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## RACISM AND HOMOPHOBIA IN *THE MERCHANT OF VENICE*

BY JAMES O'ROURKE

Recent historically inflected criticism on *The Merchant of Venice* has generally accepted the premise that William Shakespeare wrote an anti-Semitic work structured on “the central dramatic conflict of Jew and Gentile, or more precisely, of Jewish fiscalism and Gentile mercantilism.”<sup>1</sup> Those who find the play frankly insulting to modern sensibilities have reason to be suspicious of the various, sometimes contradictory, ways in which the anti-Semitism expressed in the play has been excused or even reversed in critical commentary. The argument that *The Merchant* might have been intended as a satire on the sanctimonious avarice of the Christian characters and of their hypocrisy in projecting their own worst traits onto the scapegoated figure of the Jew has prompted an emphatic rejoinder from Alan Sinfield, who argues that there is less difference than there seems between those who idealize the play’s Christian characters and those who see the play as a critique of the flaws of those characters. Sinfield contends that “even a ‘sympathetic’ presentation, with Shylock as victim” ends up saying that “the Christians are as bad as the Jews—who function, therefore, as an index of badness.” Both an idealized reading of the play, which portrays the Venetians as exemplars of a civil generosity that reflects theological values, and the darker reading, Sinfield argues, accept “an underlying us-and-them pattern” in the play.<sup>2</sup>

While historicist readings have gathered their persuasive force by placing *The Merchant* within broad historical currents, I will argue here that a close reading of the play within the micropolitics of its immediate historical moment suggests that *The Merchant* is in fact an antiracist response to the hanging of Rodrigo Lopez in 1594.<sup>3</sup> The stability of the Jewish/Christian opposition in the play, which seems to be anchored by the repeated use of the word “Christian” to refer to the Venetian characters, is unsettled by the repeated juxtaposition of inconsistencies, contradictions, and hypocrisies in the Tudor stereotyping of Jews and Italians; and the very frequency with which the Venetians are called “Christians” indicates the stress borne by the

word as it tries to persuade a Tudor audience to see Italian Catholics standing for the same values as English Protestants. The words “Christian” and “Christians” appear twenty-seven times in *The Merchant*, which constitutes over a third of all of their appearances in Shakespeare’s works, and is over three times the count for any other individual play. This insistent repetition functions like the double crossdressing that occurs later in the play; the slippage of the signifier exposes the unstable relation between the sign and the referent. Just as double crossdressing forces a recognition of the artificiality of representing women with male actors, the repeated references to Italian Catholics as “Christians” call attention to the ambiguity of this designation for a Tudor audience.

In arguing that Shakespeare deliberately constructs a critical distance on the phenomenon of anti-Semitism, I am departing from a presumption of realist theater, the premise that the play must solicit some sort of identification from the audience, either with the Venetians as exemplary Christians or with Shylock as a victim. I will argue here that *The Merchant* deliberately frustrates any possibility of identification with its characters as it cites, rather than iterates, the stereotypical Jewish/Christian opposition. Its critical force then emerges from the production of a denaturalized perspective that makes it possible, in Bertoldt Brecht’s terms, to “alienate the familiar” and make an audience “distrust what they are used to.”<sup>4</sup>

The Tudor audience was certainly “used to” anti-Semitism, and that prejudice is initially aroused both by Shylock’s self-caricaturing statement that he will avoid the smell of pork and by his first aside to the audience, where his willingness to charge interest seems to mark an essential moral difference between Jew and Christian. But the identification of the Tudor audience with the Venetian Catholic Antonio could only be equivocal at best, especially when financial matters were involved. Not only were there no Jewish moneylenders in London in 1594, but the hated foreign usurers in London in the 1590s were mostly Italians, known popularly as “Lombards,” and there was a long history of English resentment of Lombard merchants. A royal edict of 1559 that tightened the currency regulations on “merchant strangers” warned that “[t]he Italians above all other to be taken heed of, for they . . . lick the fat even from our beards.”<sup>5</sup> From the time of the expulsion of the Jews from England in 1290, Italians served as the primary source of foreign capital, and from the fourteenth through the sixteenth centuries Italian moneylenders were subject to a series of parliamentary petitions calling for their

expulsion and to xenophobic riots by the London working class.<sup>6</sup> When *The Merchant* opens with three Italians discussing their concerns over their “merchandise,” it presents a familiar tableau of acquisitive Lombard merchants.<sup>7</sup> It was not axiomatic to an Elizabethan theater audience that Italian merchants were more economically virtuous than Jews; Robert Wilson had a good deal of success in the 1580s and 1590s with *The Three Ladies of London* (revived in 1588 and reprinted in 1592), a play that pitted a morally upright Jewish merchant against a thoroughly unscrupulous Venetian.

The proximity of Italians and Jews in the Tudor imaginary is shown in a handbill from an anti-alien riot in Southwark in 1593 that complained, “Your Machiavellian merchant spoils the state, / Your usury doth leave us all for dead / . . . And like the Jews you eat us up like bread.”<sup>8</sup> The metaphoric equivalence of the “Machiavellian merchant” and “the Jews” might suggest that Elizabethan xenophobia did not make much of a distinction between Italian merchants and Jews were it not for the fact that the handbill appeared in the year before Lopez’s trial, when there was no “Jewish question” in London. The simile of the Machiavellian merchant and the Jews describes a structural relation between the Italians widely present in London and the archetypal figure of the Jew in the Tudor imaginary, a structure that is reflected in the first confrontation between Shylock and Antonio. When Shylock easily gets the better of Antonio at every turn in their battle of wits, he gives the crowd an opportunity to see the alien usurers in their midst being beaten, at what was supposed to be their own game, by a figure who is seen as their prototype. The scene solicits a series of contradictory responses as it plays one prejudice against the other; anti-Italian xenophobia is partly disabled by the use of the word “Christian,” which encourages the audience to sympathize with Antonio, but the certainty of the moral superiority of the Christian/Catholic over the Jew is eroded in the course of the scene by Shylock’s scathing account of his customary treatment by Antonio, which suggests that Shylock’s hatred for Antonio does not originate in his nature as a Jew but is the result of having been continually harassed by Antonio while conducting a business that is legal by the laws of both Venice and London.

