

THE TURN TO RELIGION IN EARLY MODERN ENGLISH STUDIES*

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When the New Historicist scholar Stephen Greenblatt recently published a book on Purgatory as well as an essay and two book chapters on the Eucharist, (1) clearly something new was afoot in early modern English studies. Religion was once again at the center in interpretations of early modern culture. Not that religion had ever disappeared as a subject of inquiry in the field, for the prominence of such authors as Spenser, Donne, Herbert, and Milton and the religious politics of the Civil War era guaranteed that a large body of work continued to be produced dealing with religious subject matter, conflicts, and culture. (2) And, of course, the vexed question of Shakespeare's religion never stopped stimulating discussion inside or outside the academic world.

Perhaps it is safer to say that interpretation of religious material and contexts never really ceased in early modern literary study but rather that they had just been pushed somewhat to the side by most New Historicists and cultural materialists, who pursued other topics and, when they dealt with religious issues, quickly translated them into social, economic, and political language. Typical of this era was the Group for Early Modern Cultural Studies, a scholarly organization drawing participation mostly from scholars who began their careers in the 1980s and 1990s. In announcing its first conference in 1993, it defined itself in the following way:

The impetus for this new group grows out of a need for an Interdisciplinary organization that spans the Early Modern period and is interested in the way issues such as race, class, gender, the body, sexuality, science, nationalism, and imperialism are being reshaped by recent work in critical and cultural theory.

The rubric of cultural studies enables us to encompass a variety of disciplinary fields and theoretical approaches, among them anthropological, rhetorical, historical, literary, economic, legal, and sociological studies, as well as feminist, materialist, multiculturalist, gay/lesbian and bisexual, and other directions in political and aesthetic theory. (3)

Nowhere in this list of topics and approaches does one find religion, even though the Marxist critic Fredric Jameson has acknowledged religion as the "master code" of early modern culture. (4) Evidently early modern cultural studies did not, at least initially, want to deal with this lingua franca. Scholars approach the topic of religion utilizing different critical methodologies and adopting different stances. Those historians and literary scholars who have discussed religious material in political analyses of early modern texts and history (e.g., Christopher Hill and those Marxist critics who write about the English Civil Wars as an "English Revolution") (5) approach religion and politics as religion as politics. (6) They adopt the stance of analytic observers who know how to decode religious language and ideas as mystifications of economic, political, and social conditions and relationships, usually assuming that religion itself is a form of "false consciousness."

There is often a relentless "presentism" in political readings of early modern culture. The otherness of early modern religious agents and culture(s) is translated into (for us) more

*JACKSON, Ken; MAROTTI, Arthur F.. The Turn to Religion in Early Modern English Studies. *Criticism*, Vol.46(1), p.167-190, 2004.

acceptable modern forms conformable to our own cultural assumptions. For example, Civil War religious sects are portrayed as socialist revolutionaries *avant la lettre*, radical female preachers as modern feminists. While this approach to religion has produced some astute political criticism in recent years, it has, with regard to religion, distorted our sense of the large and alien cultural landscape of early modern England. In literary studies that position texts in the context of intellectual history, we find a large body of work that extends the long line of cultural criticism that has its roots in philology and history-of-ideas scholarship. (7) Most notably Debora Shuger, more than anyone else, has forced professionals in the field to take seriously religious beliefs, ideas, and history. (8) In her most recent book, *Political Theologies in Shakespeare's England: The Sacred and the State in "Measure for Measure,"* (9) she distinguishes between political theory as a secular vantage point and "political theology" as a way of thinking about the relationship of the sacred to the political in human affairs: she respects the cultural otherness of a mind-set that may be uncongenial both to modern secular humanists and Marxist interpreters. (10) In her series of impeccably researched intellectual-historical studies, she has reminded the rest of the field not only that religion was central to early modern culture but also that to treat religion as "false consciousness" or as an outdated vocabulary for individual or social experience is a form of scholarly and cultural myopia that distorts our understanding. That the first of her books was published in Greenblatt's University of California Press series, *The New Historicism: Studies in Cultural Poetics*, is an indication both of the indeterminacy of New Historicism as a method and of the reemergence of religious cultural studies as a lively practice. The main weakness of her approach is that of intellectual history generally – its tenuous relationship with particular socioeconomic and political contexts and with those actualities of lived experience that a finely articulated social and cultural history should address.

The renewed historical interest in religion has accompanied the growth of cultural history as a critical practice, including that special branch constituting the "history of the book." (11) Some historians, such as Kevin Sharpe, have argued for the value of an interdisciplinary expansion of the body of materials historians examine to include literary texts and other forms of artistic representation.¹² Sharpe has recommended a broadly based cultural-historical approach to religion in the early modern period: "The subject of religion in seventeenth-century culture and politics calls out for ... an interdisciplinary approach. Historians are only just beginning to explore religion as a visual, sensual and emotional experience – as opposed to a theological system or polemical sermon.... A broader, more contextualized history of religion is also needed to elucidate the relationship of religious to other discourses – political and social, classical and pagan, amorous and sexual." (13) In calling for historical attention to the aesthetic, the literary, and the senses in human experience, Sharpe acknowledges the need to incorporate the imagination and the physical in cultural-historical analyses.

Writing before the appearance of Peter Lake's *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat: Protestants, Papists, and Players in Post-Reformation England*, (14) Sharpe commended that historian for attempting the kind of interdisciplinary study he recommends, and he praises the work of such literary scholars as Michael Schoenfeldt, Elizabeth Skerpan, and Thomas Corns for demonstrating the value of literature and other kinds of rhetoric as historical evidence. (15) He insists that, in the early modern period, "Religion was not just about doctrine, liturgy or ecclesiastical government; it was a language, an aesthetic, a structuring of meaning, an identity, a politics." (16) It was also certainly a deep psychological and emotional experience, a core moral commitment, a personally and socially crucial way of transvaluing human experience and desire, a reality both within and beyond the phenomenal world. This and much else, depending on where one looks on a spectrum of human experience running from cool rationality to impassioned devotion and mystical rapture.

The discussion of post-Reformation English culture had certainly been modified in the last thirty years by the work by historians reexamining the neglected history of English Catholicism – a phenomenon that is beginning to have a strong impact on literary study. (17)

The Whiggish master narrative of English religious history, which John King has followed in his studies of the Protestant tradition(s) in early modern literary texts, (18) depicted a country ready for the Reformation, burdened with a corrupt late-medieval Church and an under-educated clergy: resentful of the power and wealth of the English monastic establishments, resistant to domination by a distant papacy, and ready for a spiritually invigorating and more democratically dispersed scripturally based religion. (19) In this account, even if there were heavy-handed disciplinary measures taken by those at the top of the political and ecclesiastical hierarchies to install Protestantism, ordinary believers were basically receptive to the changes. Historians such as Eamon Duffy and Christopher Haigh, by emphasizing the vigor of residual Catholic culture through most of the sixteenth century, called this model into question, depicting the Henrician, Edwardian, and Elizabethan Protestantizing of England as an imposition from above of a religious order to which most of the population was resistant. (20) Although Patrick Collinson and others have offered necessary correctives to this new view in their nuanced accounts of early English Protestantism, the challenge to the old account of the English Reformation posed by Duffy, Haigh, John Bossy, (21) and others has forced scholars to take a fresh look at a hitherto marginalized English Catholicism and at an English Catholic subculture that persisted through the early modern period – despite the inevitable decline in the numbers of Catholics practicing the "old religion" in a country that mandated attendance at services in local Protestant churches, required the Protestant catechizing of children, prevented the publication of Catholic books, fined and persecuted Catholics, and either killed or exiled the Catholic missionary priests attempting to minister to the underground Church. There is a lively debate now between those who see grassroots receptivity to religious reform and those who argue that English Protestantism was essentially a top-down imposition.(22)

In addition to questioning the Protestant/Whig master narrative, historians and literary scholars have addressed one of its underpinnings, English anti-Catholicism. Peter Lake, Carol Weiner, and Robin Clifton wrote groundbreaking essays. (23) Scholars have, of course, acknowledged that anti-Catholic language and codes were utilized not only in polemical struggles between English Protestantism and Roman Catholicism but also, within the English Church, in conflicts between conservative and radical Protestants as well as (especially in Restoration England) in political conflicts between Crown and Parliament.

