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ABSTRACT

This article turns to Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors* (1594) in order to revise critical accounts of globalization and to propose a contrasting notion of "world" as a function of affective experience, collective narration, and virtual witnessing. Shakespeare's play captures how a newly global imaginary was beginning to disrupt many of the foundations of personal identity and the familiar reference points of the worlds that sustained it. *The Comedy of Errors* acknowledges the integrative effects of a globalizing system while also emphasizing its multiply-centered, regional specificity; Shakespeare models not a single, totalizing globality but a plurality of worlds characterized by continuous rupture, reconfiguration, and an ongoing state of in-betweenness. Not only does the play illuminate a non-Eurocentric view of globalization but it explores the alienation that attends migration and displacement at a global scale and the ways these movements mark the body for violence and refigure the human relationships that bond people together. In doing so, the play reveals an experience of exclusion that is constitutive of race insofar as its somatic determinations follow a logic that is both incomprehensible and absolute. The play also demonstrates how dramatic processes of collective story-telling and mutual witnessing can re-world both subject and community alike, showing us how "globalization" is an histori-cally-contingent iteration of "worlding" that is neither static, inevitable, nor permanent.

I: Globe, World, Region

The advent of "globalization" in mid-sixteenth-century Europe has become a commonplace across many fields of scholarship, which recognizes for the first time trading ventures interconnected over long distances, from Europe to Asia and Africa, and colonization efforts that resulted in a distinctive geographical division of labor and extension of political administration over far-flung territories. Only in the early modern period did capitalism become the first, and still the only, genuine "world-system" of economy, in the words of Immanuel Wallerstein ([1974] 2011, xviii), although it generally goes unremarked that Wallerstein himself distinguished firmly between what he called a "world-system" and the separate idea of the "global."[1] For Wallerstein:

> A world-system is a social system, one that has boundaries, structures, member groups, rules of legitimation, and coherence. Its life is made up of the conflicting forces which hold it together by tension, and tear it apart as each group seeks eternally to remold it to its advantage. It has the characteristics of an organism, in that it has a life-span over which its characteristics change in some respects and remain stable in others. One can define its structures as being at different times strong or weak in terms of the internal logic of its functioning. (347)

We return to Wallerstein's distinctions because scholarship on globalization has tended to subsume his notion of "world" into a concept of global economic relations and to assume an inevitable historical development from the former to the latter. In doing so, this work deemphasizes Wallerstein's insight that worlds are coherent because of their inherent *plurality* — because of the tension, violence, and differential assertions of group power that give them structure — as well as his correlative notion that large-scale world-systems are always more than purely economic relations. Wallerstein himself dates the emergence of a truly "global" network of economic relations only to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Even though "it is vital to remember . . . that Europe was not the only world-economy at the time" and that "there were others" (17), only in Europe did capitalism begin to take root as a genuine world-economy, Wallerstein maintained, because it managed to link across (and exploit) the tissue of institutions, laws, languages, practices, and symbolic representations that give meaning and identity to worlds as living and changing communities beyond their economic life.

Subsequent revisionist work on the emergence of a "global" system by economic historians such as André Gunder Frank, Philippe Beaujard, and Giancarlo Casale has de-linked notions of a "global" consciousness and economic structures from the idea of European modernity by identifying the importance of the Far East, the premodern development of Eurasian and African world-systems in the Indian Ocean, and the power of the Ottomans in what Casale (2010, 12) calls "the opening round of history's first truly global struggle for dominance."[2] Roland Robertson and David Inglis (2006, 41) have pointed to "increasing geophysical, economic, political, social and cultural compression and interdependence of hitherto unrelated peoples and places" in the ancient Greco-Roman world as early as the fourth century BCE, resulting in what they describe as a political and cultural "globality" and accompanying "global consciousness."[3] At the same time, scholarship undertaken from a non-European and postcolonial perspective has questioned the centrality of Europe in globalization and modernization accounts, and especially narratives of temporal progress in which the Third World lags behind the First. Janet Abu-Lugbod (1989), in an influential response to Wallerstein's thesis, identifies a plurality of world-systems taking shape in the late thirteenth century and reaching a peak of prosperity, stability, and power in the mid-fourteenth century, especially in the Middle East and in Asia, and only peripherally in Europe.[4] Shifting attention to the "subaltern pasts" of peasants and tribals as well as that of educated Bengalis, Dipesh Chakrabarty ([2000] 2007, 100) seeks to "provincialize Europe" by bringing the margins to the center, while Sanjay Subrahmanyam (1997, 737) has argued that what we call globalization has "many different sources and roots, and — inevitably — many different forms and meanings."[5]

Literary studies, for its part, has furnished complementary critiques of globalization by drawing a critical distinction between the notions of "globe" and "world," opening

a space between the two concepts in ways that echo Wallerstein's own arguments but redirecting them so that, in writing alternative histories for globalization (as Chakrabarty and Subrahmanyam seek to do) we also begin to imagine the "world" otherwise. In contrast to the reifying, homogenizing, and quantifying effects usually associated with globalization, philosophers such as Martin Heidegger, Hannah Arendt, and Jean-Luc Nancy (2007, 42) and literary critics who follow them, such as Pheng Cheah (2016) and Eric Hayot (2012, 24), identify in the notion of "world" a shared, qualitative environment of common life and common interest that is inseparable from ideas of aesthetic and literary form.[6] Embracing a model of cosmopolitanism that is set in opposition to the hegemonic temporality of global capital, Cheah identifies "a tension between cosmopolitanism and globalization" that maps onto the difference between "world and globe" (12). He seeks to counter global capital's "unworlding" effect by seizing on postcolonial world literature's power to begin "worlding the world otherwise," "reviv[ing] non-Western temporalities" and "build[ing] a shared world in which self-determination is achieved" (17). In this way, Cheah sketches "a modality of cosmopolitanism that responds to the need to remake the world as a place that is *open* to the emergence of peoples that globalization deprives of world" (19, emphasis in original). Ayesha Ramachandran (2017) draws attention to a similar idea of cosmopolitan worldliness in early modern humanist writing that sits in tension with the emerging nationalist identifications and religious conflicts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[7] She sees in Renaissance humanism not only the creation of a world violently wrought by human imposition — taking the form of empirical and imperial conquest and their necessary hierarchies and exclusions — but also a universal world that embraces difference and yet holds to a vision of oneness. This "universalist aspiration," she argues, was forged not only through cartographical, political, and philosophical discourses but was "integrally linked to the literary imagination" (668).

And yet it remains important to retain Chakrabarty's ([2000] 2007) insight that "universalistic thought was always and already modified by particular histories, whether or not we could excavate such pasts fully" (xiv). By distinguishing between a universal (European) history of capital, which Chakrabarty calls History 1, and "the undertow of singular and unique histories" (xvii), which he calls History 2, Chakrabarty attempts "to find a position from which to speak of the losses that globalization causes" (xix). A *longue durée* view of world-systems, in short, need not only emphasize the integrative effects of globalization, for, as Chakrabarty points out, "the margins are as plural and diverse as the centers" (16). In what follows, we aim to expand our understanding of early modern world-making by turning to William Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors* (1594), a play that repeatedly calls attention to the layered history of intercultural conflict and imperial fluctuation that made the Mediterranean a critical region in *longue durée* models of emerging world systems (Braudel [1949] 1995; O'Connell and Dursteler 2016).[8] By presenting a drama set in a temporally-layered Mediterranean region to English audiences, we argue, Shakespeare's play shows us a world-system that is multiply-centered rather than organized around clear "core" and "periphery" zones. As an "inter-imperial" space, to adapt a phrase of Laura Doyle's (2018), the play's geography overlays centuries of accrued geopolitical and cultural fluctuations that span the ancient, medieval, and early modern periods.[9] The play's palimpsested sense of history opens up a spatial horizon that exceeds clear territories and boundaries: the world of the play extends for

more than 1500 miles, from Syracuse in Sicily to Epidamnum on the Adriatic coast, from Corinth in south-central Greece to Ephesus in Turkey. Within this expanse, the play reveals the importance of *regional* networks and concentrations of economic activity, in contrast to a so-called "global" system in which nation-states putatively took a leading role. The imaginary topography of *Errors* is thus distinctive when compared to other geographies we find in Shakespeare: the national imaginary of the history plays, the imperial imaginary of *Antony and Cleopatra* (1607), the hybrid national-imperial topography of *Cymbeline* (1609), the colonial imaginary of *The Tempest* (1611), or the city and town settings of *The Taming of the Shrew* (1594) and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (1600).