Antonio’s status as an exemplary Christian is further clouded by his offer to Bassanio that “my person . . . lie[s] all unlocked to your occasions” (1.1.138–39). The suggestiveness of Antonio’s metaphor is reinforced by English stereotypes of the sexual behavior of Italians. As Edward Coke asserted, “Bugeria is an Italian word,” and according

to his parliamentary history, the fourteenth-century appeal for the expulsion of “Lombard merchants” charged not only usurious business practices but also the accusation that the Lombards had “brought into the realm the shameful sin of sodomy, that is not to be named.”<sup>9</sup> This accusation appears in a similar context and in a similarly euphemistic form in Thomas Wilson’s *Discourse Upon Usury* in 1572, where Wilson charges Italians with a propensity “to sin horribly in suche sorte as is not to be named.”<sup>10</sup> This stereotype allows the Tudor audience to complete the innuendo of Solanio’s teasing challenge to Antonio, “Why then you are in love” (1.1.46), when they see Antonio’s response to the arrival of Bassanio, and it enables them to understand what is not quite named when Solanio says of Antonio’s tears at Bassanio’s departure, “I think he only loves the world for him” (2.8.50). As Bruce Smith puts it, “In order not to say something one has to have a precise sense of what that thing is.”<sup>11</sup> One can avoid naming “[w]hat is not to be named” out of more or less sympathy; something can remain unspoken either because it is too horrible to be named or too inconsequential to be mentioned.

As the work of James Shapiro and Alan Bray has shown, both the presence of Jews and the practice of sodomy were open secrets in Tudor England. What was forbidden by law was routinely overlooked in day to day affairs, unless a Jew or a “sodomite” ran afoul of the law, in which case his sexuality or his Jewishness quickly became a marker of his probable guilt.<sup>12</sup> Another way of describing this phenomenon would be to say that in Tudor times both homophobia and anti-Semitism were ordinarily latent presences; it took some special circumstances to make them active forces. The hanging of Lopez in 1594 was one of these circumstances, which involved the exposure of one open secret and the maintenance of another. When Lopez, a convert, protested his innocence on the scaffold and claimed that he “loved the Queen as he loved Jesus Christ,” the crowd responded with derisive laughter, and the proof of his guilt was easily adduced: “‘He is a Jew,’ they shouted.”<sup>13</sup> Even as the Elizabethan mob easily articulated the common understanding of Lopez’s true religious allegiance, they overlooked a second open secret maintained by his prosecutors. Lopez’s chief antagonists consisted of the homosocial network of the Earl of Essex’s men, and the task of chronicling the Lopez trial for the Essex faction was undertaken by Francis Bacon, whose openly secret homosexuality was well protected by the Essex clique. At the time of the Lopez trial, Essex was attempting to secure Bacon’s appointment as Attorney General, at the same time that he

was pursuing a vendetta against Lopez over the resistance of William Cecil and of Elizabeth herself. But Bacon's homosexuality, and particularly his association with Antonio Perez, were probably among the reasons for Elizabeth's resistance to his appointment.<sup>14</sup>

Perez, a Spanish émigré who had been investigated by the Inquisition for sodomy in 1592 and who was particularly disliked by Elizabeth, was one of two "Antonios" in the Essex circle at the time of the Lopez prosecution, and Francis Bacon was intimately involved in the circulation of political, financial and personal favors with both of them.<sup>15</sup> The other "Antonio" was Anthony Bacon, Francis's brother, who had been charged with sodomy in France in 1586, and who was by 1594 deeply in debt for money he had borrowed and passed on to Francis.<sup>16</sup> When Francis Bacon lost the Attorney General's position to Coke and was widely supported by many of Essex's enemies for the Solicitorship as a compensatory gesture to Essex, Coke, who was to become a forceful polemicist against "the shameful sin of sodomy, that is not to be named," continued to argue strongly (and successfully) to Elizabeth against Bacon's advancement. Bacon's description of Lopez in his *True Report of the Detestable Treason Intended by Doctor Lopez*, that he was "of nation a Portugese, and suspected to be in sect secretly a Jew, (though here he conformed himself to the rites of the Christian religion)," shadows Bacon's own maintenance of his openly secret sex life.<sup>17</sup>

The outcomes allotted to Shylock and Antonio at the conclusion of *The Merchant* reflect the fates of Lopez and Bacon in 1594: the Jew's life is destroyed, and the semi-covert homosexual is excluded from the center of the social structure. The downfalls of both characters are produced by the figure of Christian feminine authority, Portia, whose success, as Jonathan Goldberg has argued, "unleashes energies that are racist and homophobic."<sup>18</sup> Both Antonio and Shylock function as scapegoats to the play's comic resolution, and the asymmetrical parallel between them takes its form from the Book of Leviticus, where two goats are chosen, one to be sacrificed, the other to be sent to wander in the wilderness. Portia's question, "Which is the merchant here? and which the Jew?" (4.1.170), recreates the moment in Leviticus when the two goats are poised to discover which is to get the worse news. Through this double scapegoat structure, *The Merchant* outlines the structural similarity of the positions occupied by homosexuals and Jews in Tudor England.

The importance of Antonio's sexual orientation in securing the Christian/Jewish opposition in the play becomes clear in critical

commentary on the nature of the Antonio/Bassanio relationship. Joseph Pequigney, who sees the Antonio/Sebastian relationship in *Twelfth Night* as a consummated homosexual partnership, in this case offers a version of Bassanio's excuse (I didn't give it to a woman, I gave it to a lawyer) when he argues that the "Christian ethic that saturates *The Merchant of Venice*" and is defined by "right conduct" makes it impossible for this Antonio to be a homosexual.<sup>19</sup> According to Pequigney, Antonio isn't a homosexual, he's a Christian. Pequigney's error is to take this contradiction too literally; when Solanio declines to spell out his understanding of Antonio's love for Bassanio, he implies essentially the same thing about Antonio that Pequigney does, but Solanio's reticence is a matter of conscious discretion. The either/or distinction (homosexual or Christian) that Pequigney applies to Antonio shows how the moral clarity of the Christian/Jewish opposition in the play depends upon Antonio's uncorrupted sexuality, but it also shows that nothing guarantees that sexuality except the premise that a Christian ethic is able to saturate the play. In a more productive account of Antonio's own contradictions, Seymour Kleinberg describes the conflict between Antonio the Christian and Antonio the homosexual as internal to the character and as the cause of Antonio's vicious anti-Semitism. Kleinberg calls Antonio "the earliest portrait of the homophobic homosexual," and suggests that Antonio projects his self-loathing onto the stigmatized figure of the Jew "in a classic pattern of psychological scapegoating."<sup>20</sup>

The strength of Kleinberg's interpretation of Antonio's character is that it both makes the extremity of Antonio's bigotry explicable (there is no mention of any other Venetians routinely assaulting Shylock on the Rialto), and it shows the play giving a coherent form to a pressing social issue. As Bray argues in "Homosexuality and the Signs of Male Friendship in Elizabethan England," by the 1590s there was a good deal of anxiety over the difficulty of distinguishing the "orderly 'civil' relations" of friendship from the "subversive behavior" of sodomy. According to Bray, one sign of a proper friendship was that the bond between the friends was "personal not mercenary"; otherwise, it became impossible to distinguish "the bribes of the one from the flow of gifts and the ready use of influence of the other."<sup>21</sup> Antonio's showering of gifts, or bribes, on Bassanio creates precisely this ambiguity.