Some recent literary scholars not driven by confessional biases have reexamined early modern English Catholicism and anti-Catholicism, particularly Alison Shell, Raymond Tumbleson, and Frances Dolan.²⁴ Shell, who is interested in examining "the formulation of a various and distinct Catholic consciousness" (25) between 1559 and 1660, skillfully relates a number of literary texts to their religious contexts. Tumbleson, who concentrates on the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, brings a real passion to his revisionist efforts, and he makes it clear how deeply anti-Catholicism has been ingrained in English culture. Dolan's study deals best with the issue of gender and religion in seventeenth-century England; she is especially perceptive with regard to the feminization of Catholicism in Protestant discourse.

Work such as Dolan's on English Catholicism has extended feminist historical study into new territory. For a long time, historical feminist scholarship, while eager to celebrate such Protestant women as Catherine Parr and Anne Askew, kept a distance from Catholic women other than the socially iconoclastic Aphra Behn – that is, until Margaret Ferguson and Barry Weller's edition of Elizabeth Cary's tragedy *Mariam* appeared (along with the life of this courageous Catholic aristocratic woman), (26) and Cary could then be made to conform to a model of resistant gender politics – as, later, could the martyred Margaret Clitherow and the activist Mary Ward. (27) Lower-profile Catholic women, especially nuns, were not deemed worthy of attention because they didn't conform to modern expectations about the most commendable forms of female agency. (28)

The reexamination of English Catholicism has helped to internationalize the context of early modern English history and literature. In a pan-European context, the period from the start

of the Reformation through the mid-seventeenth century was one of religious warfare on an international scale. A focus on religion in early modern England thus invites us to make connections between English cultural dynamics and this larger context. Of course, the Marian exiles, later Catholic exiles, and the exiled Stuart court during the Interregnum are all factors in this, but in a more general way, English religious conflicts and developments are inseparable from Continental religious and political struggles from Luther's time forward. The international reach and presence of the Jesuit order certainly registered strongly in the English cultural imagination. (29) The presence of a French Catholic queen, Henrietta Maria, in Caroline England, for example, made this context immediately relevant to English affairs. (30) The historian Jonathan Scott, in *England's Troubles: Seventeenth-Century English Political Instability in European Context*, (31) reminds English historians that an insular approach to early modern English history and culture is too narrow for rigorous historical analyses (as are all Whiggish narratives of English nationhood). Brad Gregory's study of martyrdom in a general European context, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe*, (32) puts the experience of English Catholics in its proper setting.

There are important differences, however, between the way most historians do cultural history and the way literary scholars approach the project. The latter give more attention to the rhetoric of what is said, the former to the content of the rhetoric (usually by way of summarizing it in their own words). Literary scholars attend more to the ideologized fantasy material in a culture, while historians usually betray a discomfort with imaginative creations and prefer ideas and documentary evidence. This said, it should be noted that the historian and historiographical theorist Michel de Certeau, who concedes that "[t]he imaginary is part of history," (33) certainly bridges the gap between the two disciplines, as do a number of other historians, especially methodologically self-conscious ones who write in the wake of the historiographically sophisticated work of Hayden White and those other scholars who have responded to the emphasis on theory in the last third of the twentieth century. Peter Lake, for example, concludes his long study of post-Reformation English culture, *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat*, by characterizing it as "a book about representation and fantasy performance and polemic." (34) In this work he treats Elizabethan and Jacobean plays as historical data to be used to write "a form of cultural history with at least some of the politics left in it." (35)

Lake presents a series of studies of early modern English religious culture in relation to a number of canonical and noncanonical, dramatic and nondramatic works that were part of the larger religious discourses of the time. He deals with the religious culture of English Protestantism in the context of a number of genres, including murder pamphlets, "godly" sermons, scaffold speeches, and plays. In looking at the connections, for instance, between providentialist murder pamphlets, sermonical jeremiads, and the drama, he notes the ways some playwrights, such as Shakespeare, problematize the tropes and conventions of the more naive forms of social critique. In this study, Lake gives most attention to the drama, whose religious coordinates he identifies. And it is this literary form that has, perhaps, received the most attention in the turn to religion in early modern literary studies – not the least reason being the tantalizing ambiguity of Shakespeare's religious attitudes and background. (36)

The New Historicists Greenblatt and Louis Montrose have argued that the drama appropriated the "charisma" of religion for secular ends – religious mystification becoming theatrical magic. (37) This approach assumes the "secularization thesis" – that is, the contention that there was, in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, an accelerating process of secularization taking place in English culture in which issues and conflicts traditionally expressed in a religious vocabulary also came to be formulated in other language(s). (38) This interpretation allowed literary critics to continue viewing the theater as a basically secular institution set at a distance from passionate religious concerns and conflicts. With the turn to religion, however, scholars such as Huston Diehl, Donna

Hamilton, Jeffrey Knapp, Lawrence Clopper, and Michael O'Connell have argued for an ongoing, intimate relationship between the drama and the religious culture(s) of the age. (39) Diehl, attending especially to Protestant iconoclasm and "iconophobia," (40) sees many of the dramatists of the age critiquing the culture of the image associated with the "old religion" and instructing their audiences in how to perceive critically those modes of representation associated with Catholic ceremonialism, devotional practice, ritual, and magic. Hamilton, aware of the proscription against dealing with contemporary religious conflict, argues (not always convincingly) for an allegorical presence of particular religious controversies in several Shakespeare plays, with that author taking a basically Protestant point of view in Catholic-Protestant struggles. In *Shakespeare's Tribe: Church, Nation, and Theater in Renaissance England*, Jeffrey Knapp explicitly challenges the standard hypothesis that the stage grew increasingly secular over time by arguing that playwrights, including Jonson and Shakespeare, took seriously the religious/didactic potential of the theater and stressed the emphasis Christianity placed on charity and community. Much like the state church, the playwrights sought to avoid conflict over doctrine, often adopting a Pauline "all things to all men" philosophy in the hopes of promoting the Christian mission. This middle-ground position antagonized Puritan anti-theatricalists, who despised this moderation and produced the moderate "secular" feel of many of the plays. The book is particularly good on the history plays, stressing England's need to reformulate a Christian universalism at home, having broken with the larger Christian world. But religion is not religion in this book; it is politics, and, not surprisingly, a tolerant, communitarian politics. The playwrights' "Christianity" involves only religion as a political model for social harmony. For example, the book does not discuss any transcendent desires, any personal relationship with God, any mysticism. In stressing this tolerant "religion," the book avoids such religiously charged plays as *Titus Andronicus*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Othello*, *Timon of Athens*, and *Cymbeline*. And for all its discussion of Paul, it neglects *Richard III* (whose title character curiously prays to St. Paul). In short, the book at least challenges the notion of a "secular stage," assumes some positive content for religion, and offers some suggestive readings of hardened positions on the history plays. But its intellectual payoff is disappointing.

