

the Globe at £30 or more, placing the annual value between £420 and £560. *Witter v. Heminges and Condell* explains the system of sharing, but it also demonstrates the difficulties of using lawsuits as a guideline for share values. *Witter* was an unreliable witness, omitting the fact that he had mortgaged the share, abandoned Anne, and left her for John Heminges to bury, which calls his estimate of £30 or more per share into question. These lawsuits also document the difficulty posed by the alienation of shares in the theatre through marriage and inheritance: almost all the shares in the theatres had originally been owned by sharers in the playing company, but as time went on, this ceased to be the case.

The *Sharers' Papers*, not properly a lawsuit but an appeal to the Court, further demonstrates this difficulty, as the shares in the Globe and in the Blackfriars were increasingly not owned by sharers in the King's Men, but by the heirs of the housekeepers. In 1635, three members of the King's Men—Robert Benefield, Helward Swanson, and Thomas Pollard—complained to the Lord Chamberlain's office that they had expected, as senior members of the playing company, to have been given the opportunity to purchase shares in the Globe and the Blackfriars. They maintained that the expenses of the sharers had increased dramatically over time, while the expenses for the housekeepers had not; the sharers had expenses between £900 and £1,000 a year or £3 a day, not counting costumes and scripts, while the Housekeepers' rent was a mere £65 per year. The acting company was earning only a quarter of the profits, while in their view doing all the work. They also pointed out that with the exception of two members of the company, John Lowin and Joseph Taylor, and the older player John Shanks, all of the shares were now owned by people who were not actors or the king's servants, and demanded that some of these shares be sold to them.

The Burbages countered that they had inherited the theatres, or shares in the theatres, from their family; John Shanks added that if the Lord Chamberlain's office admitted Swanson, Pollard, and Benefield's suit, there would never be an end to the financial wrangling and chaos. In the event, Shanks was proved right: between increased production costs, a narrowing audience, and difficulties with internal organization, the King's Men lacked the financial strength to withstand the external pressures brought to bear in the 1640s.

Ultimately, studying the business practices of the Chamberlain's and the King's Men and the syndicates that owned the Globe and the Blackfriars provides a valuable light on the conditions which helped produce Shakespeare's plays and the milieu in which they were first performed.

## CHAPTER 24

### FOREIGN WORLDS

JANE HWANG DEGENHARDT

As Shakespeare was writing plays for the English stage, England was advancing its position on the world stage through overseas exploration and commerce. In 1580, Sir Francis Drake became the first Englishman to circumnavigate the globe successfully. His triumphant return helped galvanize support for later exploratory and commercial ventures, and made him a national legendary figure—but also a controversial one—for years to come. Earlier examples of successful commercial and colonial ventures led by the Spanish and the Portuguese incentivized the English to follow suit. Although the English still played only a small role in the arena of international maritime trade, they began in the late sixteenth century to penetrate the rich markets of the eastern Mediterranean and to undertake exploratory ventures in the Far East and the Americas. Newly obtained knowledge of these foreign worlds informed and transformed a wide range of English cultural media, including travel narratives, cartographical materials such as globes and maps, and popular stage plays performed in the public theatres.

This chapter will consider some of the ways that Shakespeare's plays registered England's growing awareness of the foreign worlds beyond its borders by incorporating topical references and by projecting in less direct ways English fantasies and apprehensions about cross-cultural commerce, travel, and exploration. In particular, it will consider the significance of the Mediterranean world, which was a place of central importance to Shakespeare both because of its rich classical legacies and its contemporary hubs of East-West commerce, newly accessed by the English. After offering an overview of English trade in the Mediterranean and forays into other geographical regions, I examine some of the ways that Shakespeare's settings evoke foreign worlds—both old and new—through richly layered temporal resonances. A brief case study of *Twelfth Night* demonstrates how contemporary geopolitical resonances might offer deeper insight into Shakespeare's foreign settings and their animation of temporal, geographical, and imperial border zones. In addition, this chapter considers the process by which the distances and displacements associated with travel to faraway places were translated onto the stage—from the globe to the Globe, as it were. It demonstrates how

the task of representing foreign worlds stretched the limitations of the stage and reshaped theatrical conventions, ultimately introducing audiences to new pleasures in observing the imperfect contrivances of dramatic enactment and the heightened stakes of reconciliation and homecoming as sources of generic resolution.