Focusing on the play's Mediterranean imaginary, we argue, shifts our understanding of globalization in several ways. First, the space of the play reminds us of a central insight shared by some of the most influential scholars of early world systems, including both Wallerstein and Abu-Lughod: that a capitalist world-system is always constituted by *multiple* political, social, and cultural entities that, although interconnected by economic systems of exchange and divisions of labor, nevertheless retain their own individual coherence. Second, the play demonstrates the importance of *regions* as cultural and territorial areas unto themselves: zones of encounter and conflict, at once geographical and cultural, that exceed political borders and from which world systems at all scales begin to take shape. Although regions usually contain different people and populations, different political systems, different financial systems, and even different languages, they always also retain links among these differences and establish their own particular coherence across them (*OED*, "region," n. I.1.b). Arguing for the theoretical importance of "region" to the study of Shakespeare, Marissa Greenberg (2019) points out that regions

> . . . transcend boundaries — they inhabit borderlands, straddle oceans, yoke cities and farms, and cross sides of (literal and figurative) tracks that separate people according to skin color, language, creed, economic status, and other categories of identification . . . What makes regionalism critical for Shakespeare studies, then, is its spotlighting alternative ways of knowing lived experiences of space, history, and identity. (343–4)

Sometimes "subnational" and at other times "supranational," in the words of Greenberg (343), regions are not only analytically distinct from categories such as nation or empire but depend on an entirely different set of phenomenological experiences, memories, and imagination. Regions are not marginal to a center, nor are they central to a margin: they are worlds unto themselves, always connected to other places but remaining distinct from them. They are maintained through the circulation of people and objects, but also of stories — stories of origin and belonging, of injury and enmity. As cultural as they are topographic or political, regions depend on internal relationships and networks rather than on crisp borders. Their outer boundaries are often porous and indistinct: they are unities of coherence rather than unities of totality.[10]

In *The Comedy of Errors*, the region consisting of Ephesus and its Mediterranean commercial network serves as the immediate horizon for the characters' origins, motives, and possible experiences. Structurally, the region sets the conditions for the play's action and resolution. And in these ways the region also defines the world of the play as one that is neither entirely local nor entirely global; indeed, the regional horizon of the play mediates between these two categories, ensuring that the local always remains permeated

or structured by global relationships and movements but never allowing the global to swamp the identity of the local community entirely. Whereas the "local" is not necessarily closed off from the "global," the "regional" denotes a more porous territory that extends outward at the same time that it is held together by internal linkages (Wilson and Dissanayake 1996; Orkin 2005; Massai 2005).[11] Although the houses, streets, and neighborhoods of Ephesus give the play a distinctly local atmosphere, the play's drama results from the fact that residents of a neighboring community can arrive and be integrated into a world that is totally foreign to them. But at the same time, the ocean that laps at the port of Ephesus might bring anyone and anything from anywhere; its extension is potentially infinite, over a horizon that extends beyond the immediate locale of Ephesus and also beyond the region specified in the play. If *The Comedy of Errors* foregrounds an internally-linked regional setting, it also insists on its connection to an even larger world system off-stage: its casual references to the "Turkish tapestry" in Antipholus of Ephesus's house (4.1.106) and to the pressing business of sea merchants, like the "Second Merchant" whose voyage to Persia is delayed (4.1.4).[12]

By pointing out how the regional structures the relation *between* the local and the global in Shakespeare's play, we aim to show how *The Comedy of Errors* captures with unusual complexity the way in which early moderns were becoming newly aware of expanding world-systems in everyday life, from commerce to politics to family, as well as of the way these expanding world systems were starting to disrupt many of the foundations of personal identity and the communities that sustained the subject. In this way, we propose, the play reminds us how "globalization" is an historically-contingent iteration of "worlding" that is neither static, inevitable, nor permanent. Worlds can always be otherwise: they depend on a horizon of potentiality through which they are constantly being remade through our stories and our mutual recognition.

Third, and following upon this point, *Errors* also shows us that "worlds" are not simply constituted out of structures of economic interrelation and legitimized political power but depend on *structures of experience*, or what Chakrabarty calls, in his description of the counter-narratives of History 2, "affective narratives of human belonging" (71). If worlds are always plural, *Errors* shows us how characters do not live "in" a single, coherent world but are subject to sequences of *in-between* states that are experienced phenomenologically, with all the body's capacities, affects, and energies. In the Ephesus of Shakespeare's play, this worlding experience includes, most poignantly, the disorientation that attends migration and displacement in an increasingly "global" system. If the act of (re)worlding depends on mutual recognition and an openness to the other, as Cheah has argued, *Errors* reminds us that this worlding process depends not only on belonging but on dispossession and on alienation, and especially on self-alienation when confronted with the persistent regimes of classification and somatic marking that make any recognition possible. Each set of twins is positioned differently within an economic and social hierarchy defined by enforced servitude, a fundamental feature of the play's regional setting that results in very different physical treatment and different existential assumptions about power and freedom. As characters move between worlds or have their worlds altered around them, they become increasingly aware of their own marked characteristics in indelible and essentializing ways, a conspicuous feature of the play that discloses a distinctive racializing logic of identity emerging within its Mediterranean imaginary. For all its "comedy," we argue, the play demonstrates the human costs of the suturing of

worlds into a new global whole by problematizing the mobility of bodies and identities across national borders and exposing the violence enacted in the form of seizure, blows, and the threat of death.[13]

II: Shakespeare's Mediterranean

As Ferdinand Braudel's classic study suggests, the Mediterranean region was distinguished by its "unity and coherence" as well as by its enduring ability to flourish as a regional entity (Braudel [1949] 1995, vol. 1, 14). At the center of the Mediterranean's regional coherence was the sea itself, a medium of transport and connection, though Braudel notes that the Mediterranean was not just a "single entity" but also "a complex of seas," and more specifically of "peninsulas and seas" (23). While Braudel's focus was on the second half of the sixteenth century, he viewed the Mediterranean within a *longue durée* framework and sought to offer "a new kind of history" that was partly imperial but also environmental, social, and economic. In this way, his method drew attention to the rich tapestry of factors and developments that take place simultaneously across time, as well as demonstrating how different kinds of developments, geological as well as social, enlist different timescales and require new historiographical narratives.

The Comedy of Errors registers a *longue durée* history of the Mediterranean by projecting a fictionalized set of regional relationships onto an imagined past that is ostensibly Hellenistic but that also signifies in multiple and inconsistent ways: it is both pre-Christian and post-Christian, ancient and contemporary, familiar and foreign. Scholars such as Bernadette Andrea (2017), Linda McJannet (1998), and Goran Stanivukovic (2007) have drawn our attention to how the Mediterranean was a site of historically-layered interreligious, inter-imperial, and inter-regional struggles.[14] In adapting the Roman playwright Plautus's *Menaechmi* but substituting Ephesus (modern-day Turkey, on the Aegean coast) for Plautus's setting in Epidamnum (modern-day Albania, on the Adriatic coast), Shakespeare chose a setting that was variously distinguished by its association with the temple of Artemis, its legendary founding by Amazons, a reputation for sorcery and occult practices, the voyages of St. Paul, its thriving commercial port, and the contemporary Ottoman empire. Ephesus's rich and diverse cultural, mythical, and religious associations intersected with but also persisted independently from its imperial subjugations. The most recent conquest of Ephesus by the Ottoman Turks followed a long history of imperial conquest by the Persian, Greek, Egyptian, Roman, and Byzantine empires. As English audiences would have recognized, Ephesus's biblical connection to St. Paul, who spent two years in Ephesus establishing a church and converting the Gentiles to Christianity, distinguished it as a site of early Christian conversion and expansion under the Roman empire.[15]

