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# NEW LITERARIA

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## **Playing the Pirate, Playing the Jew: Refiguring the Other(s) on the Early Modern English Stage**

**Ramit Das**

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### **Abstract**

This paper studies the figure of the pirate and the Jew as evidenced on the early modern English stage. More specifically, it examines the representation of the English pirate, John Ward and his relation with the “renegado Jew”, Benwash in Robert Daborne’s play, *A Christian Turned Turk* (1612). While the play has been exhaustively studied in recent years to explore English attitudes towards Islam and the treatment of piracy, I argue that it also deserves to be considered for its treatment of its Jewish characters. Noting that Benwash is, in some respects, *sui generis* among all the Jewish characters in early modern English drama since he is shown as formally converted to Islam and yet following Jewish customs, the paper draws on a number of similarities between pirates, renegades and Jews, the trifecta of early modern bogeymen perceived as having abandoned all national and religious identity, but constituting self-centred groups devoted to their own welfare. By drawing attention to the numerous points where the actions of the Jew and pirate are merged in this drama, I argue that the Jew acts as a lens through which the action of the pirates could be held up to scrutiny and helps to recalibrate concepts of monarchy, statehood, religion and class at a time when Englishmen were caught up in the flux of national, social and religious hybridity.

**Keywords:** Pirate, Jews, Turk, Renegade, Conversion.

### **Introduction**

In her seminal study of Renaissance piracy, Claire Jowitt (2010) comments that “the widespread phenomenon of piracy in Renaissance culture has not received sustained critical attention” (p. 1). Contending that piracy is a “complex, flexible and multivalent term”, she attempts to explore what she calls “the semantics of ‘piracy’: to understand the reasons why “this term is employed in particular situations, and to examine the grounds for its popularity as a rhetorical tool” (p. 1). Arguing that the figure of the pirate is an especially rich cultural signifier, a flexible rhetorical tool, she examines the public drama, broadsheets and ballads, prose romance, travel writing and poetry of the period to understand how the term ‘piracy’ had begun to play a central role in a wide variety of subjects like factional politics, through imperial ambitions, to questions of national and class identity. In this paper, I build upon the argument of Jowitt and use the figure of the Jew as a lens to explore the various connotations of the pirate in early modern England in the play *A Christian Turned Turk* (Daborne, 1612/2000). This play has garnered a significant amount of critical commentary in recent times. However, most of these discussions have centred on the figure of the Turk in the play, with the Jewish persona mostly remaining a peripheral figure in these analyses (Burton, 2005;

Fuchs, 2001; Jowitt, 2010; Maclean, 2003; Matar, 1993; Vitkus, 2000, 2003). During the composition of *A Christian Turned Turk*, piracy was one of the burning issues in England. Through privateering was common in the Elizabethan period, James I issued a number of royal proclamations against piracy, though this did not have the desired effect. Moreover, piracy was a thorny issue; as Jowitt (2010) says, “the boundary between licit and illicit activity at sea at sea in this period is permeable: one monarch’s ‘pirate’ is, literally, another man’s ‘privateer’” (p. 13). I examine the ramifications that piracy has on the early modern constructions of the nation. Arguing that the pirate posed a threat to the concept of nation as he dwelt in the open sea and was hence not under state control, I examine how pirates like Ward continuously query the notions of nation, nationality and even identity by posing as a sovereign of the sea, as an alternative ruler to the sovereign of the land, the English king. In this play, the dramatist adopts the strategy of aligning the pirate with another despised minority, the ‘renegade’ or ‘renegado/runagate’ in early modern Britain. In consonance with critics like Adriana Streifer (2018), I argue that the word renegade or “renegado/runagate” (these were the words used generally in early modern English texts) does not simply imply religious conversion in the contemporary context but becomes a catch-all term for the exertion of individual agency, deceit, unreliability and religious conversion; anyone can be a renegade. Finally, by teasing out the parallels between renegades and Jews and hence between Jews and pirates in the contemporary popular imagination, this paper explores the ways by which the dramatist opens up the space through which the actions of Ward and other pirates can be scrutinized.