## ENGLISH COMMERCE AND EXPLORATION

During the time Shakespeare's plays were first being written and performed, England's overseas ventures were most profitably directed at the southeastern Mediterranean, including the Levant and the northern coast of Africa. Primarily controlled by the Ottoman Empire, direct trade in these areas was largely inaccessible to the English until the early 1570s, due to the impossibility of competing with the Venetians, who had negotiated exclusive trading rights with the Ottomans. Venice's defeat by the Turks in Cyprus in 1571, combined with Antwerp's collapse as the major northern entrepot, created a rare opportunity for England to break into the Mediterranean trade. The Anglo-Spanish War as well as the weakening holds of Spain and Portugal within the eastern territories also helped bolster England's presence in the Mediterranean. Queen Elizabeth actively pursued diplomatic relations with the Ottoman Empire and Morocco, and she appointed English consuls in Cairo, Alexandria, Aleppo, Damascus, Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli. By establishing direct trading relations in these regions, the English did away with their former reliance on intermediaries for obtaining a wide range of luxury goods, including silks, carpets, cloths, oils, wines, currants, pepper, cloves, nutmegs, cinnamon, ginger, sugar, indigo, and other spices. The growth of luxury consumption across Europe drove the profitability of these particular commodities and created lucrative markets for their re-export within Europe.

England's commerce in the Mediterranean contributed to a major shift in its commercial orientation away from a reliance on cloth exports and toward a reliance on the importation of raw goods for domestic manufacturing, broad home consumption, and re-export to Europe and eventually the New World.<sup>1</sup> The second half of the sixteenth century and the opening decades of the seventeenth century saw the founding of the great joint-stock companies, the Muscovy Company in 1555, the Levant Company in 1592, the East India Company in 1599, and the Virginia Company in 1609. By far, England's trade in the Levant represented the most profitable branch of its overseas commerce during the period between 1580 and 1620. In particular, the merging of the

Venice and Turkey companies into the Levant Company strengthened the English Levant trade by forging a monopoly that dissolved competition between the two companies. With its commercial advances in the eastern Mediterranean, England exchanged its passive role within Europe's trading system for an active role in the global system.

England's new role in Mediterranean trade brought with it a new set of cross-cultural encounters that helped reorient its view of itself in relation to the rest of the world. In particular, the English became aware of the far larger, wealthier, and more powerful Ottoman Empire, which controlled the majority of trade taking place in the Levant and along the Barbary Coast of Africa through tributary relationships. News reports and prayers offered at church repeatedly reminded the English of the Ottoman Empire's imperial ambitions and its increasing incursions on European territories. Contemporary territorial threats added to a long history of Christian-Muslim warfare, including the Crusades as well as more recent sixteenth-century struggles over the Mediterranean islands of Rhodes, Malta, Crete, Sicily, and Cyprus. By the early seventeenth century, a text such as *The estates, empires, & principallities of the world* ominously reported that the Ottoman Empire's imperial dominion extended 3,000 miles from Brda to Constantinople,<sup>2</sup> as well as across the northern coast of Africa from Alexandria to the border of Morocco.<sup>3</sup> In taking up the rhetoric of the Crusades, many early modern writers interpreted Ottoman imperialism as a religious threat to all of Europe, lamenting the loss of a united Christendom because of the fracturing effects of the Reformation. Nevertheless, the perceived benefits of trade prompted the English to seek diplomatic relations with the Ottoman Empire and to devote substantial resources toward commerce in the Mediterranean. The desires and anxieties attendant upon Mediterranean trade helped set the scene for a proliferation of Muslim characters on the English stage as well as the production of numerous plays featuring intercultural conflicts between Christians and Turks in Mediterranean settings.

During this period English overseas aspirations were not solely directed at the Mediterranean world. The English pursued a number of ventures in the Americas, hoping to follow in Spain's footsteps. Richard Eden's 1555 translation of Peter Martyr d'Anghera's *Decades of the Newe Worlde* encouraged the English to support and emulate the Spanish in their colonial conquests of America. While Eden's text appeared under the reign of Queen Mary and was influenced by an Anglo-Spanish alliance created by the Queen's marriage to Philip II, in subsequent years the English viewed their colonial obligations in the New World as a means of containing Spain's dominance there and defending the Protestant Reformation abroad. Queen Elizabeth took up this charge during her reign and authorized royal patents for half-brothers Humphrey Gilbert and Walter Raleigh's voyages to the New World in the late 1570s and 1580s. Raleigh's attempt to set up an English colony in Virginia was later publicized by Thomas Harriot, who reported on his experience as part of Raleigh's expedition. First

<sup>1</sup> For a history of this commercial shift and the rise of the joint stock companies, see Robert Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution: Commercial Change, Political Conflict, and London's Overseas Traders, 1550-1653* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993). For a discussion of the East India Company's reorientation of trade around imports and re-exports, in place of English exports, see K. N. Chaudhuri, *The English East India Company: The Study of an Early Joint-Stock Company, 1600-1640* (New York: August Kelley, 1965).