Bray's larger thesis, that Tudor society "lacked the idea of a distinct homosexual minority," would seem to rule out the possibility of identifying Antonio as a homosexual, but Bray's orthodox Foucauldian

paradigm is, to borrow its own metaphor, too superficial to explain the representation of same-sex sexuality in this play, and in Shakespeare's work generally.<sup>22</sup> Bray's thesis about the perception of same-sex sexuality in Elizabethan times is derived from Foucault's argument that it is only in the modern period that an interior essence is ascribed to a sexual orientation. But consider the moment in the unraveling of the ring plot in the final scene of *The Merchant*, when Gratiano defends himself against Nerissa's charges of infidelity by protesting of his missing engagement ring that "I gave it to a youth, / A kind of boy, a little scrubbed boy" (5.1.161–62). The ease with which the performative function of an excuse is conveyed through the constative declaration that the ring was given to a boy suggests that, although Nerissa claims to disbelieve her husband's excuse, she has no trouble understanding that this statement is an excuse. Both the fiancées onstage (played by boys) and Shakespeare's audience (watching fiancées played by boys) immediately grasp the inference that Gratiano could not be guilty of sexual infidelity if he gave the ring to a boy because, everyone is able to assume, his relationship with another male could not possibly be sexual. The mimetic fiction of Gratiano's consistency as a character (that is, the effect of the depth of his interiority) clashes with the dramatic device of crossdressed actors, and the audience is offered simultaneous access to two contradictory models of same-sex desire, one that presumes the impossibility of same-sex desire, and another which suggests its pervasive possibility. Gratiano's betrothal to Nerissa seems like the inevitable fate of a young, unmarried male character in a comedy, yet at the same time Antonio's devotion to Bassanio suggests the potential intensity of same-sex male bonds, and performance embodies and eroticizes that potential in the crossdressed (sometimes doubly crossdressed) boy actors.

The Foucault/Bray hypothesis of a clear epistemic shift that separates early modern from modern conceptions of same-sex desire seems to foreclose any relation between sexuality and interiority in the early modern period. But the mutual exclusivity of the beliefs that Gratiano, an imminent husband, is therefore immune to the possibility of same-sex desire, versus the transvestite evocation of an ambiguous border between boys and women as objects of male desire, poses exactly the question of whether sexuality is the expression of an immutable core of identity. The perception of Gratiano's immutable heterosexuality suggests a deeply fixed connection between sexual desire and personal identity, while Antonio's hopes for Bassanio



suggest that sexuality might become the contingent effect of cultural determinants and individual choice.

When the Foucault/Bray hypothesis is posed in its strongest form, it leads to the conclusion that it would be impossible for Shakespeare's audience to combine the innuendo of the play with their stereotypes of Italians in order to perceive Antonio as different from Gratiano. Although this thesis begins from a sound critical principle (that the connection between sexual behavior and interior identity is a fiction), the problem is that it suggests that people in the early modern era, who would not recognize the modern fiction that an "interior androgyny" attaches to same-sex desire, could not have perceived any difference between men, whose desire was primarily or exclusively directed towards other men, and men, whose desire was directed towards women.<sup>23</sup> *The Merchant of Venice* presents a more complicated thesis: it recognizes the possibility of differentiating Antonio from Gratiano in their sexual preferences, but it also suggests that that difference is sometimes less than absolute, and it goes on to unsettle the value differentials that have been attached to that initial distinction. When Antonio offers Bassanio free access to his "person" (1.1.138), the audience is set up to believe that they have spotted "one of them," an Italian sodomite, but when the same sodomite is identified as the Christian antithesis to Shylock, the audience is forced to weigh the subtle caricature of Antonio against the blatant stereotyping of Shylock. The stereotypical moral distinction between Christian and Jew is unraveled by the introduction of a middle term, the sexually and economically ambiguous "Machiavellian merchant." The crossdressed boy takes up the liminal position in the sexual economy of *The Merchant* that is occupied in its financial and moral spheres by the "Machiavellian merchant." Just as the "Machiavellian merchant," neither "Christian" nor "Jewish," collapses the moral distinction between those terms, the crossdressed boy undoes the difference between the desires that inform the heterosexual marriages in the play and Antonio's desire for Bassanio.

While Foucault's history of sexuality provides the critical tools for the dismantling of a particular modern stereotype, that of "the homosexual," Shakespeare's *Merchant*, by shadowing the representation of Shylock's Jewishness with the paradoxical treatment of Antonio's ethnic, sexual, and religious identity, offers a critique of the essentializing operation that produces stereotypes. The oft-noted symmetry between Antonio and Shylock reflects a repetitive historical process: the cultural formation that Foucault describes, the

production of the irredeemably perverse homosexual, was anticipated by the imposition of the concept of blood purity on early modern Jewish converts to Christianity.<sup>24</sup> Just as homosexuality has come to be perceived, in the modern period, as an essence that transcends the actions of the subject, Christian converts from Judaism in the early modern period were stereotyped as possessing an essential Jewishness, an interior perversion, that transcended their actual behavior. In early modern Europe, neither the personal participation in Christian rituals such as baptism nor the Christian practices of several generations of ancestors could protect Jewish converts or their descendants from the perception that they remained “really” Jewish.

As members of a proselytizing religion, Christians should have acknowledged that there was no doctrinal basis for distinguishing old Christians from the newly converted, but, as Lopez and his Iberian ancestors discovered, experience often proved otherwise. The “conversos” of Spain and Portugal were subject to the regime of “blood purity,” as the Spanish “old Christians” deplored the contamination of pure Spanish blood by racially inferior Jews. In *The Merchant*, blood becomes a central, and highly contested, sign of the supposed moral and biological differences between Christians and others. Morocco believes either that his “blood is reddest” (2.1.7) or that there is no distinction between European and African blood, yet both his belief and Shylock’s apodictic claim of his sameness with Christians (“if you prick us do we not bleed?” [3.1.58]) are belied by Salerio, who insists that there is no common essence shared by Christians and Jews, or by Europeans and Africans. Salerio asserts that Shylock’s blood is precisely what sets him apart from the Christians, and even from his “New Christian” daughter: “There is more difference between thy flesh and hers,” he claims, “than between jet and ivory, more between your / bloods, than there is between red wine and Rhenish” (3.1.34–36). The most volatile reference in the play to the centrality of blood imagery in Christian mythology is slightly more indirect; when Shylock first proposes that Antonio pledge a pound of flesh to guarantee their bond, he evokes the Christian blood libels that told of Jews desiring, and taking, Christian flesh (particularly that of children) in order to reenact the crucifixion on Jewish holy days.