The Comedy of Errors plays up Ephesus' Pauline associations as well as the significance of its commercial port that made it such a vital hub for religious and imperial expansion. By dramatizing a fraught commercial conflict between Ephesus and the distant Mediterranean city state of Syracuse, accessible only by sea, *The Comedy of Errors* foregrounds a regional Mediterranean network that spans hundreds of miles. In beckoning us to view this relationship from an English perspective, furthermore — as intended for an English audience — Shakespeare's play ends up registering England's marginal status to the Mediterranean and its long-established networks of trade. As is now well-

documented, England underwent a large-scale economic transformation at the turn of the seventeenth century, as it belatedly struggled to join the international trading networks based in the Mediterranean.[16] While English merchants were increasingly drawn to lucrative trading ports of the eastern Mediterranean, they also associated such places with the imperial threat of the Ottoman empire, the religion of Islam, and stories of captivity and forced conversion. As numerous scholars have discussed, port cities in the eastern Mediterranean were popular settings for English stage plays that dramatized the exploits of Christian merchants and their dangerous encounters with Turks, Moors, and Jews.[17]

Slavery loomed large in the English literary imagination of the Mediterranean region, particularly because significant numbers of European Christians, including English citizens, were captured and enslaved as a result of Mediterranean commerce and piracy; however, critical attention to the enslavement of European Christians by the Ottoman empire has obscured the equal numbers of Africans and other non-Europeans enslaved over the course of the early modern period.[18] The enslavement of foreign captives and prisoners of war extended to North Africa, Asia Minor, Mongolia, India, Russia, and eastern Europe and in fact long pre-dated the sixteenth century, developing in parallel to the widely-recognized practice of domestic enslavement in the region, whereby native people were born or sold into servitude.[19] As Abdulhamit Arvas (2021) has shown, the abduction and circulation of adolescent boys (devşirme) by the Ottoman empire follows upon a deep historical and literary tradition of eroticizing abducted boys in the Mediterranean region. Eunuchs from Africa were given an inferior status in the Ottoman court to those from eastern Europe, suggesting the presence of a racializing hierarchy among enslaved boys in the sixteenth-century Mediterranean, though it is also important to recognize that blackness and slavery were not directly linked as they were in the trans-Atlantic context (Arvas 2020).[20] Both foreign and domestic enslavement in the Mediterranean entailed different racializing classifications — Youval Rotman (2014) has shown how distinctions of origin, ethnicity, faith, or color were used to justify foreign enslavement and subjugation[21] — reminding us how race thinking could be adapted to many different relationships of power, forms of hierarchy, and specific social and economic systems. Over the course of three millennia, slavery in the Mediterranean had many different sources, though despite this versatility its implications for the enslaved were in some ways the same. As Rotman demonstrates, throughout many phases of Mediterranean history, the practice of "human trafficking, be it by war, piracy, kidnapping, debt-slavery, child exposure or self-selling, forced a significant circulation of human beings, against their will, in the Mediterranean world" (265).

The Comedy of Errors registers the entrenched history of Mediterranean slavery through its representation of twin brothers who are born and enslaved in Epidamnum with the intention of being taken home by their master to Syracuse, only to be separated and redirected elsewhere in the course of this journey. Critics uniformly refer to the twin Dromios as "servants," but the term employed by the play to describe them is in fact "slave," appearing eleven separate times (while "servant" appears only once in reference to their condition). This critical tendency reflects an attempt to normalize the practice of enslavement that was typical of the Mediterranean region by conflating it with the more ambiguous condition of servitude, which in England encapsulated indentured labor as well as chattel slavery. Egeon tells of how his family had been enjoying a lucrative period in which "our wealth increased/by prosperous voyages I often made/To Epidamium" when the

unexpected death of his "factor" "drew [him] from kind embracements of [his] spouse" to tend to the "great care of [his] goods at random left" (1.1.39–43). He is away from his family for six months when his pregnant wife, nearing her delivery date, travels 600 miles from Syracuse (modern-day Sicily) to meet him in Epidamnum (a town in Illyria, or modern-day Albania, on the Adriatic coast) and gives birth to their sons "that very hour, and in the selfsame inn" as a "mean woman" who also delivers identical twins (1.1.53–4). Egeon describes how he "bought and brought up" the second set of twins "to attend [his] sons," since "their parents were exceeding poor," thereby citing a practice extending from ancient to early modern times by which infants were sold into slavery due to economic duress (1.1.56–7). The enslaved boys' integration into a new family structure, which in Greco-Roman societies folded them under the identity of the family patriarch but never equated them to his actual sons, demonstrates how a family structure that is taken for normative is in fact a family reconstituted by slavery.[22] While rendered unremarkable, the severing of the Dromios from their birth family precedes the splitting of Egeon's family at sea: it constitutes a quotidian but nonetheless violent economic intrusion on family bonds that enhances the profitability of Egeon's voyage. Any suffering it causes is given no attention in the play and is overshadowed by the play's foregrounding of the unnatural separation of spouses and brothers by shipwreck. In his address to the Duke, Egeon pleads for a gesture of personal sympathy that could transcend the harshness of the law, but this plea to a universalized human compassion does not extend to the Dromios or mitigate the practice that places them in his household.

The point is important because Egeon's narrative has become our own: critical accounts of the play routinely begin with the shipwreck rather than with the prior system of appropriation that has already reconstituted his nuclear family by adding attendants for his young sons. The geographical displacement of the Dromio twins reflects the significance of their status as slaves within a larger regional economy that is maintained by broader international legal and political structures that pose a danger to human lives and their most intimate ways of making sense of identity and experience. Egeon himself has been apprehended by the Duke of Ephesus and arrested for violating the law that bars Syracusians and Ephesians from entering each other's borders, causing his goods to be confiscated and levying the ransom of his life at "a thousand marks" (1.1.21). As the Duke explains:

> . . . since the mortal and intestine jars
> 'Twixt thy seditious countrymen and us,
> It hath in solemn synods been decreed,
> Both by the Syracusians and ourselves,
> To admit no traffic to our adverse towns.
> Nay, more, if any born at Ephesus
> Be seen at Syracusian marts and fairs;
> Again, if any Syracusian born
> Come to the bay of Ephesus, he dies,
> His good confiscate to the Duke's dispose
> Unless a thousand marks be levièd
> To quit the penalty and to ransom him. (1.1.11–22)

The enmity between countries is exacted through the seizure of human bodies, translating their value into the price of a ransom and a form of debt-bond that is here given new meaning in the transactional context of global commerce.[23] Blending commercial and

political language, the passage describes a set of regional relationships constituted by rivalry, conflict, and exclusion: the "countrymen" who live together in Syracuse and who are governed by distinct "synods" remain integrally connected to the Ephesians, for their conflict is described as "intestine," or a form of civil war (*OED* "intestine," 1); words like "traffic," "marts," and "fairs" emphasize the trading relationships that join the two city-states through a shared maritime topography ("bay"). The embargo acts as a form of protectionism against the conflicts and violations created by international trade by imposing a law that objectifies and abuses persons and converts them into money. The play's opening narrative also shows how an increasingly integrated system of regional trading relationships in the Mediterranean presumes sharpening political conflict among city-states, a conflict that in turn results in a stiffening of community identity and the legal exclusion of those who come from elsewhere. In the political sacrifice of Ephesian merchants and in the Duke's "pity[ing]" but unwavering judgment over the Syracusian Egeon, we glimpse the ideological precipitation of the play's destructive political economy, which functions by tracking and categorizing bodies across great distances, always threatening them with death (1.1.97). The effects of this political economy are transformative and long-standing: Jane Hwang Degenhardt (2010) has shown, for instance, how the early modern Mediterranean was the crucible in which a notion of race as an individualized, physically marked, and culturally excluded category emerges to replace older ideas of communal or corporate religious identity.[24] Patricia Akhimie (2018) has shown how the many moments of physical abuse and of marking bodies in the play expose a larger cultural logic in which people are sorted into differentiated groups, and this sorting is then justified by reference to physical attributes that are taken to be inherent or natural. By opening with a categorical politico-economic exclusion of a specific *type* of person (Ephesians, Syracusans), we could say further, the play discloses a structure of identity that bears several of the attributes of a modern notion of race: under the absolutism of public law, geographical origin concentrates into a marked category that is somatized, experienced and exposed through the body (107).[25] The play demonstrates how in the Mediterranean, race-making depends on geopolitical differences within a regional system made evident by the movement of subjects across borders.