Lawrence Clopper's *English Festive Culture in the Medieval and Early Modern Period* bridges the gap between medieval and early modern studies and is, consequently, much more persuasive than Knapp's study in explaining the supposedly "secular" stage. Clopper suggests that our whole narrative involving the evolution from a religious drama to a secular drama is false because the "two" forms of drama developed separately. Religious theatrical activity was one thing, he asserts, "ludi" or play another. In the medieval world, no one would have confused the "theater" of the liturgy with distinctly other ritualized forms of "play." Nor would anyone have worried much about confusing the two. The "secular" drama developed from the latter (ludi), not the former (religious liturgy and ceremony). His philology is so old-fashioned as to be new, analyzing terms such as "theatrum" and "ludi" and convincingly suggesting we have misread the medieval world and have thus dramatically misconstrued Shakespeare's secular stage. If he is correct, the critical question of Shakespearean drama is, in fact, reversed: one must ask not how Shakespearean drama got so secular so fast but rather how it got so much religion as it did. Anti-theatricalists complained, perhaps, not because of the turning of the sacred to the profane but because of making the profane more sacred. Clopper is successful, it seems, because he does not assume a secular teleology.

Similarly, Michael O'Connell's *The Idolatrous Eye: Iconoclasm and Theater in Early-Modern England* is an important and rewarding study because it is willing to look for religion rather than how religion was superseded. And, like Clopper, O'Connell carefully reconnects the Renaissance English stage to its medieval roots, in his case by tracing a line of "incarnational" thinking from earlier times into the post-Reformation era. For example, O'Connell helps explain the notorious violence of the Elizabethan and Jacobean stage by

linking it to the violence done to Christ's body on the medieval stage, a violence itself stemming from twelfth-century incarnational revisions in Christianity. Like the historians Eamon Duffy and Christopher Haigh, O'Connell highlights aspects of a residual Catholic culture within the new English polity, (41) respecting the religious sensibilities of early modern Christians in ways alien to the dominant modes of political criticism. He is particularly persuasive in discussing a residual, Catholic visual culture that we need to "look" for on the stage rather than "read" in texts. We suffer, he hints, from a latent Protestant iconophobia.

The anthropologist Mary Douglas's complaint about what she calls the "anti-ritualist prejudice" inscribed in the work of British (Protestant) anthropologists, the inability to appreciate the fact that "it is impossible to have social relations without symbolic acts," (42) applies to most studies of early modern English literature and culture. A Protestant aesthetic of "less is more," Enlightenment rationality, and cultural-materialist abstraction have combined to denigrate or ignore what O'Connell has called the "incarnational aesthetic" of the older, but residual, Catholic culture whose "symbolic residue" was everywhere in early modern England. His use of the work of sophisticated contemporary Medievalists such as Carolyn Bynum and Sarah Beckwith suggests that some of the ways scholars of the earlier period have dealt with religious culture might profitably be imitated by those in the field of early modern studies.(43) In fact, O'Connell's study proves that early modern specialists need to reconnect with medieval culture in order to make better sense of what happens in the post-Reformation era. By the time of the reign of the second Stuart king, Charles I, however, there was a sufficient alienation in Protestant England from a Catholic aesthetic to set apart Queen Henrietta Maria and her preferred artistic, performative, and devotional modes as foreign. (44)

Having mapped some of the terrain of the turn to religion, it is perhaps now useful to speculate more specifically on what prompted this turn, a turn that seems to mark something new in early modern study but which quite clearly still occurs largely within a New Historical context. Given that, we might begin again with Greenblatt's own turn suggested at the outset. In the first of the two chapters of *Practicing New Historicism* devoted to Eucharistic issues, Greenblatt (drawing on the meticulous work of several art historians) offers a detailed reading of Joos van Gent's Communion of the Apostles and the accompanying narrative painting serving as its praedilla, Paulo Uccello's *Profanation of the Host*, to explain a pernicious projection of doubts about and opposition to official Eucharistic doctrine onto Jews as scapegoated others, who are then mercilessly persecuted. In the second chapter, Reformers' ridicule of Catholic Eucharistic beliefs and superstitions provides the route to an interpretation of a key Shakespearean text, Hamlet, and serves as an illustration of three of Greenblatt's contentions about the importance of the Eucharist for understanding early modern culture:

first, most of the significant and sustained thinking in the early modern period about the nature of linguistic signs centered on or was deeply influenced by eucharistic controversies; second, most of the literature that we care about from this period was written in the shadow of these controversies; and third, their significance for English literature in particular lies less in the problem of the sign than in what we will call "the problem of the leftover," that is, the status of the material remainder. (45)

The first two claims are by far the more important, and the last takes some peculiar explaining. Foucault's epistemic distinction between a culture of iconicity and a culture of representation, of course, lies behind much of what Greenblatt is saying. Greenblatt's chapters on the Eucharist and the effects of controversies about the Eucharist on the literature and culture of the early modern period, despite their attention to theological issues

and religious practices, do not really represent a dramatic turn to religion by this New Historicist scholar critic. Rather, they provide an opportunity to examine new ethnographic curiosities that are part of a larger cultural text and that shed light on modes of representation – both familiar New Historicist concerns. Greenblatt, once again, tries to define the center from the margins, less interested, for example, in eucharistic beliefs themselves than in their effects on the mistreatment of medieval and early modern Jews. He seems most interested in theological writing about the Eucharist when it provides satiric, curious, or comical arguments and examples; he does not really take religious culture seriously, but rather approaches it as a cabinet of curiosities. (46)

There is a potentially productive irony here. While New Historicism is famously difficult to define as a critical method, one can say that all New Historicist criticism organizes itself around a claim to respect alterity, otherness, and difference, whether that be a marginalized group in a culture or the distant past itself. The titles of the method's two seminal works, Greenblatt's *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* and Richard Helgerson's *Self-Crowned Laureates*, (47) point to this concern with the same or "self's" potentially violent engagement with the "other." But the productive irony revealed by the turn to religion is that the dominant anthropological "self" of New Historicism tends to render religion an alien other or makes that other over in its own image. In contrast, to return to our primary example, Debora Shuger locates her observations in a much richer field of religious writing and articulates more fully the intellectual traditions that Greenblatt only raids for selective booty.

The turn to religion can be understood as part of an ongoing dialectic that generated New Historicism itself. *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* and *Self-Crowned Laureates* were seminal texts in part because they brought the language of alterity; the fashionable French phenomenological or postphenomenological version of it, to early modern studies in an explicit and influential manner. Their early discussions of alterity or "otherness" in early modern studies limited themselves mainly to historical examinations of how one culture "othered" another culture or how one part of a culture "othered" another part of the same culture for purposes of "self-fashioning" or political dominance. Illuminating this process of othering – creating a version of difference between oneself and other beings or cultures that benefits only the self/same – thus became the methodology of early modern studies. As this methodology has been employed, however, its limited engagement with its philosophical roots gradually has become more visible. Indeed, we would suggest the turn to religion in early modern literary studies and New Historicism is prefigured by a turn to religion in the French Continental philosophy that informs it.