<sup>2</sup> Pierre d'Avity, *The estates, empires, & principallities of the world*, trans. B. Garmistone (London: 1615), 936.

published as a small pamphlet in 1588 and expanded in 1590 with detailed engravings that compared the native Americans to the ancient Scottish Picts. Harriot's report encouraged future colonial ventures by emphasizing America's abundance of natural resources and assuaging anxieties about hostility among the natives.<sup>3</sup>

Other early modern reports of English ventures in the New World played up the advantages of colonialism, but they also reflected its difficulties and in some cases drew suspicions. As Mary Fuller has argued, Raleigh's voyage to Guiana in 1596 produced a text (*Discoverie of Guiana*) with an agenda similar to Harriot's, promising gold mines more lucrative than Peru's. Later called upon to authenticate this account, Raleigh received permission to undertake a second voyage to Guiana in 1618, but he succeeded only in attacking the Spanish-occupied town of San Thome and did not find the lucrative gold mine of El Dorado. After a long history of treason charges and conflicts with the Crown, he was ultimately executed by King James after his return to England. While Raleigh's efforts in the New World were largely unsuccessful, they helped pave the way for later English explorers such as John Smith, who established the first permanent English settlement at Jamestown in 1607. Smith's writings sought to incentivize other English settlements in the New World with optimistic accounts such as the story of his rescue by Pocahontas, but they also detail his first-hand experiences with captivity, mutiny, conflicts with native Americans, and numerous hardships. In general, colonial prospects in the New World generated some impassioned publicity in England but went largely unrealized until the later seventeenth century—a fact that has been distorted by tendencies to magnify claims of English empire and transatlantic expansionism in the early modern period. English explorers had tremendous difficulty obtaining sufficient public or private support to effectively pursue settlements in the New World. While America looms large in modern accounts of English empire, during Shakespeare's time it was viewed as a risky investment for overseas ventures and an inconvenient obstacle to the more desirable wealth of Cathay and the Far East. Indeed, many of the voyages to America were funded with the intention of discovering a passage to the East.<sup>4</sup>

Attempts to discover a northwest passage to the Far East also inadvertently facilitated the opening of English trade with Muscovy and Persia in the 1550s. Seeking a route to the spices and gold of the Far East that was free from Portuguese interference, the Muscovy Company helped establish direct trade with Russia, which centred on the import of naval supplies and furs. Soon after, the Company founded a direct overland trade with Persia via Russia, and sent six voyages to Persia between 1557 and 1570. When the Turks cut off the overland route from Russia to Persia in 1570, the English pursued an alternate route via the Mediterranean Sea, eventually leading to the founding of the Turkey Company in 1580–1, a development characterized by historian Robert Brenner

as 'the decisive step in the Elizabethan expansion'.<sup>5</sup> Travels and exploration in Russia and Persia were publicized to English readers through accounts such as Giles Fletcher's *Of the Russe Common Wealth* (1591) and pamphlets detailing the travels of Robert Shirley.