The trial scene of *The Merchant* brings together the theological principles and the blood imagery that served as the basis of early modern anti-Semitism. As it places these ideas and images in a scene

that raises the specter of the judicial execution of an exemplary Christian by a Jew, it both invokes the Christian symbolism of the crucifixion and brings that symbolism back to its Judaic roots. Antonio depicts himself as the Christlike sacrificial “lamb” (4.1.74), and Portia’s role in the ritual is drawn from the medieval morality play *Processus Belial*, from which she takes the Marian part of advocating a more generous standard of judgment than the strict standard of justice called for by the devil/Jew.<sup>25</sup> Shylock’s rejection of her pleas for mercy and his declaration “my deeds upon my head” (4.1.202), puts him in the archetypal role of the Jews in Matthew’s gospel who say of Christ, “His blood be on us, and on our children.”<sup>26</sup> These three figures construct a triangular symbolic configuration that first appears in Western literature with the sudden explosion of anti-Semitism that accompanied the launching of the First Crusade in the late eleventh century: the combination of the rapacious Jew, the redemptive Marian figure, and the infantilized Christ. The emergence of a cult of the virgin mother of Christ was a contemporaneous phenomenon with the eleventh century rise of European anti-Semitism, and the Marian cult produced a correlative symbolic phenomenon in the iconic infantilization of the figure of Christ. The most familiar occurrence of this tripartite structure in English literature is Geoffrey Chaucer’s “Prioress’s Tale,” where the Jewish attack on the Christian child is prompted by the child’s song to the Virgin Mary. This combination of images—the protective virgin mother, the vulnerable Christ-child, and the predatory Jew—laid the ground for the medieval Christian mythology of Jewish murders of Christian children and the ritual use of their bodies and blood.<sup>27</sup>

When Antonio identifies himself first as a “lamb” and then as “the tainted wether of the flock, meetest for death” (4.1.74, 114), he invokes a symbolism that is both Christian and Jewish. Antonio is both Christ and the Levitic scapegoat who is, in patristic exegesis, a figure for Christ; as William Tyndale puts it, Christ “is the oxe, the shepe, the gote, the kyd and lambe; he is the oxe that is burnt without the host and the scapegote that caryed all the synne of the people away into the wilderness.”<sup>28</sup> In Tyndale’s explication, the Jewish ritual of the scapegoat foreshadows Christ’s sacrifice on the cross, in which Christ fulfills the roles of both goats, both the scapegoat and the sacrificial goat (or lamb); according to Tyndale, “just as their [the Jews] worldly synnes coude no otherwyse be purged then by bloude of sacrifice / even so can oure synnes be no otherwyse forgiven then thorow the bloude of christ.” Antonio’s self-identification as the

“tainted wether” invokes both the roots of the sacrificial Christ-figure in the Jewish Bible and the Christian mythology of predatory Jewishness. A wether is a castrated ram, and the nexus of castration and circumcision suggests that Shylock’s desire to cut off a piece of Antonio’s body is characteristic of a perverted Jewish lust for Christian flesh.<sup>29</sup> But as a “*tainted wether*” (my emphasis), Antonio becomes not the lamb “without blemish” called for in Leviticus which would serve as the pure sin offering, but the scapegoat who has, in Tyndale, “all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins” put upon his head so that they can be carried off.

In Portia’s legal challenge to Shylock, “This bond doth give thee here no jot of blood” (4.1.302), *The Merchant* crystallizes and collapses the doctrinal and metaphoric distinctions between Christian and Jew. Shylock’s downfall is brought about not only by the letter of the law but by a law that he should have thought of. This fictional provision in Venetian law is based on the prohibition in Leviticus, which is maintained in the custom of koshering meat, against eating blood.<sup>30</sup> Blood has a deeply paradoxical status in Leviticus; it is at once sacred (“the life of all flesh is his blood”) and unclean; Leviticus is pervaded with instructions for the careful disposition of sacrificial blood, and if the blood of a sin offering falls on a piece of clothing, the garment must be taken off and washed “in the holy place.”<sup>31</sup> *The Merchant* never quite comes to the point of testing the Christians’ claim of their essential difference from Jews by performing the ritual of blood sacrifice called for in both Leviticus and in Christian doctrine (recalling Tyndale’s principle that “oure synnes [can] be no otherwyse forgoen then thorow the bloude of Christ”). If Shylock were to cut a pound from Antonio’s heart, would the blood he spilled be distinguishable, as Salerio claims, from Shylock’s own blood that would be taken in retribution?

The two Biblical stories that the trial scene invokes, the crucifixion and the Leviticus story of the scapegoat, allow for two interpretations of this scene. In terms of Christian world-history, the peripetia through which Shylock is defeated shows the Jews (in the person of Shylock) receiving their deserved fate. When the grounds upon which Shylock’s life is spared—some property confiscation and a forced conversion—are summed up by the Duke as an example of “the difference of our spirit” (4.1.364), the Duke invokes the proverbial difference between the people who abide by the spirit of the law and those who remain committed to the letter. This “difference”

secures the Christian mythos of the relative wrongs of Jews and Christians. As the Christian story goes, they may harass the Jews a bit, confiscate their property from time to time (as a punishment for their greed), and sometimes force them to convert, but they don't (usually) just kill them, whereas the Jews killed Christ. Jewishness functions as *the* "index of badness" in Christian world-history, so that whatever lapses Christians exhibit from doctrinal ideals, the scapegoating of Jews allows them to believe that at least they are not as bad as the people who murdered the son of God. From a Jewish perspective, the singling out of a Jewish individual for an arbitrarily shifting punishment—a death threat, confiscation of some amount of his property, and forced conversion—confronts Christian historical myth with an accurate summary of the experience of European Jews in the early modern period, and particularly that of the Iberian and English Jewish communities from which Rodrigo Lopez emerged. The increasingly brutal tallages levied on the Jewish community in England before their final expulsion in 1290 culminated in a late attempt at conversion of English Jews by Edward I in 1280, when Jews were allowed to retain half of their property upon conversion.<sup>32</sup> Iberian Jews had the option of living as Jews until 1492, when they too were compelled either to convert or emigrate. Antonio's demand that Shylock "become a Christian" (4.1.383) does not reflect the contemporary practices of Venice, which preferred that Jews remain Jews and live in the Jewish ghetto, but that of the Spanish Inquisition. In either case, the fate of converted Jews in Spain or Venice does not bode well for Shylock. Conversos were routinely found guilty of heresy by the Spanish Inquisition, which was self-funded through the confiscation of the property of those it found guilty, and so had a double imperative to doubt the religious sincerity of the "New Christians." Not only was it run by the "Old Christians" who resented competition from the conversos, but the bureaucracy of the Inquisition itself directly profited from every guilty verdict.<sup>33</sup> In Venice, Jews who lived as Jews were not subject to the Venetian Inquisition, but those who claimed to have converted to Catholicism in order to move out of the ghetto were subject to charges of heresy if the sincerity of their conversion became suspect. Venice was a city in which Catholic icons were ubiquitous, and failure to show due respect to icons could easily attract suspicion of a secret attachment to Judaism.<sup>34</sup> Shylock's new status as a nominal Christian also disables his livelihood; Christians (even "New Christians") were not allowed to loan money at interest, and converts were unable to collect interest on any loans

they had outstanding and were required to restore all money that had been earned as interest.<sup>35</sup>