### ***A Christian Turned Turk***

*A Christian Turned Turk* dramatizes the life and adventures of two notorious pirate leaders, the English John Ward and the Dutch, Simon Dansiker. The play begins in Ward’s ship near the Irish coast where he duplicitously forces some merchant sailors to join his crew. On their journey, they come across a ship, a French man-of-war bound for Marseilles. Ward captures it and takes all the crew prisoners. Among them is a young girl named Alizia, who is dressed in male attire and is retained by Ward as his ‘French ship boy’, Fidelio. He is, however, challenged by the captain of the pursuing ship, Francisco, for a share of the booty or else to mortal combat with him. Ward accepts the duel on the deck of his ship. Each of them is impressed by the valour and generosity of the other, and they end with mutual vows of brotherhood. Meanwhile, Gallop, one of Ward’s officers, sails away with the booty and arrives at Tunis, where the action of the rest of the play takes place.

At Tunis, we encounter Dansiker, who has been promised by the French king Henry IV of a pardon provided he abandoned piracy and employed himself in service to the state. Dansiker hits upon the strategy of setting fire to the house of Benwash, the ‘renegado Jew’ (Daborne, 1612/2000, 5.37), an engrosser of goods and persons brought to Tunis so that he can lure the pirates away from the harbor and leave them exposed to his incendiaries. Ward and Dansiker arrive at Tunis and confront Gallop, who claims in his defence that he was captured by Francisco’s crew. In the meantime, both Ward and Dansiker fall in love with Voada, the Turkish sister-in-law of Benwash. Taking advantage of this, the Governor of Tunis persuades Voada to seduce Ward so that he agrees to convert to Islam. Ward agrees to convert to Islam and marry her. However, after his conversion, he returns to his home only to find Voada in love with Fidelio/Alizia. Incensed, he hatches a plot whereby he has her lover killed and wounds her in an altercation. In another sub-plot, Dansiker sets fire to Benwash’s house but when the Jew reaches there, he finds his wife, Agar, committing adultery with Gallop and stung by jealousy, he decides to let the house burn. The fire is ultimately doused by Ward and his men, though not before they find their own ships destroyed. Dansiker is however thwarted in his bid to receive pardon because of the death of Henry IV and the reluctance of the French merchants to forgive him until he agrees to murder Benwash.

Meanwhile, Benwash has managed to kill both Gallop and Agar and his Jewish servant, Rabshake. When he is questioned by the Governor and other officials about the murderer, he wrongfully accuses Dansiker of the crimes. Dansiker plunges his knife into the bosom. Dansiker himself commits suicide as his identity has been revealed. The imprisoned Ward is now brought in. He pleads for one last interview with his wife Voadá. When she arrives, he taxes her with all her crimes. Then he kills her, curses all Ottomans, exhorts others to avoid his course of life, and finally stabs himself. His body is cut into pieces and cast into the sea.

Benwash, the principal Jewish character of the play (the other is his servant, Rabshake) presents some features unique to the Jewish characters in English Renaissance drama. He is presented as a ‘renegado Jew’, i.e. a Jew who has deserted his religion and converted to Islam. However, in spite of being formally converted to Islam, he is regularly addressed as a ‘Jew’ by all the characters in the play, including his Jewish servant. The motive for his espousing Islam is peculiar. As he tells Rabshake,

Thou hast forgot how dear  
I bought my liberty, renounced my law  
(The law of Moses), turned Turk- all to keep  
My bed free from these Mahometan dogs.  
I would not be a monster, Rabshake- a man-beast,  
A cuckold. (Daborne, 1612/2000, 6.73-78).