Despite the high desirability of its trade, the Far East and, in particular, the Moluccas Spice Islands of the Indonesian archipelago, remained largely out of reach to the English during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.<sup>6</sup> Under licence from the Muscovy Company, Martin Probiecher led three ventures to establish a northeast trade route to the Indies between 1576 and 1578, but these expeditions repeatedly landed in Canada. Drake reached the Moluccas during his circumnavigation of the globe in 1579, and sent members of his crew ashore on the island of Ternate, where they spoke with the sultan about taking over the clove trade from Portuguese control. Held back by mutual suspicions and a lack of formal authorization from the Queen, Drake's men did not finalize an agreement, though Drake's success in finding the Spice Islands inspired others in England to continue to pursue trade there. Subsequent attempts to break into the Indonesian spice trade were thwarted, however, by difficulties in securing funding for expeditions and aggressive competition from the Dutch, who had discovered the best route to the Far East by sailing around the Cape of Good Hope. In India, which was often conflated with the Moluccas by early modern writers, English advances were quite limited during the time Shakespeare was writing. In 1607, directors of the East India Company made contact with the Gujarati port of Surat, and in 1615 they dispatched a ship directly from Surat to England, but it took many years for the English to establish firm commercial footholds in Surat and Agra. This slow progress may help to put into context the seemingly casual reference to an Indian boy in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. While Oberon and Titania's conflict over the boy seems to imply their sense of entitlement to this prized commodity, in actuality, direct access to Indian commodities proved as elusive to the English in 1596 as the boy himself, whose body never appears on the stage.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, English participation in the emerging sub-Saharan African and West Indian slave trades remained quite limited during the early modern period. John Hawkins led several English slaving voyages in 1560s to the Guinea coast and the Spanish West Indies, but these efforts were effectively abandoned by the 1570s and did not resume until after 1650.

<sup>3</sup> Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution*, 16.

<sup>4</sup> On the Moluccas, see Robert Markley, *The Far East in the English Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), ch. 1; Jerry Brotton, *Trading Territories: Mapping the Early Modern World* (London: Reaktion Books, 1997), ch. 4; and Kenneth Andrews, *Trade, Plunder and Settlement: Maritime Enterprise and the Genesis of the British Empire 1480–1630* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 265–70.

<sup>5</sup> For influential discussions of the play's reference to the Indian boy, see Anita Loomba, 'The Great Indian Vanishing Trick—Colonialism, Property, and the Family in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*', in Dyanne Callaghan (ed.), *A Feminist Companion to Shakespeare* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000), 163–87; and Shanhar Ramant's psychoanalytic reading of the Indian boy in *Franching India* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), ch. 6.

<sup>3</sup> *A Brief and True Report of the Newfoundland of Virginia* (London: 1588, 1590).

<sup>4</sup> Consider for example the title of Humphrey Gilbert's report of his voyage to America: *Discourse of a Discoverie for a new passage to Catalia* (London: 1576).

## FANTASIES, REALITIES, AND RISKS

As this cursory sketch of England's overseas activities during Shakespeare's time suggests, English ventures into foreign worlds were generally characterized by struggle and disappointment rather than confidence and mastery. Although John Dee, a mathematician and adviser to Queen Elizabeth, coined the term 'British Empire' in 1576, the state of British imperialism at the time was extremely tentative and undeveloped. Occupying a peripheral position on the rim of northern Europe, England entered late upon the imperial scene and had been largely eclipsed by the Spanish, Portuguese, and Dutch. This is not to say that the English did not imagine themselves as future colonizers or produce a substantial volume of writings expressing the fantasy of imperial conquest. Colonial struggles closer to home to contain the Welsh, Scots, and Irish within an emerging British nation initiated a process that the English hoped to extend farther afield. A play such as *Henry V* illustrates the difficulties of subsuming England's internal colonies under one body politic through its depiction of highly distinct Welsh, Irish, and Scottish subjects. The desire for empire was richly articulated across a wide range of cultural media, including popular drama, but the reality was that England could not compete with other European countries, much less with the immense and powerful Ottoman, Persian, and Mughl empires outside of Europe. As critics such as Jerry Brotton have now amply demonstrated, the East was perceived to be dominant over the West during Shakespeare's time, and even the notion that the European Renaissance originated exclusively in Italy is largely misleading.<sup>9</sup> Rather, the Renaissance period was characterized by East-West exchange and collaboration, producing a wealth of artwork, technological inventions, and writings that integrated influences from Africa, the Levant, and the Far East. Within this cross-cultural Renaissance, England assumed a belated and struggling role.