Shylock's disappearance from the play at the end of the trial scene is a figure for the expulsion of the Leviticus scapegoat, but the scene ends with the play's affective entanglements unresolved and the Leviticus ritual incomplete. Although one scapegoat has effectively been exiled, there has been no blood sacrifice, and Antonio's self-confessed "taint" seems to have had no consequence. The entire structure of the Leviticus scapegoat ritual is brought to completion in the play's conclusion through the development of the symbolic roles acquired by the characters in the trial scene. The material for the play's last act is generated when Antonio speaks what he believes will be his last words to Bassanio and issues a challenge to the supposedly absent Portia:

Commend me to your honourable wife,  
Tell her the process of Antonio's end,  
Say how I lov'd you, speak me fair in death:  
And when the tale is told, bid her be judge  
Whether Bassanio had not once a love.  
(4.1.269–73)

If the greatest proof of love (in both Christian and romantic terms) is to die for it, Antonio has set an impossibly high sacrificial standard for his rival for Bassanio's love. Bassanio's immediate offer that he would "sacrifice" (4.1.283) everything, including "my wife" (4.1.280), if it would save Antonio (4.1.280), and Portia's aside, "Your wife would give you little thanks for that / If she were by to hear you make the offer" (4.1.284–85), seem momentarily to divert the trial scene from a melodrama with theological implications into a domestic farce; and as Gratiano and Nerissa reenact the roles of a husband verging on errancy in front of his disguised wife, the play veers even further into the conventions of domestic comedy. The resolution of these domestic conflicts in the play's final scene is darkened by the symbolic overtones of the theological melodrama. While Shylock is not physically present in the play's conclusion, his death is figured in the play's final lines in Nerissa's bestowal upon Jessica and Lorenzo "From the rich Jew, a special deed of gift / After his death, of all he dies possess'd of" (5.1.292–93). Lorenzo's description of this prospect as "manna" for "starved people" (5.1.294–95) makes Shylock's death and his transformation into a sacrificial host the vehicle of financial salvation for Lorenzo and his "New Christian" wife. The story in

Exodus of the manna found by the Jews in exile becomes, in Christian exegesis of the Jewish Bible, a foreshadowing of the communion host, but as the communion also becomes a reenactment of the blood sacrifice of the crucifixion, it acquires a more disturbing symbolism. When the doctrine that the “bloude of Christ” is the necessary condition for the standard of “mercy” that enables Christian salvation was joined to the infantilization of the figure of Christ in the early modern Church, the communion ritual inspired anxiety over oral-aggressive fantasies of killing and eating the Christ-child. A thirteenth-century preacher explained that Christ did not visibly appear in the communion because it would be too disturbing to the congregation: “Who would like a little child to have his little head, or his little hands, or his little feet bitten off?” Berthold von Regensburg asked.<sup>36</sup> By the end of the sixteenth century, Protestants were able to restrict this suggestion of cannibalism to the Catholic belief in transubstantiation; the Catholics, Reginald Scot charged, “in the end of their sacrifice (as they say) they eat him up raw, and swallow down into their guts every member and parcel of him.”<sup>37</sup>

The substitution of Shylock for Christ, as the sacrificial offering who is devoured by the spiritually purified community, reverses the imaginary construction in the 1593 handbill of “Jews, [who] eat us up like bread,” a reversal that is more than a figure for the permeability of religious traditions. The insertion of Shylock into the role of the sacrificial offering outlines both the rules of the game and the place of the Jews in the compromises between Christianity and commerce that accompanied the transformation of European states into capitalist enterprises. Antonio, Shylock, and Portia all affirm the impossibility of altering the terms of a written contract, even in a life-threatening situation, suggesting that everyone understands that the Venetians are prepared to allow Antonio to die—and they will watch the gruesome execution take place in a public courtroom—in order to preserve the “trade and profit of the city” (3.3.30). This calculation reflects the decision made by the English government in response to the anti-Italian “evil May-day” riots of 1517, when Henry VIII publicly hanged (with “extreme cruelty,” suggesting drawing and quartering) fourteen Englishmen as an assurance to the resident Italian merchants that the full force of the English state would be brought to bear on anyone who interfered with the ability of foreign merchants to do business in London. As Henry well understood, the brutality of this scale of values cannot function as the official state ideology. Several days after the fourteen had been hanged, Henry

brought the other four hundred men and eleven women arrested in the riot to the gallows, where, according to Edward Hall's *Chronicle*, "the prisoners together cried, 'Mercy, gracious lord, mercy.' Then the lords altogether besought his Grace of mercy, at whose request the King pardoned them all." Two other chronicles offer a more dramatic story; in John Stow's *Annales* and in Francis Godwin's history, the pardon ensues from the intercession of three kneeling Queens—Katharine of Aragon and Henry's sisters, the Queens of Scotland and France.<sup>38</sup> Portia's "quality of mercy" (4.1.180) speech, delivered in a feminine persona, is the official statement of values of a system that, when forced to choose, will allow the spilling even of native blood if it is necessary to maintain "the trade and profit of the city."

The figure of the Jew thus serves as a double scapegoat for the Christian-capitalist condominium. The final epithet applied to Shylock, "the rich Jew" (5.1.292), indicates his specific function in carrying off the taint of greed. Shylock is, at this point, possessed of less wealth than Antonio, both by the margin of a yet unspecified fine and by the "life and living" (5.1.286) Antonio has just received from Portia, and Shylock is barred from his former livelihood; he remains, nevertheless, the archetypal "rich Jew." When mercenary excess is assigned to Jewishness, these Christians can revel all they like in their wealth, since the stigma of greed has been carried off by the designated scapegoat. The broader scapegoat function of the Jews derives from their assignment to the role of the Christ-killers. The guilt that accrues to the beneficiaries of a culture based on blood-sacrifice, the killing, dismembering, and eating of the Christ-child, without which "oure synnes [could] no otherwise be forgiven," is displaced onto a group of "aliens," and whenever the system needs venting—whenever blame has to be fixed somewhere for a failure or shortcoming—the guilt of these figures makes them the obvious choice to be made into the sacrifice. Just as Christian-capitalist ideology devises elaborate ways to destroy Shylock and still claim that he brings about his own demise, the demise of Lopez instances the difficulty of playing the Christian game as an alien. The Lopezes went through the entire gamut of choices presented by Christian sovereignties to the Jews within their borders in the early modern period. Rodrigo Lopez came to London about 1559, and he was among the second generation of Lopezes in England; this means that both Rodrigo Lopez and some of his ancestors became Catholics in Spain and then reconverted to Protestantism when they emigrated to England, and yet, in the case of Rodrigo Lopez, he still ended up on



the scaffold being denounced for Jewishness. Whatever the evidence regarding Lopez's actions, the historical record indicates that his partisans—particularly Elizabeth—could not save him because of his identification as a Jew.<sup>39</sup>