While critics have tended to view the shipwreck that sets the plot in motion as a carryover from the romance tradition, it also speaks to the contemporary realities of early economic globalization, of which the English were becoming increasingly aware as they began to rely more heavily on maritime trade.[26] Sea travel evoked not a sense of unfettered mobility or miraculous transport from place to place but rather a subjection to contingency and danger, as well as the compelled displacements of forced migration, exile, and the seeking of refuge.[27] Bodies do not move freely in this fraught maritime landscape: by entangling geopolitical protectionism, economic displacement, enforced servitude, and racializing logic, the play can also be said to open a space for the "refugee" as a distinctive category of person on the early modern European horizon.[28] Eric Griffin (2014, 14–15) has emphasized how a combination of inflation, unemployment, and plague epidemics led to a "stranger crisis" in the 1590s, which he argues informed Shakespeare's decision to "place the problem of the immigrant at center stage" in *The Comedy of Errors*.[29] Like Griffin, we understand the play to highlight the violent exclusion of immigrants, though it does so in

unexpected ways that expose a breakdown in the implicit method by which insiders are distinguished from outsiders according to a system that relies on the somatic marking of difference.

As so often happens in Shakespeare's plays, the narrative circumstances that open the play are simply points of departure for subsequent events that immediately begin to call into question any kind of absolutist logic. Like *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1595–6), for instance, with which *Errors* shares several themes — absolute law, playful events with supernatural causes that grow increasingly disorienting for the experience of the characters, an expanding global backdrop, shades of violence and obsession, all bundled as an experiment in metadrama — the unfolding scenes of *Errors* quickly probe some of the fundamental contradictions of an emerging world system. In the first place, the polarizing logic that opens the play does not result in distance, difference, and opposition but rather in proximity, sameness, and intimacy, as separate worlds are drawn into a single region of reference. No sooner has the Duke spoken a decree that binds place, body, and identity together than the scene changes to introduce twins who come from different places but look exactly the same, answer to the same name, and are accompanied by the same enslaved servants — men who are themselves *also* twins with identical names and features. Importantly, however, the Syracusian Antipholus and Dromio do not know of their twin brothers' existence in Ephesus, and thus their inclination is to hide the particularities of their identities so as not to stand out: believing themselves to be perceived as outsiders, they are unaware that they are passing as insiders. Upon landing in Ephesus, Antipholus of Syracuse is warned by another merchant to conceal his Syracusian identity from anyone he meets, since that very day another Syracusian visitor — his own father, unbeknownst to him — has been "apprehended for arrival here" and sentenced to death (1.2.4).

With this advice, Antipholus resolves to "go lose myself" (1.2.30) and "view the manners of the town" (1.2.12), and his very first speech shows us how he has already begun to experience his travel to Ephesus as a movement that dissolves his edges, his boundaries, his integrity as a coherent body:

> I to the world am like a drop of water
> That in the ocean seeks another drop,
> Who, falling there to find his fellow forth,
> Unseen, inquisitive, confounds himself.
> So I, to find a mother and a brother,
> In quest of them, unhappy, lose myself. (1.2.35–40)

To employ the opening terms of our article, Antipholus's entrance into the play shows us how an emerging "global" structure is already displacing an idea of "world" and changing its meaning. Prior to his departure, Antipholus's sense of individual identity was intact and unthreatened; his movement into the ocean — a vast space of "betweenness" leading he knows not where — opens his awareness onto a wider horizon. Concomitantly, the ocean opens a gap inside the subject, engendering a loss of origins and ties to family history that "confounds" identity (1.2.38).

Upon arriving in Ephesus, however, Antipholus of Syracuse finds that he is suddenly and mysteriously locked *back* into a singular identity that is not his own. The same is true for Antipholus's enslaved servant, Dromio, whose identical twin works in the household of Antipholus of Ephesus, creating a doubling of doubles that exponentially compounds

potential confusion as the twins repeatedly mis-recognize one another's "slave" or master and are themselves misrecognized by everyone they encounter.[30] As a result, words, actions, and perceptions are conspicuously misaligned. Money changes hands, but they are not the hands each character thinks they are; promises are made but then dropped in the next scene, because the promisor has become someone else who looks exactly the same; instructions are given but then seemingly forgotten by the person who gave them a moment ago, who has in fact left the scene and been replaced by his perfect double. The play's geopolitical horizon, an ever-receding space of expansion but also of exclusion, of difference and polarity, has contracted into the theatrical horizon between onstage and offstage space, allowing for a structure in which two identical but nonetheless incommensurate worlds can be brought into uncanny nearness while holding them apart long enough for the time of the play to elapse.

Throughout the play, characters suffer a confounding experience of being *in-between* worlds, as the demands and reactions they receive from everyone they encounter do not align with what has come before and all continuity between events in which they participate is inexplicably broken. In place of a continuity of relations, a pattern of unequal and disrupted transactions drives the action forward, as characters receive disproportionately large or small returns for the sums of money they put into circulation. The broken exchanges centered around the purchase of the gold chain by Antipholus of Ephesus illustrates not only how incoherent the experience of the world has become for all characters but also the fact that this incoherence results from the intrusion of a global dimension from offstage, outside the frame of the scene. Antipholus first requests the chain from the goldsmith, who gives it to Antipholus of Syracuse by mistake; payment is then demanded of Antipholus of Ephesus, who has not received his chain; he is in turn indebted to a courtesan, who expects the chain in exchange for a ring she has traded him. Meanwhile, the goldsmith needs his payment for the chain to settle a debt with a merchant, whose trip to Persia is being delayed as he waits for the money. The culmination of the disrupted chain of exchange is the physical arrest of Antipholus of Ephesus, whose body becomes the collateral for the broken transactions and receptacle for all the unanswered debts. Without comprehending how or why, he finds his body has become marked as criminal and subject to imprisonment simply because it matches the description of another body that has come into possession of his gold chain. The repercussions of mistaken identity reflect a dangerous racial logic operating in the world of Ephesus. A person may find himself subject to the worst circumstances. He may be exposed to arbitrary capital punishment only because of where he comes from. He may be threatened with sudden imprisonment by an accosting street officer simply because of the way he looks.

As the confusion mounts, physical seizure or violence becomes the only functional currency of the play and the only force that connects these fragmented worlds with one another. The Dromios, who act as messengers between their masters, the goldsmith, the Phoenix (home of Antipholus of Ephesus), and the inn where Antipholus of Syracuse hopes to lodge, unwittingly deliver messages to the wrong Antipholus over and over. As a result, their masters are bewildered to find their orders forgotten and the Dromios are dumbfounded by their masters' responses. Describing one such miscommunication, Dromio of Ephesus attempts to explain to Adriana, Antipholus of Ephesus's wife, why he cannot get her husband to come home for dinner:

> When I desired him to come home to dinner,
> He asked me for a thousand marks in gold.
> "'Tis dinnertime,' quoth I. 'My gold,' quoth he.
> "Your meat doth burn," quoth I; "My gold," quoth he.
> "Will you come?" quoth I; "My gold," quoth he.
> "Where is the thousand marks I gave thee, villain?"
> "The pig," quoth I, "is burned." "My gold," quoth he.
> "My mistress, sir," quoth I. "Hang up thy mistress!
> I know not thy mistress. Out on thy mistress!" (2.1.62–72)