No doubt the association of Islam with sexual excess and promiscuousness was a commonplace in Renaissance England, but to put such a statement in the mouth of a Jew seems to have been a part of the strategy of the dramatist: it is not only Christians but Jews, who lived in Muslim countries and who were supposed to be impartial observers, who attest to the sexual predations of the Turks. However, it seems that in spite of his conversion, Benwash, like the marranos —Jews who had apparently converted to Christianity but were suspected of professing their Jewish faith in secret— still adheres to his former faith. He visits the synagogue (6.373), and himself reveals the disingenuous character of his conversion before murdering his wife: “I swear as I was a Turk, and I will cut your throat as I am a Jew” (16.75). His constancy to Judaism is further affirmed when in his death throes he declares, “Bear witness, though I lived a Turk, I die a Jew” (16.213). As Burton (2005) says, “Once a Jew, always a Jew it seems; none of the consequences of ‘turning Turk’ seem to apply to the Jew” (p. 199). In another aspect too, Benwash stands out among the gallery of Jewish characters in early modern English drama. As is stated in the beginning, he ‘gives free and open entertain[ment]’ (5.38) to all the Barbary pirates. He buys their booty and their prisoners and sometimes lends money to them when they are in need. In addition to that, he uses his wife and her sister to lure the various pirates to his residence to further his business. More importantly, he, along with his brother-in-law and the governor of Tunis, uses the women to lure the Christians to convert to Islam and thus strengthen the financial and military conditions of the state.

Daborne’s play was based on the two pamphlets, both printed in 1609: Andrew Barker’s *True and Certain Report of the Beginning, Proceedings, Overthrows, and now present Estate of Captain Ward and Dansiker, the two late famous Pirates...* (London, 1609) and the anonymous *News from Sea, Of Two Notorious Pirates, Ward and Dansiker...* (London, 1609). As has been noted, the attitude towards piracy in both these pamphlets was ‘ambivalent’ (Vitkus, 2000, p. 24). While these pamphlets do insist upon Ward’s lowly origin and the moral vices that are usually attributed to Islam, he is also commended for his bravery, resolution and his fortitude in overcoming numerous obstacles and ascending the dizzying heights of success. The *News from Sea* describes his humble origin, “[His] parentage was but

mean, his estate low, and his hope less” (cited in Vitkus, 2000, p. 25). Even more heinous was the fact that he had converted to Islam and “was diverted to most vile actions, clothing his mind with the most ugly habiliments that either pride luxury or cruelty can produce from the blindness of unruly desires” (cited in Vitkus, 2000, p. 26). Yet, such condemnations of Ward are always hedged about with a tinge of awe and admiration, a sense of awe at his meteoric rise from such a lowly position to his most “princely and magnificent” state in the Ottoman empire. As Barker says, “[T]hese last three years... [Ward] is grown the most absolute, and the most undauntedest man in fight, that ever any heart did accompany at sea. And if his actions were as honest as his valor is honorable, his deeds might be dignified in the chronicles with the worthiest” (cited in Vitkus, 2000, p. 24). *News from the Sea* also testifies to the bonhomie between Ward and the Turks, noting that “[his] respect and regard is reported to be such with the Great Turk, as he is made equal in estimate with the Bashaw” (cited in Vitkus, 2000, p. 26).