Greenblatt's rather specific critical interest in alterity and the subsequent calls from New Historical scholarship to respect alterity, in fact, derive largely from the "ethical" direction provided by Emmanuel Levinas's response to Husserl's phenomenology. For Husserl, the "other" self confounded his efforts to establish the individual consciousness as the creator of meaning. In short, if an individual consciousness determines meaning in the world, how does one account for "others" also determining meaning? I cannot make sense of the "other" ego trying to make sense of me without transforming that other into part of my same/or self. For Husserl, this was an epistemological problem: How can one understand or know the other knowing ego? (48)

In his *Theorie de l'intuition dans la phenomenologie* de Husserl (1930), however, Levinas gave this "epistemological" problem of otherness an ethical inflection that persists in much critical thought, including Greenblatt's New Historicism. (49) The other ego that cannot be known became not only a gap in my understanding, an unanswerable problem that complicates my ability to ground all understanding in individual consciousness as phenomenology sought to do, but the other as other ego (autrui) that exerts an ethical call on me that must be addressed. (50) For Levinas, responsibility for the other – the ethical – precedes questions of knowing or even questions of Being. Ethics precedes epistemology or ontology. The self is itself determined by the very encounter with alterity. The ethical encounter with the other brings the subject into being. In one sense, this ethical move by

Levinas solves the previously irresolvable problem of self/other relations. Because the ethical encounter with alterity precedes even subjectivity, the problem of the self-obliterating alterity of the other dissolves because the "other" is there in the "self" from the start. The aporia of self/other relations, in short, disappears. But Levinas's suggestion that the "other" is there from the very beginning – in some sense originary or foundational – ultimately tends only to reconstitute the "other" as another name for being, another logos, rather than solve Husserl's phenomenological problem. Quite simply, knowing or responding to the "other" is impossible and must remain an aporia that we approach and respect rather than solve.

Jacques Derrida explained years ago "that alterity had to circulate at the origin of meanings" and, therefore, "the Greek thought of Being forever has protected itself against every absolutely surprising convocation." (51) According to Derrida, Levinas underestimates not only the elusiveness of alterity but the degree of respect for alterity already present in earlier thinkers. Soren Kierkegaard, for example, whom Levinas critiques for privileging the same, "had a sense of the relationship to the irreducibility of the totally other, not in the egoistic and esthetic here and now, but in the religious beyond of the concept, in the direction of a certain Abraham." (52) In other words, Kierkegaard's reading of Abraham and the alterity of the absolutely other puts him closer to Levinas's thought than Levinas would allow. Levinas habitually differentiates himself from Kierkegaard, Hem de Vries points out, by insisting on the "trans-descendence" of alterity. (53) The "other" for Levinas always involves the other individual in a "face-to-face" encounter. This does not negate the infinitely other, the absolutely other, the religious other – "God, for example" –but for Levinas that absolutely other always leaves its trace in the "other" as other individual (54) Derrida's sustained critique of Levinas, however, reveals that this distinction between the "other" and the "absolutely other" (God), the distinction between Levinas and Kierkegaard, cannot hold. (55)

This latent religious content in critical thought and discussions of alterity has troubled many. From a much different – critical and materialist – perspective, French philosopher Alain Badiou repeatedly has pointed out the disturbing proximity of our Levinasian "ethics" to Kierkegaardian "religion." Because Levinas's efforts to locate alterity in the other individual – the face-to-face – always returns to the same or self,

[t]he phenomenon of the [Levinasian] other (his face) must then attest to radical alterity which he nevertheless does not contain by himself. The Other, as he appears to me in the order of the finite, must be the epiphany of a properly infinite distance to the other, the traversal of which is the originary ethical experience. This means that in order to be intelligible, [our Levinasian] ethics requires that the Other be in some sense carried by a principle of alterity which transcends mere finite experience. Levinas calls this principle the "AltogetherOther," and it is quite obviously the ethical name for God.... To put it crudely: Levinas's enterprise serves to remind us, with extraordinary insistence, that every effort to turn ethics into a principle of thought and action is essentially religious.... Ethics is a category of pious discourse. (56)

"Whether [we] know it or not," Badiou writes, and whether we like it or not, it is this Levinasian ethical/religious strain of twentieth-century phenomenology that underwrites much of early modern studies' critical interest in alterity. Unlike Derrida and Levinas, however, very few in early modern studies have any specific interest in the aporia between self and other that prompts our New Historical interest in alterity. We have little interest in the impossibility of knowing the "other." Indeed, we access the incarnate "other" – the

"Turk" or the "Moor," for example – quite easily in almost every monograph, albeit with an appropriate rhetoric of reticence that approximates Levinas's post-Derridean attempts to avoid the language of ontology. Most practitioners of early modern studies remain blithely unconcerned or unaware that deconstructive thought still wrestles with the aporia of self/other relations and has undergone its own explicit and complex turn to religion as a result. While the "linguistic" turn in philosophy provided by Derrida in the 1970s and 1980s had a profound impact on early modern literary studies, the "religious" turn of Derrida in the 1990s has gone largely unnoticed and, for us, consequently, alterity remains undertheorized. We have been, in brief, cafeteria critics of alterity.

The turn to religion in early modern studies suggests, perhaps, that we are coming to the point where we recognize the impossible demand of the "other" embedded in French phenomenology – a demand itself now embedded in New Historicist methodology. Drawing on Continental philosophy, New Historicism seeks to address the "other," but this same philosophical tradition insists that doing so is "impossible." Early modern studies only began to recognize this impossibility inherent in its own methodology when religion became an issue. Shuger, for example, never denied the New Historical desire to address the "other"; she only suggested that the method wavered in its critical faith when it came to religion, transforming religion into politics or culture, and ignoring its alterity. In one sense, Shuger and others pointed out that if we were going to address the alterity of the Renaissance, we would have to fully address religion. But Renaissance religion resists our alterity criticism and thereby reveals the aporetic, philosophical problems hardwired into New Historicism and its organizing respect for alterity, its desire to "speak with the dead." Somewhat paradoxically, the resistance Renaissance religion poses to alterity criticism has spurred, rather than slowed, our historicizing of religion, pushing us, tempting us, it seems, to realize the aporias of our own methodology.

Consequently, the methodology that sought to respect the difference of a distant past actually reveals our proximity to the early modern world, narrowing the gap between the secular and the sacred. Here it might be helpful to return again briefly to Levinas. If Derrida in part derives his understanding of alterity from Levinas, we need to keep in mind that Levinas derives his understanding of alterity from Descartes's very Catholic, Christian notion of the infinite. Descartes, Levinas writes in *Totality and Infinity*, discovered "a relation with a total alterity irreducible to interiority, which nevertheless does not do violence to interiority – a receptivity without passivity, a relation between freedoms." (57) Descartes's idea of the infinite, in other words, provides a model for Levinas's absolutely "other" outside the thought of the subject.