Having given the other Dromio "a thousand marks" to secure lodging at an inn, Antipholus of Syracuse is perplexed by what has happened to his gold and why his enslaved servant is now imploring him to report to dinner with a wife he doesn't know and at a house that doesn't belong to him. As Dromio insists on "dinner-time," and Antipholus repeatedly answers "My gold," the two bespeak the multiple realities that coexist in the same world. Their experience of betweenness leads not only to confusion and isolation but also to building frustration and violence, which the Antipholuses vent through repeated beatings of the Dromios. Perceiving that his enslaved servant has lost his "one thousand marks," Antipholus of Syracuse takes his anger out on Dromio of Ephesus by laying "marks" on his body (1.2.83). With the translation of currency into physical marks of injury, these beatings become the only common language that is spoken in the play, as the Antipholus' communications are reduced to a common denominator of physical violence. As Akhimie (2018) has argued, the marking or bruising of the Dromios' bodies reflects a somatization of their inferior status that constitutes a racializing stigma. For Akhimie, the identical nature of the twins' bodies is less meaningful than the "racialist logic" that allows any number of bodies to be grouped together by virtue of "a 'recognizable' set of somatic marks . . . invested with meaning"; as she puts it, "the magnitude of the perceived similarity between two or more individuals, from perfectly identical bodies to bodies that merely share a single somatic trait or feature, is immaterial" (109). And yet, the play's insistence on perfectly identical and exchangeable bodies — a condition that is over-determined by Shakespeare's doubling of twins, a modification of his Plautine source material — completely disrupts our ability to ground individualized identity in the body and at the same time exposes the arbitrariness with which any individual body is subjected to either privilege or punishment based on its appearance. The receipt of so many marks for what appears to be no reason at all prompts Dromio of Syracuse to ask, "But I pray, sir, why am I beaten?" (2.2.39–40). Incensed, Antipholus of Syracuse responds, "Does thou not know?" (2.2.41), to which Dromio replies, "Nothing, sir, but that I am beaten" (2.2.42–3). The exchange of miscommunications always ends with these "marks," producing a kind of surplus that has no exchange value. Seeing neither "rhyme nor reason" (2.2.52) in his master's explanation for the beatings, Dromio is prompted to thank his master "for this something that you gave me for nothing" (2.2.55–6).

No character is untouched by the confusion that attends these disruptions and misalignments. "I am transformèd, master, am I not?" (2.2.207), Dromio of Syracuse asks his master, who replies "I think thou are in mind, and so am I" (2.2.208), only to have Dromio answer, "Nay master, both in mind and in my shape" (2.2.209). "Am I in earth, in heaven, or in hell?" (2.2.225), wonders Antipholus, "Sleeping or waking? Mad or

well advised?/Known unto these, and to myself disguised?" (2.2.226–7). Later, Dromio of Syracuse will again appeal to his master for verification: "Do you know me, sir? Am I Dromio? Am I your man? Am I myself?" (3.2.79–80). "Wander[ing] in illusions" (4.3.44), as Antipholus describes the experience late in the play, the characters find that all grounds for identity — political, psychological, social, affective, legal, commercial — have been compromised. Physical embodiment proves no source of identity: the Dromios are identical, down to the "mark of my shoulder, the mole in my neck, the great wart on my left arm" (3.2.156–8), and Antipholus of Syracuse is alternately berated and coaxed by Adriana, who cannot tell the difference between him and the man she calls "my husband" (2.1.1). Nor is the name a sufficient marker of identity; it is the sign for a confusion so pervasive that it extends from the marriage chamber to the public street, rendering any social identity equally unstable.[31]

Body, name, communal relation, whether private or public: each is the cause only of false recognition, a pseudo-*anagnorisis* that is in fact a hyper-recognition, for everyone recognizes Antipholus and Dromio of Syracuse, but they are misrecognized as someone they are not:

> There's not a man I meet but doth salute me
> As if I were their well-acquainted friend,
> And everyone doth call me by my name.
> Some tender money to me; some invite me;
> Some other give me thanks for kindnesses.
> Some offer me commodities to buy.
> Even now a tailor called me in his shop
> And showed me silks that he had bought for me,
> And therewithal took measure of my body.
> Sure these are but imaginary wiles,
> And Lapland sorcerers inhabit here. (4.3.1–11)

The play furnishes multiple images for the experience of alienation and confusion that results from this drawing-together of worlds: it is a "jest" (1.2.69) or trick played by an entire "dissembling" world upon the subject (4.4.107), in a perverse, comic form of paranoia; it is a form of "madness," as we have seen (5.1.143); it is a "dream" (2.2.193); it is the work of "fairy land" (2.2.200) and other "invisible" forces (5.1.193), a charm of "witches" (3.2.173), the effects of demonic "inspiration" (2.2.178). Reasonable explanations for events cannot be made without recourse to altered states of consciousness, supernatural forces, or egregious foul play, and yet the bizarre effects begin to follow a kind of logic in which surplus piles up on one side and loss and disenfranchisement on the other.[32] What seems to emerge is not a logic of privilege based on desert or reason, but rather an illogic that resembles racism, which follows a code that is both absolute and incomprehensible.

If the Syracusian twins are subjected to entitlements and privileges that they do not deserve, their identical Ephesian brothers are brutally deprived of their rights: inexplicably locked out of their home, held accountable for debts they have not incurred, and arrested for crimes they have not committed. In effect, they are rendered aliens in their own country. Regional difference disrupts the privileged assumption that they are unmarked. Ironically, the twins' experience of alienation results from their identical

bodies, which renders them indecipherable rather than marked or distinguished by bodily difference — a circumstance that exaggerates the injustice of the contrasting ways they are treated in the world.

Errors also makes visible the privilege of the unmarked body by exposing how this privilege reflects the prerogative of being unaware — an entitlement that only some can afford to have. The disenfranchisement experienced by Antipholus of Ephesus strains and exceeds the limits of what he previously understood to be possible in his world of experience. Being barred from his home by his wife is literally "beyond imagination," as he exclaims to the Duke (5.1.207); what had previously been unimaginable has now become his reality, revealing to him an entirely new world into which he has been inexplicably transported. To the extent that Antipholus of Ephesus only becomes aware of his privilege once it has been taken away, his sense of entitlement is analogous to the invisibility of white privilege.[33] He experiences alienation as a re-ordered relationship to a world that now excludes him, but he does not comprehend why; where once he benefited from the privilege of being unaware of his marked body, he suddenly perceives that he is marked. In response, he transforms into a violent, enraged man who seems unrecognizable to those who know him: he demands an "iron crow" to break down the door of his own house (3.1.133); he seeks out a "rope's end" so that he can beat his wife and "her confederates" (4.1.16–17); and he seems to those around him to lie and steal "monstrously" (5.1.11). His extreme alteration causes his merchant friend Balthazar to admonish him, " . . . You war against your reputation" (3.1.135), and Angelo the goldsmith attests to how Antipholus was once "of very reverend reputation . . . /Of credit infinite, highly beloved,/Second to none that lives here" (5.1.5–7). As the world has become incomprehensible to Antipholus, so has he become increasingly incomprehensible to the world that surrounds him, his sense of entitlement manifesting as seemingly baseless outrage.