### Piracy in Early Modern England

Who is a pirate? Burwick and Powell (2015) state that “ ‘Pirate’ is a legal as well as a social term: a true pirate is *hostis humani generis*, the enemy of all humankind, considered to have no nation or national protections, and fair game for anyone who captures him” (p. 16). But such a simplistic definition was problematized in the Elizabethan age since the concept of piracy came to be closely related to privateering. Privateering referred to the practice of armed ships, privately owned or manned, commissioned by the government to attack and capture cargo from enemy ships. During Elizabeth’s reign, this practice of attacking foreign ships, especially Spanish ships from the New World, with the tacit approval of the government, was considered to be a part of England’s imperial ambitions. However, there was no clear-cut distinction between privateers and pirates as “[e]verything depended upon the identities and relative technical advantages of the converging ships. Traders and merchantmen habitually combined commerce and theft” (Vitkus, 2000, p. 30). The Prologue to the play states that “What heretofore set other’s pen awork, / Was Ward *turned pirate*; ours is Ward *turned Turk* [emphasis added]” (Daborne, 1612/2000, Prologue, 8-9). This seems to imply, that other unlike other texts that featured the career of Ward, “this play will feature not the relatively ‘trivial’ crime of turning pirate, ... but rather the damnable, apostatical crime of conversion to Islam that Ward commits in the central scene of the play” (Vitkus, 2000, p. 232). Taking their cue from this point of view expressed in the Prologue, critics have focused more on the theological —the notion of “turning Turk” - than on the economical aspects of piracy in this text. It is only in recent times that critics like Ellinghausen (2018) and Vanwagoner (2019) have tried to redress the balance, arguing that the economic aspects of the play are as important as its theological implications. Jowitt (2010) says, “The representation of piracy in Daborne’s *A Christian Turned Turk* is ambiguous” (p. 144). While she sees the “subtle similarities between the pirate-king’s situation and the anxieties circulating about James’s leadership and personal style of government” and Ward’s story as a “warning to monarchs of the dangers of the consequences of believing their word is law, and of the influence of sensual and sexual counsel”, (p. 144), Ellinghausen (2018) probes the play’s other voices to complicate its moral-nationalist scheme to present Ward as a “reflective, morally conflicted and ultimately tragic figure” (p. 51).

### Renegades in Early Modern England

In his important study of the renegade in the early modern English imagination, Nabil Matar (1993) states that

In England, the renegade developed into an important dramatic type...Unlike the other villains, however, the renegade was heinous because he was the enemy from within: he was no swarthy Moor or contorted Papist or necromancer but an average



Englishman- a sailor, a trader, a traveller- who willfully renounced God and monarch and ‘turned Turk’. (p. 490)

Such a phenomenon was particularly worrying because a) the convert lacked any moral or spiritual anxiety and b) the renegade, after his apostasy, did not suffer divine punishment as a Muslim. This necessitated a new strategy where instead of attacking Islam or the Moor/Turk, the dramatist presented in their work a real or an invented renegade and described the horrid retribution awaiting him or showing him undergoing a spiritual change and his conversion to Christianity. This was necessary to demonstrate Islam’s failure in retaining its converts and the Christian god’s punishment of those who rejected him. Daniel Vitkus (2000) concurs with Matar, noting that “the term ‘renegado’, used in early modern English, is derived from a Spanish form of ‘renegade’ and suggests a particularly Mediterranean phenomenon—the activities of modern European Christians who converted to Islam and lived under Muslim authorities in the Ottoman empire or the Barbary ports of North Africa, though he notes that the term “carried both a political and a religious signification” (p. 233). MacLean (2003) further broadens the scope of the term, arguing that renegadism has a “great deal more to do with *turning* than with either Islam or Turks”; rather it signified the assertion of “a dangerous degree of individual agency in defiance of one’s native country, family, and religion” (p. 228). Barbara Fuchs (2001) adds further nuance to this discussion, speculating that “According to one’s perspective ... renegadoes were thieves, traitors or apostates” and the “figure of the English renegado seemed threatening...mainly in shattering the carefully constructed fantasy of privateering as a way of controlling piracy” (p. 123). Finally, Ellinghausen (2018) observes that the OED defines the ‘renegado’ as “a vagabond, a wanderer, a restless, roving person” who defines the stabilizing norms of his society and situates “the transnational figure of the ‘renegado’ in a history of resistance to domestic oppression” (p. 4). Mark Hutchings (2007) points out that “associating pirates and renegades was both logical and factually accurate: both categories were transgressive, subversive of social political order, and turning to a life of piracy often resulted in close encounters with Muslims which sometimes led to outright conversion” (p. 92).