Robert Bernasconi and Simon Critchley point out that Levinas's idea of "the ethical relation to the other has a formal resemblance to the relation, in Descartes's *Third Meditation*, between the *res cogitans* and *infinity of God*. What interests Levinas in this moment of Descartes's argument is that the human subject has an idea of infinity, and this idea, by definition, is a thought that contains more than can be thought."(58) The more secular advocates of Levinas, who fear his work will be tainted with "religiosity," stress that this is merely a "formal relation" and that Levinas "transforms" Descartes's understanding of the infinite as God – that is, "substitutes" the other for God.

But Derrida, at least, still has troubling and intriguing questions about the nature of this "transformation" and "substitution" that we should attend to more carefully. Derrida reminds us that our desire for the other may not be that distinguishable from the early modern world's desire for the "other." In other words, the turn to religion – in critical theory and in the hyper-historicizing of early modern literary studies – suggests that we may still be more "religious" than we wish to be – even in our most secular of critical methodologies. Julia Reinhard Lupton has been particularly astute in addressing the "religion" of our critical methodology. For example, she has become increasingly persuasive in cautioning against the tendency to extract religion from our critical discussion, pointing particularly to our "multicultural humanist" habit of viewing the "Christian" or "Jewish" world as "cultures."

This late-twentieth-century tendency arose in part, Lupton points out, to avoid the universalizing impulses of Christian humanism and its most immediate descendant, secular liberalism. For example, criticism steeped in secular liberalism often reads Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* as a piece of irony, its anti-Semitism only a superficial facade that actually demonstrates the flaws of the Christians in the play. This kind of criticism, in other words, has the seemingly unassailable agenda of obliterating differences between Christian and Jew. Lupton reminds us, however, that obliterating differences in this way reinvigorates a certain Pauline universalism (Galatians 3:16) and reveals the "religious" roots of our critical methodology.

Reading with respect for the "other," as in an "other" culture, then, does not necessarily absolve one from dealing with the problem of religion in history, or in our own criticism; on the contrary: reading with respect for the "other" culture simultaneously may efface and reinforce religious impulses in our supposedly secular work. As Lupton writes,

Christianity and Judaism are too often constituted as two competing "cultures," without the idea of culture-as-ethnos itself being traced back to its exegetical foundations in the historical conflict of the two religions.... This failure to frame dialectically the terms of contemporary cultural analysis in relation to their exegetical foundations severely limits our historical and theoretical comprehension of the ethno-political field of Shakespearean drama as well as its later effects in modern discourse of races, culture, and ethnicity. (59)

Lupton's willingness to "dialecticize the terms of contemporary cultural analysis in relation to their exegetical foundations" has allowed, for example, profound reconsiderations of the character of Othello. (60) Read through the Pauline exegesis that certainly informed Shakespeare, Othello can be considered a "black Gentile of the universal church," his skin color less of a problem in the playwright's imagination than the (other) possibility that he might have converted from – and return to – Islam. The play, then, is more about religious divisions than racial ones. Othello, and Shakespeare, struggle in the "Moor's" final moments with the necessary conversion to Christianity that informs the play. The play is not able to realize completely the final conversion it imagines. Lupton's work, in turn, puts *Othello* back into a dialectic with *The Merchant of Venice*, something called for by Gil Anidjar in his provocative introduction to Derrida's *Acts of Religion*, and *The Arab, Jew*, (61) in that few can be satisfied with the Christian conversions in that work either. Read together, these plays suggest a very "Pauline" Shakespeare, writing two rigorous letters to the cosmopolitan Venetians, seeking, but not realizing, Christian universalism. Shakespeare, like our contemporary criticism, struggles with the relation between "self" and "other"; he struggles to engage the other, the Jew and the "Muslim/moor," without subsuming the other within the self or same. Lupton reminds us that such a struggle is "religious," a problem inherent in Pauline universalism, in particular, but a problem inherent in any religious attempt of the self to engage the alterity of the divine without anthropomorphizing that divine.

Lisa Freinkel's *Reading Shakespeare's Will: The Theology of Figure from Augustine to the Sonnets* brilliantly complicates and extends some of Lupton's work, reminding us that, years before Shakespeare, Martin Luther struggled, too, with Pauline universalism, realizing that the Pauline demand to transcend the "flesh" for the "spirit," the particular for the universal, is "impossible." (62) The human simply cannot obtain the alterity of the divine in the manner suggested by the "upward" trajectory of Catholic thought. One cannot love or "give" perfectly like God. (63) In that, Luther devastates a whole "theory of textuality and a rationale of textual authority" identified by the ancient term "figura." This tradition ranges from Paul to Augustine to Petrarch, and it assumes that the concealed presence of the "New" can be read in the figures of the "Old." This perspective involves not mere allegoresis but rather an

entire "thematics of reconciliation" whereby the old is understood to prefigure the new, the flesh is understood to prefigure the spirit, the particular is understood to prefigure the universal, the law is understood to prefigure love, the Jew is understood to prefigure the Christian.

According to Freinkel, Luther replaces these thematics of reconciliation with the "unsettling oscillations of ambivalence." More specifically, Freinkel writes, "in place of a dualism resolved over time, Luther will argue for an unending and irresolvable tension" between all these binary oppositions.(64) While Freinkel does not put it this way, one could say Luther performs a partial deconstruction of Catholic Christianity, interrupting its teleological direction. And this "deconstructed" Christianity, in turn, informs and generates much early modern literature. Freinkel concludes, for example, that the "Janus-like ambivalences" of *The Merchant of Venice*, its (as Richard Halpern puts it) anti-Semitism and anti-anti-Semitism, stem from this Lutheran gesture, this Lutheran insistence that the alterity of God cannot be realized, that the aporia of self and other be respected. (65)

Religion, then, is not just another field for anthropological investigation or political decoding. There are ethical and philosophical issues at stake in the newer criticism addressing religious culture and history that point to the need for serious and sustained self-reflection in our own postmodern approaches to the early modern era. A good example of the critically self-conscious and productive merger of deconstructive and historicist methods is Lowell Gallagher's analysis of the complexities of casuistical discourse and thinking which points both to the epistemic shifts in English culture and to the kinds of textual indeterminacies and problematic modes of signification to which deconstruction has alerted us.(66) Clearly, the deconstructive response to Enlightenment rationality has opened up religious culture and religious study to new (but perhaps also old?) forms of apprehension and interpretation.

While we should not turn to religion in our studies of early modern literature and culture the way that a much earlier and more naive generation of Whiggish ethnocentrists or Catholic apologists did, with belief systems governing the selection of evidence, the choice of texts deemed worthy of attention, and the results of interpretation, we should not take a smugly rational stance in approaching the religious culture(s) of an earlier era either but rather respond deeply to the interplay of defamiliarizing experiences and familiar knowledge. Greenblatt, who displays an aesthetic and intellectual aversion to the kind of rationalistic move he depicts in William Tyndale's dismissal of the Catholic invention of Purgatory as "a poet's fabled," (67) seems caught between an awareness of the line of reasoning that can depict all religion as "poetry" (68) and his aesthetic, emotional, and intellectual appreciation of this extra-rational sector of experience (which he sees the drama of Shakespeare and his contemporaries appropriating from organized religion).