If England entered the world stage during Shakespeare's time, it did so by virtue of its growing participation in the Mediterranean trade, rather than its colonial efforts or its imperial prowess. In the words of historian Kenneth Andrews, the English 'put colonization well below trade and plunder in their priorities. Their primary objective from about 1580 down to 1690 was oriental trade.'<sup>10</sup> But England's shifting reliance on eastern commerce was associated with both substantial risk and controversy. For one, the dangers of travel in the Mediterranean were significant. The limitations of maritime technology rendered journeys long and arduous, and the chances of getting thrown off course or shipwrecked were high. Seamen often experienced disease, hunger, conflict over victuals, and mutiny. In addition, piracy and plunder—particularly along the Barbary Coast of Africa—proved to be constant threats. English seamen were vulnerable not only to Muslim corsairs, who threatened enslavement and forced conversion to Islam, but to

attacks by Spanish, Italian, and other Christian ships. In many cases piracy afforded a more profitable profession than legitimate trade, and numerous Englishmen took up its practice and reaped its benefits. The adventures of life on the seas and the moral vicissitudes of Christian renegades informed a popular genre of stage plays that fictionalized the exploits of real-life adventurers such as Thomas Stukely, John Ward, Francis Drake, and the Shirley brothers. While none of Shakespeare's plays fits squarely into the genre, several plays such as *Othello* and *The Tempest* contain recognizable elements of the adventure drama, or else feature the odd sea captain (consider the pirate's head in *Measure for Measure*, the sea captain in *Twelfth Night*, and the merchant who is delayed from his voyage to Persia in *The Comedy of Errors*) or threatening Mediterranean port (consider Mytilene in *Pericles*).

In addition to the physical dangers of conducting maritime trade in the Levant and along the Barbary Coast, risks associated with economic investment in foreign imports created controversy about global trade. Some worried that the investment of English bullion in global trade would compromise England's pressing need to defend its own borders. Others worried about the potential moral hazards of cross-cultural trade for both the individual seafarer and the English nation as a whole. William Harrison's *Description of England*, which was incorporated into Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles* (1577, 1587), expresses suspicions about the effects of foreign trade on the English character. Many others worried that English expenditures overseas would not be sufficiently recouped in the form of viable profits. *The Merchant of Venice* dramatizes this anxious possibility through its repeated references to Antonio's foreign ventures, which the his 'means' up 'in supposition': 'he hath an argosy bound for Tripolis, another to the Indies, . . . a third at Mexico, a fourth for England, and other ventures he hath squandered abroad' (1.3.16, 17–20).<sup>10</sup> Although Antonio claims that his exposure is minimized because his 'ventures are not in one bottom trusted | Nor to one place', the dispersal of his capital so diffusely around the world requires him to relinquish his control over it (1.1.42–3). Over the course of the play, news of Antonio's losses at sea continues to pour into the Rialto, and the stakes of such losses are weighed in the threat to Antonio's very flesh, which he has wedged against these overseas investments. We do not get to see Antonio's ships at sea or their far-flung destinations, but we do see the potential effects of their loss played out in Venice and in the human drama that unfolds between friends and enemies at home. As Valerie Forman has recently shown, the English stage responded to England's new economic practices by producing a genre of plays that transformed losses into gains by following a tragicomic arc.<sup>11</sup> Although for Forman, *The Merchant of Venice* does not adhere entirely to this generic model, it does assuage anxieties about overseas investments by showing that Antonio's economic

<sup>9</sup> Jerry Brotton, *The Renaissance Bazaar: From the Silk Road to Michelangelo* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

<sup>10</sup> Andrews, *Trade, Plunder and Settlement*, 356.

<sup>10</sup> All line references to Shakespeare's plays correspond to John Jowett, William Montgomery, Gary Taylor, and Stanley Wells (eds.), *The Oxford Shakespeare Complete Works* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

<sup>11</sup> Valerie Forman, *Tragicomic Redemptions: Global Economics and the Early Modern English Stage* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

fortunes ultimately fall under the protection of Christian providence. He not only profits from his bond with Shylock, he learns in the final act of the play that 'three of [his] argosies | Are richly come into harbour suddenly' (5.1.276-7). This 'sudden' reversal of fortune, which allows Antonio to 'read for certain that [his] ships | Are safely come to road', amounts to a kind of miracle, reflecting the grave uncertainties and suspicions associated with overseas trade (5.1.287-9).

Another concern related to foreign trade had to do with its effects on London as a rising world city and temporary home to a growing number of immigrants. London's transformation during this period was fostered by its spectacular demographic and economic growth. Its population tripled between the years 1520 and 1600, with thousands of people migrating yearly to London from other parts of the country. By 1600, London was the third largest city in Europe, surpassed only by Naples and Paris. The expansion of English mercantile activity, primarily in the Mediterranean, contributed significantly to London's rise as a world city and to its emerging cosmopolitanism.<sup>12</sup> In 1568, Thomas Gresham built the Royal Exchange, modelled on the great trading bourses on the Continent, to serve as a gathering place for international merchants. The Royal Exchange figured prominently in city comedies such as William Haughton's *Englishman for My Money* (1598) and Thomas Heywood's *If you Know Not Me You Know Nobody, Part II* (1606). Jean Howard argues that it came to symbolize 'London's pride in its growing role as an international entrepot' as well as its 'anxiety about the traffic with strangers that such a role mandates'.<sup>13</sup> Due to its shifting commercial status, London attracted increasing numbers of foreign visitors, including traders and diplomats who populated the Royal Exchange, official places of business, and the London theatres as well.