### **Pirates, Renegades and Jews in *A Christian Turned Turk***

Commenting on the association between Jewishness and renegadism, Adriana Streifer (2018) seeks to redress the lack of discussions on Jewishness in *A Christian Turned Turk* and points out that “Stage Jewishness often exists independently of actual Jewish characters ... and includes vengefulness, atheism, greed, stubbornness, Machiavellian cunning” and points out how the play “elides renegade and Jewish identities in the conversions of Ward (the titular Christian) and Benwash (the renegade Jew)” (p. 32). As she says,

‘Renegado Jew’ reminds us that renegade is a capacious concept: insofar as it is a catch-all term for the exertion of individual agency, deceit, unreliability and religious conversion,...If both the Jews and the English can inhabit this appealing renegade category, then English renegades, now sharing an identity with Jews, can be understood as Jewish. (p. 32)

Although I find her arguments convincing, I would like to build on her insights and push the point a bit further. *A Christian turned Turk* does offer Jewishness as a lens to understand the allures and dangers of renegadism, but more importantly it uses the figure of the Jew as a trope to control, co-opt and shape the disruption in national identity caused by pirates and piracy in the play. Examining the ramifications that the representations of piracy have on early modern constructions of the nation, Christopher Morrow (2006) comments:

In this period, a nation's commercial, martial and imperial goals were often implemented on the open seas. As floating pieces of sovereignty, these ships carried the nation into open seas where it not only interacted with other nations but also was beyond the immediate reach of the state. Pirates exploited this lack of control to work against sanctioned national enterprises of other countries, as well as their own. They posed both a literal threat to nation through the interruption of maritime trade and the loss of wealth. But more importantly, they posed a conceptual threat because on the sea they were free to redefine themselves, their relationship to their nation, and their concepts of nation. Thus, representations of pirates offer an ideal perch from which to witness the instability of constructions of nation and national identity. And, the English pirate Ward, as the subject of numerous representations, becomes an ideal figure to explore the negotiation of nation. (p. 240)

In light of the above observations, it would be logical to infer that a pirate's life beyond the law – and outside the boundaries of conventional European society – creates a potential site for the expression of other unorthodox beliefs and patterns of behaviour. Pirates thus offer a locus for issues regarding constructions of nationality, identity and religion in early modern England, both on the stage and off it.

It is here that the figure of the Jew becomes such a potent tool in the hands of the dramatist. Jews were viewed in early modern England as vagabonds and outcasts, with no nation or dwelling place of their own. Supposed to possess a fierce individualism, Jews in early modern England were seen as forming an inward-looking society of their own, deliberately cutting themselves off from their host countries. Usually considered a parasitical people owing allegiance to no ruler and authority and lacking “the sense of group unity and national defence” that were believed to be the natural traits of any religious or ethnic group, they were supposed to be solely guided by purely individualistic concerns of wealth and well-being, concerns which closely parallel those of the pirates (Morrow, 2006, p. 240). Pirates, too, in their own way, threaten the nation by plundering its riches and by destroying or reducing the nation's ability to conduct maritime trade. More importantly, by severing legal and even economic ties with the nation and by setting up an alternate nation, or anti-nation, based on merit and personal ambition rather than the monarchical model based on birth and status, the pirate becomes a prototype of the Jew, focussing on the accumulation of wealth against the construction of a national identity and possessing no regard for human life. In the remainder of this section, I will focus on the depiction of Ward both as a pirate as well as a ‘renegade’ and try to tease out the various ways by which ‘the Jew’ is used as a trope to prise open a space through which the actions of Ward and other pirates can be scrutinized.