All of these events — the apparent insubordination of the Dromios to their masters, the barring of Antipholus of Ephesus by his wife and servant from his own home — upend hierarchies that would normally go unquestioned in the world of Ephesus (and, of course, in the world of England as well). This inversion of hierarchies also disrupts intimacies that are taken for granted between husband and wife, master and servant, revealing the underlying precarity of these intimate hierarchies and their somewhat arbitrary reliance upon a coherent set of agreements and values that inhere in a shared world. As Antipholus of Ephesus repeatedly knocks on his front door, only to find the kitchen maid responding, "Let him knock till it ache," he vows furiously yet futilely, "You'll cry for this, minion, if I beat the door down" (3.1.90–1). And at the same time that he understands himself to be inexplicably locked out of his house and deprived of his dinner, his wife Adriana is baffled by why the man who she believes to be her husband, but who is actually his twin brother, does not recognize her. She beseeches him:

> How comes it now, my husband, O, how comes it
> That thou art then estrangèd from thyself?
> "Thyself" I call it, being strange to me,
> That, undividable, incorporate,
> Am better than thy dear self's better part.
> Ah, do not tear away thyself from me!
> For know, my love, as easy mayst thou fall

> A drop of water in the breaking gulf,
> And take unmingled thence that drop again
> Without addition or diminishing,
> As take from me thyself and not me too. (2.2.130–40)

Adriana compares the idea that a wife could extract herself from the bond of marriage — an "undividable, incorporate" union — and somehow remain undiminished to the impossibility of releasing a single drop of water into the "breaking gulf" and then retrieving it "unmingled." She re-appropriates Antipholus of Syracuse's earlier metaphor of a self-identity dissolving as irrevocably as a drop of water in the ocean, analogizing the intimacy of marriage with the integrity of a coherent selfhood. Again, global migration is seen to disrupt the bonds of intimacy that we hold most sacred and self-evident. The effects of globalization not only threaten these intimacies but also call into question the basis on which they have been forged within a former world that was presumed to be self-contained. In the in-between space in which the characters now find themselves, no world is as stable as it seems, and this is because their experience has been so radically unsettled. Mystified by Adriana's recognition of him as her husband, Antipholus of Syracuse answers:

> Plead you to me, fair dame? I know you not.
> In Ephesus I am but two hours old,
> As strange unto your town as to your talk,
> Who, every word by all my wit being scanned,
> Wants wit in all one word to understand. (2.2.158–62)

In place of the old intimacies, the separations and migrations brought about by global commerce and movement initiate new intimacies, as Antipholus of Syracuse sets his sights on marrying Adriana's sister — much to her initial horror — and Nell the kitchen maid aggressively pursues sex with Dromio of Syracuse.[34]

Nell provides the most vivid example of the play's emergent awareness of globalization and how it brings about uncanny intimacies, as Dromio tells how she "haunts" him (3.2.89) and "lays claim" to him (3.2.94–5), calling him by name and somehow knowing the most minute features of his body. In a blazon that objectifies both the female body and the world, Dromio describes Nell as "spherical, like a globe" (3.2.125) and proceeds to map various "countries" onto specific locations of her body (3.2.126):

> Ant. In what part of her body stands Ireland?
> Drom. Marry, sir, in her buttocks. I found it out by the bogs.
> Ant. Where Scotland?
> Drom. I found it by the barrenness, hard in the palm of her hand.
> Ant. Where France?
> Drom. In her forehead, armed and reverted, making war against her hair.
> Ant. Where England?
> Drom. I looked for the chalky cliffs, but I could find no whiteness in them. But I guess it stood in her chin, by the salt rheum that ran between France and it.
> Ant. Where Spain?
> Drom. Faith, I saw it not, but I felt it hot in her breath.
> Ant. Where America, the Indies?
> Drom. O, sir, upon her nose, all o'er embellished with rubies, carbuncles, sapphires, declining their rich aspect to the hot breath of Spain, who sent whole armadas of carracks to be ballast at her nose.

Ant. Where stood Belgia, the Netherlands?
Drom. O, sir, I did not look so low. (3.2.127–53)

Even as Dromio describes her as "like a globe," the actual topography mapped onto Nell's body is one of region opening onto a global colonial horizon: the British Isles, the English Channel, and Spanish incursions into the New World. England and France are separated by the "chalky cliffs" and "salt rheum" that runs to Nell's chin, whereas Spain and the Americas are connected through the extraction and commodification of natural resources, demonstrated by the "rubies," "carbuncles," and "sapphires" on Nell's nose, which bend toward "the hot breath of Spain, who sent whole armadas of carracks to be ballast at her nose." Dromio expresses his palpable aversion to this pulsating globe that pursues him through references to its pustules and excreting orifices, which emit breath and mucus and sweat. As he puts it, she exudes so much "grease" that one could "make a lamp of her" (3.2.104–5) and "sweats" so much that "a man may go overshoes in the grime of it" (3.2.112–13). The comic but threatening condensation of the entire globe into the pungent and excreting figure of Nell emblematizes the compulsive, all-encompassing force of violence and alienation that seems to accompany globalization. But at the same time the figure shows how a globalizing view was starting to assume a distinctively *English* perspective and was modelled on regional relationships that an English audience could recognize and understand.[35] Shakespeare seems to be testing out just how unstable, how confusing, how complicated the inherent multiplicity of worlds constituted through experience can be, and all the more so as a newly "global" imagination and set of structures begin their encroachment.

III: Shakespeare's Worlds

Everyone knows that Shakespeare's theater was called the Globe, but Dromio's misogynizing reference to Nell as "like a globe" is in fact one of only twelve such usages across all his plays. Despite the prevalence of new technologies of navigation and map-projection in Shakespeare's period, the relative scarcity of the term "globe" in his work suggests how unfamiliar a spatial, planetary, or territorial idea of worldedness remained to him and to many of his contemporaries.[36] By comparison, however, Shakespeare uses the term "world" more than 650 times, a huge number that discloses a richer and far more varied semantic range. Sometimes he uses the term in a metaphysical way, to allude to the world of the living and the dead, or of sleep and wakefulness (as in *Macbeth*). He refers, not surprisingly, to the "Christian world" (in *All's Well That Ends Well*, 4.4.2), although this usage is in fact fairly infrequent, and also to the "golden world" (*As You Like It*, 1.1.117–18), or to a "brave new world" (in *The Tempest*, 5.1.217). "The poor world is almost six thousand years old," Rosalind declares (*As You Like It*, 4.1.100); in *Coriolanus*, it "tremble[s]" with fever (1.4.79). In a slightly more spatialized meaning, "world" means something like "all places," although in a general sense that remains geographically indistinct and non-cartographic. Frequently the term has a broader existential meaning: "the sum total of all things existing, of creation"; and especially "all mankind." In a final sense, "world" is often a term for a community of others: we would call it "society," or perhaps something like "the general public," to which things are announced (as in *Coriolanus*) or displayed. The world "knows" of some things, "takes note" of others; it

"thinks" and is a source of opinion and judgment and the arbiter of reputation. At the beginning of *The Comedy of Errors*, Egeon captures this use of the term perfectly when he refers to how he shall "speak my griefs unspeakable" so that "the world may witness" the cause of his sorrows (1.1.32–3).

We may be tempted to conclude that Shakespeare's notion of a "world" as a collective subject that "thinks," "knows," and "sees" resembles Ramachandran's and Cheah's new model of cosmopolitanism, for it describes the concept of a community of common experience that strives to preserve coherence even as it remains indefinite and open to others. But for all of *Errors*' theatrical virtuosity and self-declared "comedy," the worldly experience it renders is less that of cosmopolitan detachment buoyed by a sentiment of universalism than it is the confusing, fearful, and often violent experience of displaced persons who wander among strangers. As we have seen, its geographical displacement of two sets of twins, identical in both appearance and name, exposes the proliferation of "errors," both comic and violent, that are produced when multiple worlds unwittingly collide. By dramatizing geographical migration as a profoundly alienating experience, the play shows us the limits of one's self-constitution within a singular community and the disorientation that happens when one discovers that they have moved into a newly-connected world-system in which their self-understanding no longer correlates in any intelligible way with how they are perceived by others.

A natural question arises from the play's events: if each brother knows that he has a twin lost somewhere in the world, why doesn't he realize what the audience understands all along — that the simplest, albeit improbable, explanation for the play's confusing events is that two sets of twins are being mistaken for one another? Why doesn't it occur to Antipholus and Dromio of Syracuse that the reason they are persistently mis-recognized is that everyone already knows their twins, the very people they have come to Ephesus to find? The question itself suggests some further features of worlds, starting with the fact that they depend on a kind of amnesia: if worlds are constituted out of the characters' everyday lived relationships, movements, institutions, and experiences, then their enworlding requires that they suppress the notion of the in-between, forget about the essential plurality of worlds, and actively *not* think about other worlds or places that don't immediately concern them. We often think of "worlds" as constituted by their completeness, but *Comedy of Errors* shows us that since worlds are always plural, they are in fact created out of gaps, seams, and absences.[37] *Errors* invites us to realize that a "world" is constituted not only from our experience of things and persons that are present before us but also by those which are *not* present, which we infer and which we might at any moment finally recognize and draw into our world as a new constituent or which we cannot or might refuse to recognize.