Greenblatt cannot quite jettison Hamlet's ghost, as it were, and neither should any of us. One way to negotiate the tension between these two opposing responses embedded in Greenblatt's work is to address Derrida, deconstruction, and its strange "religion without religion." While the New Historicist Greenblatt seems unaware of it, *Hamlet and Purgatory* approximates the deconstructive gesture made by Derrida in *Specters of Marx*. (69) There Derrida also turns to Hamlet and Hamlet's ghost, and he relies on Shakespeare to create a word, "hauntology," that helps describe the irreducible space between religion as anthropological residue and as something absolutely other. (70) Although, from one point of view, this might be an example of *savvy nescience*, it is a space that some scholars and critics are beginning to occupy as they readdress religion, religious traditions, religious culture, and religious agents in their studies of the early modern era – a period that is and is not like our own. To quote Derrida quoting Shakespeare, "Thou art a scholar; speak to it Horatio." (71)

NOTES

(1.) Stephen Greenblatt, *Hamlet in Purgatory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); idem, "Remnants of the Sacred in

- Early Modern England," in *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture*, ed. Margreta de Grazia, Maureen Quilligan, and Peter Stallybrass (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 337-45; see also the discussion of the Eucharist in Catherine Gallagher and Stephen Greenblatt, *Practicing New Historicism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 75-109, 139-62. The first work has been criticized by (among others) Sarah Beckwith in "Stephen Greenblatt's Hamlet and the Forms of Oblivion," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 33, no. 2 (2003): 261-80.
- (2.) See, e.g., Richard Mallette, *Spenser and the Discourses of Reformation England* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997); Meg Lota Brown, *Donne and the Politics Of Conscience in Early Modern England* (Leiden: Brill, 1995); Ramie Targoff, *Common Prayer: The Language of Public Devotion in Early Modern England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001); and Mary Ann Radrinowicz, *Milton's Epics and the Book of Psalms* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989).
- (3.) This statement can be found in the announcement of the group's first scholarly conference:
- (4.) Fredric Jameson, "Religion and Ideology: A Political Reading of Paradise Lost," in *Literature, Politics, and Theory*, ed. Francis Barker (London: Methuen, 1986), 40.
- (5.) See, e.g., Christopher Hill, *The Intellectual Origins of the English Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965); idem, *Antichrist in Seventeenth-Century England* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971); idem, *The English Bible and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution* (London: Allen Lane and New York: Penguin, 1993); David Norbrook, *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance*, rev. ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Leo F. Solt, *Church and State in Early Modern England, 1509-1640* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); Peter McCullough, *Sermons at Court: Politics and Religion in Elizabethan and Jacobean Preaching* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Lori Anne Ferrell, *Government by Polemic: James I, the King's Preachers, and the Rhetorics of Conformity, 1603-1625* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998); Nigel Smith, *Perfection Proclaimed: Language and Literature in English Radical Religion, 1640-1660* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989); and David Loewenstein, *Representing Revolution in Milton and His Contemporaries: Religion, Politics, and Polemics in Radical Puritanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
- (6.) David Aers and Sarah Beckwith, "Introduction: Hermeneutics and Ideology," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 33, no. 2 (2003): 211, have remarked: "In contemporary criticism, religion is apt to be seen as politics in another guise, and the task of political criticism will be to deliver the medieval or early modern text from its own illusions, to complete the partial insights which it had not the language to say in its own time."
- (7.) See, e.g., Richard Strier, *Love Known: Theology and Experience in George Herbert's Poetry* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983); Linda Gregerson, *The Reformation of the Subject: Spenser, Milton, and the English Protestant Epic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Achsah Guibory Ceremony and Community from Herbert to Milton: *Literature, Religion, and Cultural Conflict in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); and Reid Barbour, *Literature and Religious Culture in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
- (8.) Debora Shuger, *Habits of Thought in the English Renaissance: Religion, Politics, and the Dominant Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); idem, *Sacred Rhetoric: The Christian Grand Style in the English Renaissance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988); idem, *The Renaissance Bible: Scholarship, Sacrifice and Subjectivity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); and idem, *Political Theologies in Shakespeare's England: The Sacred and the State in "Measure for Measure"* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave, 2001). See also such recent collections of essays as Claire McEachern and Debora Shuger, eds., *Religion and Culture in Renaissance England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); and Donna B. Hamilton and Richard Strier, eds., *Religion, Literature, and Politics in Post-Reformation England, 1540-1688* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
- (9.) Shuger, *Political Theologies in Shakespeare's England*.
- (10.) For a rich study of "political theology" and political crises in the period, see Richard C. McCoy, *Alterations of State: Sacred Kingship in the English Reformation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).
- (11.) Certainly the interest in the history of the book, given great impetus by the work of such scholars as Elizabeth Eisenstein and Roger Chartier, has had an effect on the attention paid to early modern religion: Eisenstein, e.g., highlights the traditional association of print and Protestantism in *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early-Modern Europe*, 2 vols. (London: Cambridge University Press, 1979). Chartier's influential work includes *The Cultural Uses of Print in Early Modern France*, trans. Lydia Cochrane (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987). One is not surprised to find that the first two chapters of the recently published volume of the Cambridge history of the book in Britain are devoted to religious publishing: *The Book in Britain*, vol. 4, 1557-1695, ed. John Bernard and D. E. McKenzie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 29-93.
- (12.) Kevin Sharpe, *Remapping Early Modern England: The Culture of Seventeenth-Century Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 3-38. Sharpe cites such works as J. S. Morrill's "The Religious Context of the English Civil War," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., 34 (1984): 155-78; and Patrick Collinson, *The Religion of Protestants* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982).
- (13.) Sharpe, *Remapping Early Modern England*, 389-90.
- (14.) Peter Lake, with Michael Questier, *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat: Protestants, Papists, and Players in Post-Reformation England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).
- (15.) Sharpe praises Michael Schoenfeldt's *Prayer and Power: George Herbert and Renaissance Courtship* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Elizabeth Skerpan's *The Rhetoric of Politics in the English Revolution* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1992); and Thomas N. Corns's *Uncloistered Virtue: English Political Literature, 1640-1660* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).
- (16.) Sharpe, *Remapping Early Modern England*, 12.
- (17.) This study was made easier with the appearance of two invaluable scholarly resources: the appearance of the 394-volume series of facsimile texts under the editorship of D. M. Rogers, *English Recusant Literature* (Menston, England: Scolar Press, 1968-79); and Anthony Alison and D. M. Rogers's bibliography, *The Contemporary Printed Literature of the English Counter-Reformation between 1558 and 1640*, 2 vols. (Aldershot, England: Scolar Press, 1989-94).
- (18.) John King, *English Reformation Literature: The Tudor Origins of the Protestant Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982); idem, *Tudor Royal Iconography: Literature and Art in an Age of Religious Crisis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989); idem, *Spenser's Poetry and the Reformation Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990); and idem, *Milton and Religious Controversy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). See also John Knott, *Discourses of Martyrdom in English Literature, 1563-1694* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). Most of the scholarship on John

Foxe and John Bunyan fits within the Whig master narrative.

(19.) For a traditional Whig/Protestant view of the period, see A. G. Dickens's *The English Reformation*, 2nd ed. (London: Batsford, 1989).