Even before his actual meeting with the Jew Benwash, the play portrays Ward consistently, as Peter Berek (1998) puts it, as “a Tamburlainean overreacher, epitomizing the kind of self-fashioning for which...Jews had become a kind of figure: free of normal social bonds, contemptuous of religion, treasonous whenever it serves his purpose, and impossible to understand because of his duplicity” (p. 156). The very first encounter with Ward associates the English pirate with sovereignty. His subordinate Gismund describes his captain in these hyperbolic terms: ‘Heroic Captain Ward, lord of the ocean, terror of kings, landlord to merchants, rewarder of manhood, conqueror of the Western world’ (1.22-24). His view of the pirate as a sovereign of the sea, as an alternative ruler to the sovereign of the land, in this case the English monarch, is echoed by Ward himself before his encounter with Francisco:

My merit – shall I thrall them? The sway of things  
Belongs to him dares most. Such should be kings,  
And such am I. What Nature in my birth  
Denied me, Fortune supplies. This maxim I hold:

He lives a slave that lives to be controlled. (4.83-87)

If, according to Ward, identity—national, religious or otherwise—is not predetermined, but shaped by an individual’s personal qualities, then it opens up a space whereby identity and nationalism become highly unstable concepts, which are not determined rigidly by birth, religion or status but dependent on time, place and person. Such an anxiety about identity and social position was especially prevalent in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, anxieties that neatly dovetail with anxieties regarding renegades. However, as cultural historians like James Shapiro (1996) have pointed out,

The expulsion of the Jews from Spain and Portugal and their emigration to various parts of Europe including England, the Protestant reformation and England’s break from Catholicism, and the practice of Jewish rites by various radical protestant sects was putting sustained pressure on what had been assumed to be a stable English and Christian identity. The theatre of the time too was obsessed by the possibilities that identity might be willed or chosen and social position achieved by deeds, not birth.... Moreover, emerging ideas about the fluidity of personal identity are closely associated with new entrepreneurship and social mobility. The traditional association of Jews with money-lending and other forms of commercial enterprise makes Jews in Elizabethan England...suitable representations of ambivalent feelings about economic innovation and social change. (p. 130)

Thus, Ward and his companion pirates are shown to be already limned with a patina of ‘renegadism’ and consequently by ‘Jewishness’ even before they land at Tunis and encounter Benwash.

When Benwash makes his entry in the play, accompanied by Gallop, Dansiker and Sares. Rabshake is quick to point out the similarities between them: ‘But see my master, the great thief and the little thieves, the robbers and the receiver’ (6. 34-35). His statement implies that the difference between the Jew and the (Christian) pirate is not one of kind, but of degree (both live by plundering the wealth of others). Only a few lines later, we witness the entry of Ward into Tunis. Once he meets Benwash to sell his booty, the play makes repeated and pointed resemblances between them. When Raymond and his two sons entreat Ward not to sell them to Benwash, and Ferdinand asks him, “Do they not move you, sir?” (6.258), Ward replies, ‘Yes, as *the Jew* [emphasis added]’ (6.259). When Albert and Ferdinand say they would redeem Raymond and his sons by paying their ransom, he becomes so incensed that he decides to sell them too to the Jew. While everyone is astonished that Ward could sell his ‘own fellows’, his ‘countrymen’ who stand ‘conditioned as [him]’ (6.304-5), he justifies his dealings by saying that they are his ‘lawful prize’ (308) and they could betray him to his enemies. This concept of a pirate who is completely unconcerned even about his own comrades and would sell them to further his interests neatly aligns him to ‘the Jew’ as well as the ‘renegade’ who lives solely for his own well-being and is completely indifferent to the communities of which he is a part.