In this way the play raises another essential question that globalization presses upon subject and community alike. What does it take to become aware of the other? To recognize the other? What is necessary to live with the other in awareness? Looking beyond oceanic flows and commercial networks, the play perceives a special relationship between region and globe, one in which the region responds to global pressures by reconstituting itself around the experiences of subject and community alike, drawing coherence from shared values and experiences, rather than from economic ties. The play suggests that in a globalizing condition, the "self," as Shakespeare calls it, can always re-world itself. It can always recognize, even in moments of radical estrangement from its

own experience, that the only possible grounds for its own persistence lies *in* this experience: in its temperament, its memory and history, in its perception of the world and the values it holds and in the accounts it gives of itself. But as individual selves join with others to form a new shared understanding, the play also shows how the re-worlding of both subject and community — the integration of the subject into community, and the formation of the community as the horizon of the subject's experience — requires it *to acknowledge as many accounts of experience as it can*: to be open to the experience of the other, who might come from anywhere and who might have more in common with us than we might at first imagine.

The play opens and closes with the narration of stories, first by Egeon, who narrates the story of his family's separation to the Duke, and eventually by all of the characters, who collectively discover that they have been reunited as they knit their individual stories together. Their accounts are sprawling and wildly unlikely, and yet they are the truest element in the play, and their truth depends upon the recognition and witnessing of others — both in the sense that the other must confirm the truth of the subject's story but also that the other must be *acknowledged* by the subject as a member of the world that is at that moment being re-composed. The Duke reoccupies the role of authorizing witness who can attest to the truth of their collective story; hearing the words of Emilia, who emerges from her sanctuary in the abbey to recognize her long-lost husband Egeon, the Duke announces, "Why, here begins his morning story right" (5.1.357). Together with Egeon, Emilia, the Antipholuses, and the Dromios, the Duke proceeds to enter into the abbey, where together the characters shall "hear at large discoursèd all our fortunes,/[by] all that are assembled in this place/ . . . /And we shall make full satisfaction" (5.1.408–9, 412). Here, within the confined and contracted space of the abbey, a new world appears to be born through the merging together of stories into a new coherence. As Dromio of Ephesus declares in the play's concluding lines, "We came into this world like brother and brother,/And now let's go hand in hand, not one before another" (5.1.439–41).

But the moment of equitable fraternity conceals the fact the Dromios are still enslaved, after all, and remain cut off from their family of origin, sutured to a new family in which they will always enter last and trail behind their masters. By contrast, in Plautus's *Menaechmi*, the slaves' eventual manumission is linked to the comic resolution of the play, as was conventional of Roman comedy.[38] Shakespeare's departure from his source reflects how slavery was coming to be imagined as a permanent condition of unfreedom in the sixteenth century — a shift in the institution of slavery that corresponded with larger economic developments that systemized human mobility, trafficking, and commodification.[39] That the Dromios' final entrance into the priory constitutes a happy ending suggests how their condition of permanent enslavement invites no notice or consideration for their suffering. It is hard to shake the feeling that the play's ending works too hard to compensate for the knowledge it has already disclosed to us, from Egeon's opening narrative to Antipholus of Ephesus's indignant outrage: the knowledge that exploitation, alienation, exclusion, and their active forgetting lie at the core of every community, including and especially the family but also the communities that sustain the worlds in which they live. Egeon may appeal to a generalized "world" that can bear witness to his grief and his family story, but subsequent events have shown this world to be far less coherent or convergent in its attentions than he presumes it to be. Not all subjects have friendly witnesses, and many stories are never shared or received — not in the world, and not in the worlds of criticism, as Ian Smith has recently argued in his

discussion of blackness, story-telling, and witnessing in *Othello* (2016).[40] Smith's call to critics to grant Othello the witnessing that is denied to him in the world of the play (and in centuries of Shakespeare scholarship) encourages us to remember the importance of being seen and heard to the experience of belonging in a world, and to the constitution of worlds that are truly inclusive.[41]

In light of Smith's arguments, we may see more clearly how the process of worlding through exclusion that features so prominently in *Errors* also registers the play's incipient racializing imaginary. The play enacts a portrait of the subject's most self-conscious experience and self-awareness as a function of a regional life in which bodies alone cannot ground identity and yet are somehow made to do so anyway. Worldedness, as a structure of self-alienation, becomes a state of in-betweenness, of plurality and dislocation, of straddling and accommodation — or, to use a more contemporary idiom, of double consciousness. For *Errors* is, in the end, an "existential" play, one in which the "I" becomes aware of an experience in which I am I, but I am being reacted to by others as though I am something else — something that I do not experience myself to be. The "global" force of the play has created excruciating moments of tension among multiple worlds of experience, and this tension has traveled inside the person to become its constitutive feature: a self born of the awareness of a loss of self, of being the Other of the Other. To be "in-between," to experience the world as structured by negation, misrecognition, and violent exclusion: this experience will become the experience of race, as race itself becomes the most violent way of marking difference psychologically and physically, of polarizing enmity into categorical exclusions that are essentialized and taken as normative foundations for an understanding of a world as it is lived, ordered, and defended. And this experience is itself differentiated: for the Dromios, a collision of worlds joined only by commands, rebukes, and physical blows; for Antipholus of Syracuse, a collision of worlds that dissolves identity and leaves the subject "wandering in illusion"; for Antipholus of Ephesus, a collision of worlds that provokes superstition, conspiracy theory, and finally manic anger at a world that refuses to recognize him for who he believes himself to be — like so many subjects who believe themselves to be unmarked, only to find that they are not what they imagined.

Notes

1. Wallerstein ([1974] 2011, xviii); also 15: "It is a 'world' system, not because it encompasses the whole world, but because it is larger than any juridically-defined political unit." See also Wallerstein (1979) and the work of Braudel (esp. [1979] 1984).
2. Frank (1998); Beaujard (2005); and Casale (2010, 12). See also Frank and Gills (1993), especially the preface by McNeill and the essays by Abu-Lughod, Amin, and Pomeranz; Dale (2013); and the essays collected in Aksan and Goffman (2007).
3. Robertson and Inglis (2006, 33–47).
4. Abu-Lughod (1989), observing that although these systems were not fully "global" — indeed that "no world system is *global*" (32; emphasis in original) — they nevertheless unfolded at a world-scale and remind us that "the characteristics of world systems are not invariant" and "that world systems are not static. They evolve and change" (6).
5. Chakrabarty ([2000] 2007, 100); Subrahmanyam (1997, 735–62, esp. 737). Adopting the view of what he calls "'connected histories' as opposed to 'comparative histories,'" Subrahmanyam draws attention to "the at times fragile threads that connected the globe"

and that transcend the borders created by subsequent nationalist ideologies and historiography (745, 762).

6. For Nancy, "world" is "the common place of a totality of places, or presences and dispositions for possible events"; see Nancy (2007, 42). "World" is not a reified thing but "a self-enclosing, self-organizing, self-grounding process," in the words of Hayot (2012, 24); for Cheah, it is the continual practices of shared making and of mediated reflection upon that making which result in an ethical relation of belonging with others, or a community (2016).

7. Ramachandran (2017).

8. The classic account is that of Braudel ([1949] 1995), usefully supplemented with more recent work by O'Connell and Dursteler (2016), arguing that the Mediterranean "region" "should be conceived of as a fluid patchwork of centers and shifting allegiances" (207) and emphasizing how the Habsburg, Venetian, and Ottoman empires were each comprised of a diversity of regional elements: "These empires were composite states incorporating broad and often disparate regions and comprising significant cultural and religious diversity" (207). At the same time, Braudel, O'Connell, and Dursteler conceive of the Mediterranean as an integrated "whole" — united by "deeper social and geographical unity" that transcends political divisions (5–6). See also Mallette (2010); Akbari and Mallette (2013), especially their introductory discussion of the Mediterranean as a site of geographical, social, and literary convergence.