Shylock eventually takes the place that seemed to have been prepared for Antonio as he becomes the sacrificial sin offering for the worship of money by the Italians, and Antonio, though he is finally less unlucky than Shylock, slides into the role of the exiled scapegoat in his exclusion from the heterosexual pairbonding of the play's conclusion. His fate, like Shylock's, is laid out by the all-powerful Portia, who articulates the rules of the sexual economy of Belmont as deftly as she explicates the judicial principles of Venice. In her chastisement of Bassanio for having lost "the ring," Portia takes on the most severe aspect of the Blessed Virgin in ballad tradition. As Hyam Maccoby puts it, Mary is "a fearsome figure when her will is crossed," and in Portia's harangue,

If you had known the virtue of the ring,  
Or half her worthiness that gave the ring,  
Or your own honor to contain the ring,  
You would not then have parted with the ring,  
(5.1.199–202)

she takes on the role of a phallic mother disciplining an infantilized Bassanio.<sup>40</sup> She teases Bassanio in terms that do not make literal sense, but which clearly establish the rules of the game from which the "tainted" Antonio is excluded. Portia tells Bassanio, first, that she is sure that "some woman had the ring" (5.1.208); next, that she will be "as liberal as you" (5.1.226); and, finally, that she now has the ring, showing that "the doctor lay with me" (5.1.259). Gratiano's incredulity, "What, are we cuckolds ere we have deserved it?" (5.1.265), does not capture the inconsistency in Portia's logic. Portia's supposed infidelity with the (presumably male) doctor is presented as a reciprocation ("as liberal as you") for Bassanio's tryst with "some woman" (5.1.208), but if the ring was in the hands of a male doctor when Portia next saw it, this would seem to confirm Bassanio's excuse, not to refute it: he says he gave it to a man, and Portia says she received it from a man. For the moment, Portia maintains both of her claims: that the ring could not have been lost unless Bassanio had slept with "some woman," and that in recovering the ring by laying with the doctor, Portia has simply been "as liberal as you." Portia's creation of this "some woman" shows why her story needs this

fictional character. If Portia's male "doctor" had slept with "some woman" to whom Bassanio gave the ring, then the doctor could have received the ring from her (in return for his sexual favors), and Portia from him (in return for hers). Portia's nonrealistic story has a succinct moral: as the ring comes to stand for genitalia, Portia warns Bassanio that if yours goes into circulation, so will mine.

Portia's insistence on the reality of this fictional "some woman," and the audience's immediate understanding of her accusation of Bassanio's heterosexual infidelity, depend upon the presumption of the essentiality of heterosexual desire. Portia constructs the impossibility of what she has just witnessed: that the marital bond could be threatened by a same-sex, rather than an opposite-sex, bond. Where Antonio embodies the possibility of same-sex desire and Gratiano its impossibility, Bassanio is saved for compulsory heterosexuality by the grace of Portia, as the "sin which is not to be named" is silently censored into invisibility. Antonio is protected from antisodomy laws, and from Shylock's fate, through a conspiracy of discretion that does not name his difference from the other Christian characters, but that difference is nonetheless registered in his lack of a partner in the play's conclusion. The taint associated with Antonio's separation from the married couples serves a specific function in assuaging the anxiety about heterosexual fidelity, manifested in the nervous, obscene jokes that permeate the play's final scene and that culminate in Gratiano's final pun on the precarious sanctity of "Nerissa's ring."<sup>41</sup> Leviticus, which provides the story of the scapegoat, is also the source of the Biblical injunction that to "lie with the male as one lieth with a woman" is an "abomination," a passage that is elevated to a dominant position in modern Christianity in delimiting "the unclean from the clean" in matters of sexuality.<sup>42</sup> The Marian cult of virginity is the extreme version of the obsession with sexual purity that informs Portia's lesson to Bassanio, and the threat to the sexual purity of Christian marriage has to be assigned elsewhere, to an alien scapegoat, just as the taint of greed is carried away from the financial behavior of Christians by its stereotypical assignment to Jews.<sup>43</sup> The play does not indicate that Antonio's assignment to his homosexual role is directly derived from his actual sexual practices. There is no suggestion that Antonio has an active sex life; it is only his declaration that he will dispose of the wealth he gained from Shylock to Jessica and Lorenzo, and not to any possible heirs of his own, that secures his separation from the structures of alliance that are formed through bonds of blood and property. Antonio's lack of heirs also reflects the

fate of the usurer in Wilson's *Discourse*, where the merchant finally accedes to the preacher's arguments and acknowledges that "my goods [are] not mine to bestow after my death, if I should die a usurer."<sup>44</sup>

What happens to Antonio is structurally similar to what happened to Jews, like Lopez, who tried to become Christians by changing their behavior and participating in Christian rituals. Since Jews fulfilled the necessary scapegoat roles of embodying both the specific guilt associated with money and the more general guilt produced by a religion that taught its members that their salvation depended upon a blood sacrifice, their conversions were never really trusted; they were always suspected of being "really" Jewish. So with Antonio: his relationships with Bassanio and with other men may not be overtly or actively sexual, but the social obsession with sexual purity means that, for his difference, he is stigmatized and compelled to live the role of an internal exile.

I have tried to suggest here how *The Merchant* fit into a particular cultural moment in London in 1594–1596. The production history of the play has given us a work with a volatile and uneven life on the stage, even down to the present day. The restored Globe Theatre in London presented a *Merchant* in 1998 that was unabashedly partial to the Christians, and, in the participatory space of the Globe, this led to a disturbing response from the audience. As Michael Billington reported in *The Guardian*, "Last Friday afternoon I heard a Jew being hissed in south London. Not . . . at a National Front rally but at a performance of *The Merchant of Venice* at Shakespeare's Globe."<sup>45</sup> The production received mixed reviews, but few reviewers mentioned the unembarrassed anti-Semitism that it courted from the audience. In 1999, possibly in response to the Globe production, Trevor Nunn staged a *Merchant* at the Royal National Theatre that was entirely sympathetic to Shylock and Jessica. The production was a popular and a critical success, and both Nunn and Henry Goodman, whose Shylock oscillated between public urbanity and private rage, won Olivier awards. For all of their differences, both productions took place on the axis described by Sinfield: one was sympathetic to the Christians, the other showed them to be equal to Shylock in ruthlessness. Goodman's Shylock was, in fact, far more ferocious in the trial scene than was Norbert Kenthrup in the Globe production, and his Olivier award reflected his successful realization of the values of realist theater.