However, it is in his conversion to Islam that the resemblances between Ward the pirate and Benwash the Jew come to the forefront. Immediately after he comes to Tunis, Crossman, Voada’s brother and the captain of the janissaries, decides to use his sister as bait to convert Ward to Islam. As he tells Voada, ‘That’s he in the Judas beard. Use but thy art, he’s thine’ (6.355). Morrow (2006) comments that “[b]y connecting Ward to Judas through his beard, Crossman foreshadows Ward’s conversion and more importantly reveals the ‘use’ to which the Turks want to put Ward” (p. 285). I would contend that by connecting Ward to Judas, the archetype of Jewish perfidy in the Christian imagination, the play implicates Ward

as an arch-betrayer, one who could switch sides and shift allegiances according to the demands of the situation. It is doubtful whether Muslims regarded Judas as the epitome of betrayal as the Christians did; what it clearly demonstrates is that Daborne makes use of the figure of the Jewish Judas to underscore the affiliation between the shape-shifting and treasonous English pirate and the treacherous Jews/marranos of early modern Europe routinely accused of religious duplicity to drive home the horror of the conversion. When the governor of Tunis (himself a Christian turned Turk), Crossman and Benwash gang up to persuade Ward to convert, he is initially reluctant to forsake his religion. However, he is unable to sustain this opposition for long. As the Turks enlist Voada to appeal to his lust, he can no longer control his reason and swears to 'turn Turk' to obtain her. Ward's conversion for the sake of a woman thus has a precedent in the conversion of Benwash. Both of them convert for reasons other than religious belief, i.e. for sexual attraction.

In spite of his conversion, the play constantly voices the doubt that Ward's conversion may not have been sincere. Immediately after the dumb show dramatizing the conversion of Ward, Dansiker, hearing the news, refuses to believe that Ward could forsake his faith so easily. Sares responds, 'I saw him Turk to the circumcision. / Marry, therein I heard he played *the Jew* [emphasis added] with 'em, / Made 'em come to the cutting of an ape's tail' (9.2-4). Vitkus (2000) comments that "Jews, like Muslims, are required to undergo circumcision, and according to the anti-Semitic stereotypes maintained by early modern Christians, Jews were proverbial deceivers and oathbreakers. Thus, Sares is punning on the idea of 'playing the Jew': Ward 'played' (i.e. faked) the part of the circumcised Jew, cheating them of his foreskin" (p. 237). Additionally, it also suggests that Ward is not committed to his new religion since he was not actually circumcised. This possibility is strengthened by the fact that after his conversion, he is scarcely referred to as a 'Turk' by the other characters of the play, though he himself insists that he has become a true Muslim. After his conversion, he is mostly referred to as a 'runagate' (8.21) or a 'false runagate' (13.27, 104, and 15.219). As I have shown, the term 'runagate' or 'renegade' is constantly associated with Jewishness in the early modern imagination, and the application of this epithet to Ward aligns him with Benwash, the 'renegado Jew'. Just as Benwash maintains both identities, Turkish and Jewish, Ward is suspected by the other characters to be maintaining his Christian profession even though he has formally converted to Islam. As Peter Berek (1998) says, '[t]he obvious parallels between Christian and Jew helps define the horror the play wants us to feel concerning the manipulation of identity as a way of advancing in power and wealth' (p. 156).

### Conclusion

The above analysis of *A Christian Turned Turk* illustrates early modern English drama's need for and use of the Jew. In the burgeoning era of Anglo-Islamic trafficking, the Jew is indispensable not only in his cultural function 'as a scapegoat upon whom invective might be poured when anti-alien sentiment ran high or English Christianity seemed particularly unstable' (Burton, 2005, p. 218), but also as a third term which breaks down the binary of Christian and Turk, pirate and privateer, renegade and royal subject in this play. As delineated above, the figure of the Jew in *A Christian Turned Turk* attempts to control, co-opt and shape the disruption in national identity caused by pirates and piracy in the play. 'The Jew' in this play is thus not only the 'Other' against whom the English/Christian can be grounded, rather as 'the master trope of national indeterminacy', he helps to figure 'both transnational fluidity and lend it a provisionally stable identity' (Harris, 2004, p. 61).

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### Bio-note

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