(20.) See, e.g., Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400-1580* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992); Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations: Religion, Politics, and Society under the Tudors* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993); idem, "The Continuity of Catholicism in the English Reformation," *Past and Present* 93 (November 1981): 37-69; idem, "The Church of England, the Catholics and the People," in *The Reign of Elizabeth*, ed. Christopher Haigh (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1984), 195-219, 284-85; and idem, "Success and Failure in the English Reformation," *Past and Present* 173 (November 2001): 28-49.

(21.) See, e.g., John Bossy, *The English Catholic Community, 1570-1850* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1975).

(22.) However, Ethan H. Shagan's recent book, *Popular Politics and the English Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), tries to solve the conflict by arguing that the Reformation in England involved a complex process of negotiation between state authorities and the people.

(23.) Peter Lake, "Anti-Popery: The Structure of a Prejudice," in *Conflict in Early Stuart England: Studies in Religion and Politics, 1603-1642*, ed. Richard Cust and Ann Hughes (London: Longman, 1989), 72-106; Carol Weiner, "The Beleaguered Isle: A Study of Elizabethan and Early Jacobean Anti-Catholicism," *Past and Present*, no. 51 (May 1971): 27-62; and Robin Clifton, "The Popular Fear of Catholics during the English Revolution," *Past and Present*, no. 52 (August 1971): 23-53; Michael G. Finlayson, *Historians, Puritanism, and the English Revolution: The Religious Factor in English Politics before and after the Interregnum* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983), 79-158. See also the essays in *Catholicism and Anti-Catholicism in Early Modern English Texts*, ed. Arthur F. Marotti (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999); and *Catholic and Anti-Catholic Discourses in Early Modern England*, ed. Arthur F. Marotti (South Bend, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005).

(24.) Alison Shell, *Catholicism, Controversy, and the English Literary Imagination, 1558-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Raymond Tumbleson, *Catholicism in the English Protestant Imagination: Nationalism, Religion, and Literature, 1600-1745* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); and Frances Dolan, *Whores of Babylon: Catholicism, Gender and Seventeenth-Century Print Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999). See also idem, "Gender and the 'Lost' Spaces of Catholicism," *Journal of Interdisciplinary Study* 32, no. 4 (2002): 641-65; and Ceri Sullivan, *Dismembered Rhetoric: English Recusant Writing, 1580-1603* (Madison, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press and London: Associated University Presses, 1995).

(25.) Shell, *English Literary Imagination*, 10.

(26.) Elizabeth Cary, *The Lady Falkland, The Tragedy of Mariam The Fair Queen of Jewry, with The Lady Falkland Her Life by one of her Daughters*, ed. Barry Weller and Margaret W. Ferguson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994). See also Elizabeth Cary, *Lady Falkland, Life and Letters*, ed. Heather Wolfe (Cambridge, England: RTM Publications, 2001).

(27.) The best discussion of Margaret Clitherow is found in Anne Dillon, *The Construction of Martyrdom in the English Catholic Community, 1535-1603* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2002), 277-322. See also Arthur F. Marotti, "Alienating Catholics in Early Modern England: Recusant Women, Jesuits, and Ideological Fantasies," in *Marotti, Catholicism and Anti-Catholicism in Early Modern English Texts*, 5-9; and Megan Matchinske, *Writing, Gender, and State in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 53-85. For a discussion of Mary Ward, see Henriette Peters, *Mary Ward: A World in Contemplation*, trans. Helen Butterworth (Leominster, Herefordshire: Gracewing, 1994); and Lowell Gallagher, "Mary Ward's 'Jesuitesses' and the Construction of a Typological Community," in *Maids and Mistresses, Cousins and Queens: Women's Alliances in Early Modern England*, ed. Susan Frye and Karen Robertson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 199-217.

(28.) Many studies have now turned to this group of neglected early modern women—including Deborah Aldrich-Watson's edition of Constance Aston Fowler's commonplace book (*The Verse Miscellany of Constance Aston Fowler: A Diplomatic Edition* [Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, for the Renaissance English Text Society, 2000]) and Heather Wolfe's study of the Benedictine nun Barbara Constable, as well as Jane Stevenson's essay on "Catholic Women and Latin Culture" (both in *Catholic Culture in Early Modern England*, ed. Ronald Corthell, Frances Dolan, Christopher Highley, and Arthur F. Marotti [under review]).

(29.) See Marotti, "Alienating Catholics in Early Modern England," 1-34. See also the influential recent study by John W. O'Malley, *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993); and Thomas M. McCoog, S.J., *The Society of Jesus in Ireland, Scotland, and England, 1541-1588: "Our Way of Proceeding?"* (Leiden: Brill, 1996).

(30.) See the chapter on Henrietta Maria in Dolan, *Whores of Babylon*, 95-156, as well as Caroline M. Hibbard, *Charles I and the Popish Plot* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983).

(31.) Jonathan Scott, *England's Troubles: Seventeenth-Century English Political Instability in European Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

(32.) Brad Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999).

(33.) Michel de Certeau, *The Possession at Loudun*, trans. Michael B. Smith (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), caption for figure 5, between pp. 108 and 109.

(34.) Lake, *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat*, 714.

(35.) Ibid. In her masterful study, *Providence in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), Alexandra Walsham certainly knows how to draw a wide variety of popular literature into a discussion of theologically articulated political issues.

(36.) Two recent publishing projects dealing with Shakespeare and religion have revived an old discussion about the playwright's Catholic background and his possible religious inclinations but have put them in the context of current scholarship on religious culture: Shakespeare and the Culture of Christianity in Early Modern England, ed. Dennis Taylor and David N. Beauregard (New York: Fordham University Press, 2003), and the two volumes drawn from the proceedings of a 1999 conference on "The Lancastrian Shakespeare": *Theater and Religion: Lancastrian Shakespeare and Region, Religion and Patronage: Lancastrian Shakespeare*, both edited by Richard Dutton, Alison Gail Findlay, and Richard Wilson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004).

(37.) See, e.g., Louis Montrose, *The Purpose of Playing: Shakespeare and the Cultural Politics of the Elizabethan Theatre* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 25. Beckwith, in a historically well articulated argument, concludes: "Shakespeare's theater does not represent the supersession and succession of religion, purgatory, and ritual action by a