The original effect of *The Merchant* cannot be recreated today. English anti-Italian xenophobia is not the force it once was, and the crossdressing of the play's female characters is not a common stage practice. But the response to the most famous of all Shylocks, that of Charles Macklin, may help to indicate how a divisive political effect can be created in an audience, not through a distancing from the play's mimetic force but through an intensification of its realism. Macklin's was, famously, an elementally powerful production. Whether his Shylock was meant to be sympathetic is harder to determine, even from contemporary accounts. Comments like those of Francis Gentleman, who said that Macklin's Shylock is "a most disgraceful picture of human nature . . . subtle, selfish, fawning, irascible and tyrannic," and that "in his malevolence there is a forcible and terrifying ferocity," have led some modern critics to conclude that Macklin "presented Shylock as a detestable monster." Others have concluded that Macklin's Shylock was a "fiercely dignified character" based on such reports as James Boaden's recollection that Macklin "in the trial scene, 'stood like a TOWER.' . . . He was 'not bound to *please*' anybody by his pleading; he claimed a right grounded upon LAW, and thought himself as firm as the Rialto."<sup>46</sup> These two accounts are not easy to reconcile; in one viewer's memory, Macklin's Shylock is "subtle, selfish and fawning"; in another's recollection, he "stood like a TOWER."

Macklin did a good deal of research for his role. He spent time with the Jews of London, he read extensively in Flavius Josephus's *History of the Jews*, and he commented on his reading in his commonplace book: "Jewes Their history an instance of human uncertainty—from the Creation to the Flood—in Egypt leaving it . . . go thro the history of it—act the great characters."<sup>47</sup> He wore a red hat in his production because he learned that the Jews of Venice had worn red hats, and he undoubtedly knew why they wore them: Venice required the hats in order to mark Jews as Jews when they traveled in the Christian part of Venice. It is easy to find a basis for Macklin's interest in Shylock's Jewish background. "Macklin" was born Charles McLaughlin or Melaghlin in County Donegal, and first appeared on a Drury Lane playbill as "Mechlin." He chose a less ethnic name for himself when he arrived in London, apparently feeling that it would be helpful to his theatrical career if he were less obviously Irish.<sup>48</sup>

Macklin's experience of passing in London undoubtedly informed his characterization of Shylock, and the response he provoked

suggests that an unsentimental Shylock can be more disturbing than a sympathetic one. Macklin was best remembered for the trial scene; his power was realized not in the appeal “Hath not a Jew eyes” (3.1.52–53), but in the indecorous challenge to the justice of Venetian law: “You have among you many a purchas’d slave” (4.1.90). Slavery was an institution that produced categorical distinctions between Christians and others. In early modern Europe, the Catholic church insisted that only non-Christians could be enslaved, and Venetian Jews could not own slaves; the Church objected to the symbolism of a Jew exercising dominion over anyone, even an African, but it did not object to slavery as long as it was practiced by Christians over non-Christians.<sup>49</sup> As Shylock points not at an individual moral failure but at how inequities are enshrined in law, he makes difference not a matter of spirit but of the distribution of material power based on accidents of birth—Christians over Jews, Jews over slaves.

The motive for the derogation of Macklin’s Shylock into something subhuman is supplied by George Lichtenberg’s contemporary account of the performance: “The sight of this Jew,” he writes, “suffices to awaken at once in the best regulated mind, all the prejudices of childhood against this race.”<sup>50</sup> In some parts of his audience, Macklin’s Shylock revived the fear of the Jewish bogeyman that was used to scare children, while others seemed to understand the brutality of the character as a matter of aesthetic necessity. This polarity of responses, from fear to admiration, indicates that Macklin, in producing an unapologetic Shylock, displaced the question of whether Shylock was to be sympathetic or unsympathetic, and instead demanded of his audience a recognition of the human face of a sociological effect. The aesthetic effect of the play then comes to depend, in a manner that Brecht would appreciate, almost entirely on one’s political beliefs. We have a modern genre that is able to produce a similar polarization in our cultural moment. Gangsta rap asks not for sympathy but for a recognition that a member of a social underclass is capable of “better[ing] the instruction” (3.1.66) he receives from the dominant society about the worthlessness of some people’s lives. The popularity of gangsta rap, and the relative scarcity of works emanating from African-American culture pleading for white people to be nicer to black people, suggest that Shakespeare and Macklin accurately captured a powerful response to being racially stigmatized and assigned second-class citizenship on that arbitrary basis.

The sort of stereotyping that produces Shylock's difference as "an inhuman wretch" is familiar in American political rhetoric. When young people who live in inner-city ghettos are apprehended for violent crimes and show little remorse, the media is apt to echo Shakespeare's Doge in telling us that they seem to lack "human" feeling. By the point that Shylock pursues what, even he recognizes, is "a losing suit" (4.1.62) against Antonio, he has gone beyond trying to improve his own life; he can only imagine dragging his antagonists down to the level to which he has been reduced. Young people who live in ghettos often ascribe their indifference to the deaths of their victims to the fact that they have seen friends their own age die. They don't see why you should be exempt from what happened to their friends. Neither does Shylock.

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#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, "Marlowe, Marx and Anti-Semitism," *Critical Inquiry* 5 (1978): 294.

<sup>2</sup> Alan Sinfield, *Cultural Politics-Queer Reading* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), 6.

<sup>3</sup> Walter Cohen describes the play as "of a piece with [an] international pattern of development" in which "absolutism served the interests of the neofeudal aristocracy against those of all other classes, in the epoch of western Europe's transition from feudalism to capitalism" ("*The Merchant of Venice* and the Possibilities of Historical Criticism," *ELH* 49 [1982]: 783). Michael Ferber argues that "it is precisely the ideological conjunction of heroic adventure and bourgeois merchant adventuring" that Shakespeare "frankly celebrate[s]" ("*The Ideology of The Merchant of Venice*," *English Literary Renaissance* 20 [1990]: 462).

<sup>4</sup> Bertoldt Brecht, *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic*, ed. and trans. by John Willet (New York: Hill & Wang, 1964), 192.

<sup>5</sup> R. B. Wernham and J. C. Walker, *England under Elizabeth 1558-1603* (New York: Longman, Green, 1932), 219.

<sup>6</sup> The "good Parliament" of 1376 appealed to Edward III for the expulsion of all Italian merchants (William Longman, *The History of the Life and Times of Edward III*, 2 vols. [1869; reprint, New York: B. Franklin, 1969], 2:262); another parliamentary petition for restraint of "Marchaunds Straungers Italyans" was set aside by Henry VI in 1455, after which London apprentices and servants launched anti-Italian riots in 1456 and 1457 (Alwyn Ruddock, *Italian Merchants and Shipping in Southampton* [Southampton: Southampton Univ. Press, 1951], 163-65). The "evil May-Day" riot of 1517 was precipitated by the abandonment of an English merchant by his wife who set up housekeeping with a Lombard trader (Martin Holmes, "Evil May-Day, 1517: The Story of a Riot," *History Today* [1965]: 642-50).

<sup>7</sup> William Shakespeare, *The Arden Shakespeare: The Merchant of Venice*, ed. John Russell Brown (New York: Random House, 1964), 1.1.40. Hereafter cited parenthetically by act, scene, and line number.

<sup>8</sup> James Shapiro, *Shakespeare and the Jews* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1986), 185.

