that one and same thing, in one and the same city, at one and the same time, is related in different manners” (12). The story’s meaning will depend upon the teller, his own perception, agenda, political or religious leanings, etc. At the same time, Menasseh ben Israel authorizes himself as a teller of God’s stories and relays divine action on behalf of the Jews; one story, relayed at length in *Vindicae Judaeorum* and briefly in *The Humble Address* is inserted at critical points as an alternative narrative to Jewish murder. The Jew is written in the role of victim, to which he has often been ascribed; however, this victim is empowered by the fear and awe he inspires in the reader who will see in his tale the endorsement and protection of God. The Jew’s innocence is discovered and his persecutors punished by God. The particular crime begins with a lie that originates in blood libel accusation – re-telling these old and baseless stories will result, in this early modern day, in visible and painful retribution.

The story goes that a Christian woman in Araguza kidnaps and murders a wealthy eleven year old girl and when she is found out, claims to have murdered at the instigation and persuasion of a Jew, Isaac Jeshurun. According to this woman, the motive was the girl’s blood which the Jews needed to “celebrate their feast” (*Vindicae* 10). The woman

was hanged, while the Jew was tortured six times, condemned to twenty years in prison, “to be fed there through a trough, upon the bread and water of affliction, being close manacled, and naked, within a four square wall, built for that purpose, that he might there perish in his own dung” (10). The Jew here is not only tortured and subjected to inhuman conditions, but is reduced to slavery, re-ascribed to his abject position in pre-redemptive Egypt, and doomed, Sisyphus-like, to never reach freedom. This “miserable man” prays to God and begs for a signal of his innocence, “citing before his divine tribunall the Senatours who had with no more mercy, then justice, thus grievously and inhumanely afflicted him” (10). Ben Israel continues:

[T]he blessed God was a just Judge, for the Prince died suddenly at a banquet, the Sunday next ensuing the giving of the sentence, and during the time of his imprisonment, the aforesaid Senatours by little and little dropt away, and died, which was prudently observed by those few that yet remain’d, wherefore they resolved to deliver themselves by restoring him to his liberty, accounting it as a particular divine providence. (10-11)

It is both the terrible injustice and the power of the wronged Jew’s prayer in Ben Israel’s story that cause God to kill both the prince and the senators. The few who remained themselves attribute their cronies’ deaths to divine retribution, lending additional authority to Ben Israel’s story and to his entire re-admission endeavor. For those who think that Israel is out of divine favor, let them think again.

The Whitehall Conference ended without an official readmission, although

Cromwell indicated that Jews who lived in England would be tolerated but Ben Israel died a disappointed man in 1657. For those Puritans whose messianic zeal and philo-Semitism determined their pro-admission stance, Menasseh ben Israel's rhetorical self-validation as God's elected and protected people had powerful resonance. For others, history was a potent account of the "Jew" as distinct from the allegorized Israel of scripture, and although they believed that the Jews (or at least some of them) would eventually be recalled, the imminence of such an act or England's own role in bringing about the second coming remained unclear. John Dury in "A Case of Conscience whether it be lawful to admit Jews into a Christian Commonwealth" (1656) argued that the "seasons" of the Jews' deliverance is in God's hands alone and that mortals are "very much inclined to mistake in conjectures of that nature" (8-9). From the eye-witness accounts of the proceedings of the Whitehall Conference, it is apparent however that the fear of divine retribution did hold sway with a good portion of English men and women. Christian millenarianism provided a ripe context for the readmission question and for Ben Israel's maneuvering of election discourse to promote himself and his people as a nation that both required and offered "the shadow" of God's protection. It has been often noted that Ben Israel "failed" in his readmission endeavor, but what his writings record is how well he succeeded in both understanding the millenarian milieu and manipulating its ideology and language to his benefit. Unfortunately Israel restored was one of many images which circulated in seventeenth century England – it offered an identification and admiration that was as absent from England for the last four hundred years as the Jews themselves; but no matter how ben Israel enforced its powerful rhetoric, God's Israel competed with the

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