9. According to Doyle (2018, 396), "the aim of inter-imperial analysis is to trace the pressures of both the accrued imperial legacies in a place and the contemporaneous inter-imperial geopolitics affecting the region's current struggles."

10. Compare Storper and Walker (1989, 183), describing region as similar to "territory" in that "it denotes functional interaction rather than bounded spaces; a fabric of related places with some coherent linkages."

11. For a collection of essays that addresses the relationship between the local and the global, see Wilson and Dissanayake (1996). Similarly, "local" readings of Shakespeare often take note of connections between the local and the global. See, for example, Orkin (2005) and Massai (2005).

12. Shakespeare (1996). All subsequent references to *The Comedy of Errors* are from this text and will appear parenthetically in the text and notes by act, scene, and line number.

13. In this respect, our reading is sympathetic to Daniel Vitkus' critique of celebratory approaches to the "global Renaissance" which gloss over its perpetuation of violence, elitism, and exploitation (2019a).

14. See, for example, Andrea (2017); McJannet (1998); and Stanivukovic's useful collection (2007).

15. On the play's many Pauline references, see Parker (1983, 1993). For a discussion of the complex set of cultural and religious resonances attached to Shakespeare's Ephesus, especially the Hellenic resonances, see Martin (2001) and De Sousa (2018, esp. 146–7).

16. See, for example, Brenner (2003), as well as Andrews (1984) and Canny (2001). For a useful overview of England's entry into the world system and its impact on English economic practices, see Vitkus (2008). The fact that English shipping and Anglo-Turkish relations receive a scant five pages of discussion in Braudel's 1300+ page study reflects England's virtual insignificance in the region ([1949] 1995).

17. For discussions of the play relating it to a contemporary mercantile context and the threat of the Ottoman empire, see Harris (2004); and McJannet (1998).

18. Rotman estimates that between a million and a million-and-a-quarter Christian Europeans were enslaved by Mediterranean corsairs between 1530 and 1780, and that this "was matched by a similar number of North Africans raided by European ships" (2014, 274). On foreign slavery in the Mediterranean, see also Austen (1992), Hunwick (1992), Dávid and Fodor (2007), and Davies (2003). While numerous scholars of the English Renaissance have focused on the threat and impact of Christian slavery, other literary scholars have sought to acknowledge the importation of Black and Muslim slaves to England whose existence is often reduced to shadowy references in the English archives. See, for example,

Habib (2008), Andrea (2016), Dávid and Fodor (2007), and Davies (2003). Hutchinson (2020, 55–70) draws attention to the important history of enslaved women, both Christian and Muslim, in the early modern Mediterranean, although he explicitly discounts the relevance of "race" to discussions of the region, a claim that runs counter to our argument in this essay.

19. Rotman demonstrates how "the right to subdue, own and use foreigners was institutionalized in Greek, Hellenistic, and Roman societies" (2014, 266). On Mediterranean slavery and Islam, see also Amitai (2006), Forand (1971), and Ali (2010).

20. This point was drawn from a talk given by Abdulhamit Arvas on "Boys Remade: Sexing Blackness in the Early Modern Mediterranean and English Imagination," CUNY Graduate Center, November 20, 2020.

21. Rotman (2014, 276). See also Isaac (2004).

22. On the status of enslaved males in the Roman household and their relationship to the master's sons, see Rotman (2014, 267).

23. On the bodily implications of the early modern debt bond, see Bailey (2013).

24. Degenhardt (2010).

25. As Akhimie has put it, "the play makes bodily suffering visible; indeed, it calls attention to a broader system in which individuals' bodies attain meaning without their consent or knowledge, especially bodies that are indistinct in some way, vulnerable to generalizations" (2018, 107).

26. On *Errors'* generic self-consciousness and the implications of romance and farce on Shakespeare's treatment of identity, see especially van Elk (2009).

27. On the ways that "shipwreck occupies the heart of the human and historical meanings of ocean" in this critical period of globalization and ecological disaster, see Mentz (2015, xiv); on the play's engagement with the way the sea disrupts notions of home and identity in the play, see De Sousa (2018).

28. A number of literary scholars have discussed a heightened awareness in early modern England of the plight of refugees, especially those seeking religious asylum. The influx of immigrants in London led to intensified legislation around immigration and a new apprehension of the impact of foreigners on English culture. On how this registers in Shakespeare's plays, see Espinosa and Rutter (2014), Archer (2005), and Kermode (2009). On the economic motives for immigration in the period and their implications for London, see Luu (2005), and Goose and Luu (2005).

29. For a contrasting view of the effects of immigration on London, see Oldenburg (2014); Oldenburg suggests that increased English encounters with "strangers" led to an inclusive form of early modern multiculturalism that he refers to as "provincial globalism" (11).

30. Compare Weinberg's (2015) reading of the play in terms of misrecognition, trauma, and the uncanny and the reading of Antipholus's speech by Lanier (1993, 93, emphasis in original), arguing that Antipholus is split apart when confronted by "the engulfing gaze of the world, a gaze that fails *to see* him."

31. On the relation between names and identity in the play see Raman (2005, esp. 189–91).

32. On magic in the play see especially Cartwright (2007); Weinberg (2015, esp. 214–18).

33. As Ian Smith has written in his discussion of *Othello* and the place of race in a majority-white field of professional criticism, white people never have to account for their privilege or the system of power that enables it, whereas "blacks have always needed to know whiteness" (2016, 108).

34. Lisa Lowe's work on how intimacies of desire, sexuality, marriage, and family are inseparable from the structures of power that govern the physical displacements of globalization proves instructive here (2015). Rather than understand intimacy in its conventional sense "as the privileged sign of liberal interiority or domesticity," Lowe places emphasis on the global processes and connections that "are the condition of its [intimacy's] production" (18). *The Comedy of Errors* demonstrates how global migration both disrupts old intimacies and forges new ones.

35. Andrea has provocatively suggested that the figure of Nell was based on an enslaved African woman named Lucy Negro, who ran a brothel close to the Inns at Court and may have attended the first recorded performance of *The Comedy of Errors* in 1594 as part of the Gray's Inn Revels (2016).

36. Scholarship on the intersections between the history of cartography and literary form has recovered the ways in which the imagination of the "globe" itself as a total abstract space — a geometrical, mappable expanse that has been divided into political territories and the systems of sovereignty, diplomacy, and war that maintain them — depended on new technologies of navigation and map-projection that took place in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. See esp. Cosgrove (2001), Padrón (2004), Ramachandran (2015), and Turner (2007).

37. Cf. Hayot (2012, 60–7, esp. 65–6).

38. We thank Rebecca Bushnell for calling our attention to this point (personal communication, 18 November 2020).

39. For a useful discussion of how slavery was transformed in the early modern period in relation to incipient capitalism and new global economic structures, see Vitkus (2019b).

40. Smith (2016, 107, emphasis in original). "The pertinence and urgency of Othello's request for us to tell his story must be restated as a major disciplinary concern," Smith argues (119), for "the refusal to speak for another might, in specific contexts, result in ignoring the mandate for coalition building toward social justice and equity, in abjuring the responsibility to speak for others who sometimes lack the resources to speak for themselves . . . and in protecting the interests of a white racial status quo . . . 'speaking about' race means positioning whiteness in relation to other social identities and classes, exchanging exceptionality for the collective solidarity of coalition building" (123).

41. Smith's arguments about the white presumptions of professional criticism are especially pertinent to *The Comedy of Errors*, a play that seems all the more conspicuous for its relative lack of attention to color as a form of identity marking when compared to other "Mediterranean" plays such as *Othello, The Tempest, The Merchant of Venice, Antony and Cleopatra*, and *Titus Andronicus*. "The failure among critics to routinely remark whiteness as a fully realized racial category in all-white plays — that is, where all the characters are presumed to be white, unless otherwise noted — enables the normative invisibility of whiteness, which is a sign of its hegemony" (107), Smith writes.

Acknowledgments

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