<sup>9</sup> Edward Coke, *The Third Part of the Institutes of the Laws of England*, 3rd ed. (London: J. Flesher, 1660), 58.

<sup>10</sup> Thomas Wilson, *A Discourse Upon Usury* (1572), ed. with an introduction by R. H. Tawney (New York, A. M. Kelly, 1963), 205.

<sup>11</sup> Bruce Smith, *Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare's England* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1994), 18.

<sup>12</sup> Shapiro, 72; Alan Bray, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England* (London: Gay Men's Press, 1982), 72–74.

<sup>13</sup> William Camden, *The History of the Most Renowned and Victorious Princess Elizabeth*, 4 vols. (London: M. Flesher, 1688), 4:484.

<sup>14</sup> The Perez affair and the pursuit of the Attorney General's position are intertwined in vol. 1 of *Memoirs of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth*, ed. and compiled by Thomas Birch from Anthony Bacon's papers and originally published in 1754 (reprint, New York: AMS Press, 1970), 160. This has led to speculation among historians about the connection between the two matters. See Paul Johnson, *Elizabeth I* (New York: Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, 1974), 371; Perez Zagorin, *Francis Bacon* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1998), 13; and Lisa Jardine and Alan Stewart, *Hostage to Fortune: The Troubled Life of Francis Bacon* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1999), 161.

<sup>15</sup> Zagorin, 13.

<sup>16</sup> Francis Bacon, *The Works of Francis Bacon*, ed. James Spedding et al., 14 vols. (New York: Garrett, 1968), 8:322–23.

<sup>17</sup> Bacon, 8:278.

<sup>18</sup> Jonathan Goldberg, *Sodomities: Renaissance Texts, Modern Sexualities* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1992), 142.

<sup>19</sup> Joseph Pequigney, "The Two Antonios and Same-Sex Love in Twelfth Night and *The Merchant of Venice*," *English Literary Renaissance* 22 (1992): 202, 215.

<sup>20</sup> Seymour Kleinberg, "The Merchant of Venice: The Homosexual as Anti-Semite in Nascent Capitalism," *Journal of Homosexuality* 8 (Spring/Summer 1983): 120.

<sup>21</sup> Bray, "Homosexuality and the Signs of Male Friendship," *History Workshop Journal* 29 (1990): 10 ("personal not mercenary"), 15 ("bribes of the one"), 8 ("orderly 'civil' relations"; "subversive behavior").

<sup>22</sup> Bray, "Friendship," 2.

<sup>23</sup> Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction* (New York: Vintage, 1980), 43.

<sup>24</sup> For the role of the concept of blood purity in producing "racial antisemitism," see Jerome Friedman, "Jewish Conversion, the Spanish Pure Blood Laws and Reformation: A Revisionist View of Racial and Religious Antisemitism," *Sixteenth-Century Journal* 18 (1987): 3–29; see also Norman Roth, *Conversos, the Inquisition and the Expulsion of the Jews from Spain* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1995), 229–37.

<sup>25</sup> John D. Rea, "Shylock and the Processus Belial," *Philological Quarterly* 8 (1929): 311–13.

<sup>26</sup> Geneva Bible, Matthew 27:25. All biblical quotations are from the facsimile of the 1560 edition of the Geneva Bible (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1969).

<sup>27</sup> Hyam Maccoby, *The Sacred Executioner: Human Sacrifice and the Legacy of Guilt* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1982), 154–62.

<sup>28</sup> William Tyndale, “A Prologe in to the Thirde Boke of Moses, called Leviticus,” *The Pentateuch* (Antwerp, 1530). No pages given.

<sup>29</sup> See Shapiro (113–30) for the history of this fantasy.

<sup>30</sup> Noted by Ferber, 463.

<sup>31</sup> Leviticus 17:14, 6:27.

<sup>32</sup> Cecil Roth, *A History of the Jews in England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), 79.

<sup>33</sup> Norman Roth, *Conversos*, 223.

<sup>34</sup> Brian Pullan, *The Jews of Europe and the Inquisition of Venice* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), 125.

<sup>35</sup> Pullan, 308.

<sup>36</sup> Hermann Strack, *The Jew and Human Sacrifice* (London, Benjamin Blom 1971), 34.

<sup>37</sup> Shapiro, 110.

<sup>38</sup> Holmes, 642 (“evil May-Day”), 648 (“extreme cruelty”).

<sup>39</sup> David Katz, *The Jews in the History of England, 1485–1850* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1994), 49–106. Katz is confident of Lopez’s guilt, but Elizabeth not only resisted Essex’s initial prosecution of Lopez, she brought him out of imprisonment in the Tower to attend her in an illness after his conviction. She also delayed his execution to the point that her counselors warned of “dishonour and scandal” to the Crown if it were not soon carried out (*Calendar of State Papers Domestic, 1591–1594*, vol. 3 of *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reigns of Edward VI, Mary, Elizabeth, James I, 1547–[1625]* [Nedeln, Liechtenstein: Kraus Reprint Ltd., 1967], 460). These events are nicely summarized by Margaret Hotine in “The Politics of Anti-Semitism: *The Jew of Malta* and *The Merchant of Venice*,” *Notes and Queries* (1991): 35–38.

<sup>40</sup> Maccoby, 161.

<sup>41</sup> Russell J. Meyer, “Keeping Safe Nerissa’s Ring,” *American Notes and Queries* 16 (1978): 67.

<sup>42</sup> Leviticus 18:22, 10:10.

<sup>43</sup> As Judith Butler puts it, “The performative ‘queer’ operate[s] alongside, as a deformation of, the marriage vow”; *Bodies That Matter* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 226.

<sup>44</sup> Wilson, 379.

<sup>45</sup> Michael Billington, *The Guardian* (1 June 1998): 13.

<sup>46</sup> Francis Gentleman, quoted in Toby Lelyveld, *Shylock on the Stage* (Cleveland: Western Reserve Univ. Press, 1960), 27 (“disgraceful picture”); and Edward A. Parry, *Charles Macklin* (London: Kegan Paul, 1891), 67 (“malevolence”). Bernard Grebanier, *The Truth About Shylock* (New York: Random House, 1962), 326 (“presented Shylock”). Matthew J. Kinservik, “A Sinister Macbeth: The Macklin Production of 1773,” *Harvard Library Bulletin* 6 (1995): 56 (“fiercely dignified”). Lelyveld, 31 (“trial scene”).

<sup>47</sup> William Appleton, *Charles Macklin: An Actor’s Life* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1960), 46.

<sup>48</sup> Philip H. Highfill, Jr., Kalman A. Burnim, and Edward A. Langhans, vol. 10 of *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors, Actresses, Musicians, Dancers, Managers & Other Stage Personnel in London, 1660–1800* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1984), 2, 4.

<sup>49</sup> Pullan, 75.

<sup>50</sup> George Lichtenberg, quoted in Lelyveld, 31.