- disenchanted theater, but the persistence of its historical concerns in the incarnation of performance" ("Greenblatt's Hamlet," 275).
- (38.) See, e.g., C. John Sommerville's *The Secularization of Early Modern England: From Religious Culture to Religious Faith* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).
- (39.) Huston Diehl, *Staging Reform, Reforming the Stage: Protestantism and Popular Theater in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997); Donna B. Hamilton, *Shakespeare and the Politics of Protestant England* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1992); Jeffrey Knapp, *Shakespeare's Tribe: Church, Nation, and Theater in Renaissance England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); Lawrence Clopper, *English Festive Culture in the Medieval and Early Modern Period* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001); Michael O'Connell, *The Idolatrous Eye: Iconoclasm and Theater in Early-Modern England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).
- (40.) See Patrick Collinson, *From Iconoclasm to Iconophobia: The Cultural Impact of the Second English Reformation* (Reading, England: University of Reading Press, 1986). Cf. John Phillips, *The Reformation of Images: Destruction of Art in England, 1535-1660* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973); and Margaret Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, vol. 1, *Laws against Images* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).
- (41.) For a discussion of the symbolic residue of Catholicism in early modern England, see also Elizabeth Mazzola, *The Pathology of the English Renaissance: Sacred Remains and Holy Ghosts* (Leiden: Brill, 1998).
- (42.) Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966), 62.
- (43.) John Cox, "Shakespeare and the Mystery Cycles," in *The Origins of Shakespeare*, ed. Emrys Jones (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 31-84, emphasizes the influence of the dramatization of the Passion in the mysteries on Shakespeare's tragic dramaturgy.
- (44.) See Erica Veevers, *Images of Love and Religion: Queen Henrietta Maria and Court Entertainments* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989). There is a similar problem with the literary-historical fortunes of the poetry of Richard Crashaw, which, because of its Continental, Catholic qualities, did not fit into the "English" tradition. Using a "queer theory" approach, Richard Rambuss, *Closet Devotions* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), connects Crashaw's work to the devotional languages of his time despite the cultural estrangement of Crashaw's work in literary history and criticism.
- (45.) Gallagher and Greenblatt, *Practicing New Historicism*, 141.
- (46.) For a critique of Greenblatt's discussion of the Eucharist and of the shortcomings of New Historicism in relation to religious subject matter, see David Aers, "New Historicism and the Eucharist," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 33, no. 2 (2003): 241-59.
- (47.) Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning from More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980); Richard Helgerson, *Self-Crowned Laureates: Spenser, Jonson, Milton, and the Literary System* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).
- (48.) Husserl's solution to the problem relied on analogy. The "other" is another me, another self, an alter ego. As Levinas points out, however, this analogy, even at its most empathetic, leaves no room for the other as other. To borrow the phrasing of Colin Davis, there is not enough "alter" in the concept of the alter ego. Levinas: *An Introduction* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1996), 26.
- (49.) The crucial Levinasian texts are *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), and *Otherwise Than Being or Beyond Essence*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1974).
- (50.) See Derek Attridge's summary of Levinas in "Innovation, Literature, Ethics: Relating to the Other," *PMLA* 114 (1999): 20-32.
- (51.) Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 153.
- (52.) *Ibid.*, 111.
- (53.) Hent de Vries, *Religion and Violence: Philosophical Perspectives from Kant to Derrida* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press), 147; see also *idem*, *Philosophy and the Turn to Religion* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002).
- (54.) Derrida makes clear that the possibility of God as absolutely other cannot be foreclosed or embraced. See *The Politics of Friendship*, trans. George Collins (London: Verso, 1997): "The event of revelation would reveal not only this or that--God, for example--but revealability itself. By the same token, this would forbid us saying 'God, for example.... Must one choose between these two orders? ... Must one choose between the priority of revelation (Offenbarung) and that of revealability (Offenbarkeit), the priority of manifestation and that of manifestability, of theology and theology, of the science of God and the science of the divine, of the divinity of God?" (18-19).
- (55.) Jacques Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, trans. David Wills (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995). See, in particular, John Caputo, *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida: Religion without Religion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997).
- (56.) Alain Badiou, *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*, trans. Peter Hallward (London: Verso, 2001). Slavoj Žižek recently has joined Badiou in offering a materialist response to the "ethical" or "religious" turn in Continental philosophy. See *The Fragile Absolute--Or, Why Is the Christian Legacy Worth Fighting For?* (London: Verso, 2000) and *The Puppet and the Dwarf: The Perverse Core of Christianity* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003). See also Badiou's *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism*, trans. Ray Brassier (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003). In many ways, this discussion is an extension of the old debate between Marxism and deconstruction. See Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 1995), and the "Marxist" response in *Ghostly Demarcations: A Symposium on Jacques Derrida's Specters of Marx* (London: Verso, 1999) for context.
- (57.) Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 211.
- (58.) Simon Critchley and Robert Bernasconi, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 14.
- (59.) Julia Reinhard Lupton, "Exegesis, Mimesis, and the Future of Humanism in *The Merchant of Venice*," *Religion and Literature* 32, no. 2 (2000): 123-39, quote at 134. Some of these notions were sketched out in Lupton's *Afterlives of the Saints: Hagiography, Typology, and Renaissance Literature* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996).
- (60.) Julia Reinhard Lupton, "Othello Circumcised: Shakespeare and the Pauline Discourse of Nations," *Representations* 57 (Winter 1997): 73-89.
- (61.) Gil Anidjar, ed., *Acts of Religion: Jacques Derrida* (New York: Routledge, 2002); *idem*, *The Jew, the Arab: A History of*

the Enemy (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003).

(62.) Lisa Freinkel, *Reading Shakespeare's Will: A Theology of Figure from Augustine to the Sonnets* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 115.

(63.) *Ibid.*, 116. Lupton's description of Luther's work corresponds to Derrida's discussion of God and the gift in *The Gift of Death*.

(64.) *Ibid.*, 118. We recall that this scholarship corresponds with great advances in biblical scholarship and a significant rise in interest in "historical" Christianity and topics like "Jesus the Jew." See, in particular, Geza Vermes's *Jesus the Jew: A Historian's Reading of the Gospels* (1973; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981); *idem*, *The Religion of Jesus the Jew* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993); *idem*, *The Changing Faces of Jesus* (New York: Penguin, 2000); and E. P. Sanders's *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985) and *The Historical Figure of Jesus* (New York: Penguin, 1993).

(65.) Freinkel, *Reading Shakespeare's Will*, 291; Richard Halpern, *Shakespeare among the Moderns* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997).

(66.) Lowell Gallagher, *Medusa's Gaze: Casuistry and Conscience in the Renaissance* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991). Gallagher is currently working on a new book, "Looking for Lot's Wife: Postmodern Itineraries of a Biblical Figure," a study that explores the relationship of current ethical thinking to our constructions of both the past and the future, the conflict between a "hermeneutics of suspicion" and the need for ethical action, the contradiction between the "radical contingency" of a figure such as Lot's wife and its transhistorical function as a catalyst for thinking about trauma, the possibilities of knowledge, and the problem of "alterity."

(67.) Greenblatt, *Hamlet in Purgatory*, 35.

(68.) *Ibid.*, 47. Beckwith, "Greenblatt's Hamlet," 267, remarks: "Purgatory stands in for the past in this book, but it also stands in for religion itself, a religion that is at once a fiction and organized through the medium of fiction." She sees in Greenblatt's skeptical, rationalistic stance a "profound functionalism" (269).

(69.) Greenblatt alludes briefly to Derrida and *Specters of Marx*, saying only that the philosopher "has many acute observations about the functioning of the Ghost in Shakespeare's play" (*Hamlet in Purgatory*, 297 n. 17).

(70.) Derrida's primary aim in the text is to demonstrate that Marx is inspired by a powerful "messianic" religious desire for enlightenment and liberation, even though Marx himself tried to fully disengage this religious desire, and that we should honor this "ghost" of Marxism. The attempted rapprochement by Derrida was recklessly misread by many. See Sprinker, *Ghostly Demarcations*, and Jameson's most insightful response, in particular.

(71.) The last lines of *Specters of Marx*, 176. One might usefully compare Derrida's concluding citation with the last lines of *Hamlet in Purgatory*, where Greenblatt returns to a characteristic gesture of transforming "religion" into "theater": "He is not, of course, crying out from Purgatory; he is speaking from the stage. And in place of prayers, we offer the actor's ticket to bliss: applause" (261).