Scapegatois for the problems relating to overcrowding, grain shortages, and poverty included not only the labourers who had migrated to London from other parts of Britain and Europe, but also London's growing community of alien merchants. As Antia Loomba has observed, 'England displayed an increasing hostility to, and anxiety about, the presence of outsiders within its borders, even as it sought to expand its own frontiers'.<sup>14</sup> In turn, movements emerged that sought to circumscribe the legal and economic rights of outsiders. In 1596 and again in 1601, Queen Elizabeth issued open letters to the Lord Mayor of London commanding the expulsion of 'blackmoores' from the land. Given the 'divers blackmoores brought into this realme, of which kind of people there are already here to manie' and the recent increase to the English population, Elizabeth expressed concern for the 'people of our own nation' who for lack of work 'fall to idleness and to great extremitie'.<sup>15</sup> Reaction against the influx of foreigners in London thus resulted in a form of colour-based discrimination. According to

<sup>12</sup> Crystal Bartolovich, "Baseless Fabric": London as a "World City", in Peter Habine and William H. Sherman (ed.), *The Tempest and Its Travels* (London: Reaktion Books, 2000), 13-26.

<sup>13</sup> Jean Howard, *Theater of a City: The Places of London Comedy, 1598-1642* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

<sup>14</sup> Loomba, *The Great Indian Vanishing Trick*, 155.

<sup>15</sup> *Acts of the Privy Council of England*, no. 26 (1596-7), John Roche Dassett (ed.) (London: Mackie & Co., 1902), 16-17, 20-1.

Early Barrels, Queen Elizabeth's move to deport London's Moors to Spain and Portugal also served a specific practical purpose in offering the Moors in exchange for the redemption of English captives from Spain.<sup>16</sup> Apparently, during his final voyage of 1595-6, Drake attacked the Spanish-occupied West Indian town of Rio de la Hacha and captured a number of Moors—an occurrence referred to in Elizabeth's 1596 letter. While ostensibly aimed at redressing the displacement of English subjects from jobs taken by Moorish immigrants, Elizabeth's deportation orders were informed by Anglo-Spanish hostilities being played out in foreign commercial and colonial spaces. Thus, Elizabeth's move to rid London of these outsiders responded to the effects of global commerce in more ways than one.

## TRAVEL WRITING AND THE ENGLISH TRAVELLER

England's new role in global trade had a direct impact on cultural life, the evidence of which survives in a diverse range of texts from the period. Global trade affected not only the materials and experiences of everyday life, but also the cultural fantasies of the English and their shifting view of the world around them. As I have been implicitly suggesting, popular media such as the plays performed on the public stage assumed a vital role in making sense of this new world and reconciling England's place within it. Another popular medium that flourished due to England's growing interest in cross-cultural commerce and exploration was travel writing. Within a relatively short period of time, English publishers produced a diverse array of travel books written by a wide range of travellers—some leading state-authorized ventures, others travelling for leisure, others working in the crews of merchant ships, and still others forced to travel because of religious exile or captivity. Travel books also served a broad range of purposes, reporting on past voyages, appealing for funding for future expeditions, providing navigational and other practical information, and telling stories of exotic places and dangerous exploits purely for entertainment.

Richard Hakluyt's massive compilation of the full range of narratives in *The Privet-pall Navigations, Voyages, and Discoveries of the English Nation* (1589, 1598-1600) provided an archive of past and present English voyages that was oriented around promoting patriotic support for future voyages. Like *The Merchant of Venice*, it linked commerce with Christian providence, and more specifically aligned English commercial and proto-colonial expansion with the Protestant cause. The first edition of Hakluyt's compilation covered ninety-three voyages and spanned 1,500 years; by the time of his second edition, eleven years later, the number of voyages included had

<sup>16</sup> Early Barrels, *Speaking of the Moor: From Alcazar to Othello* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), ch. 4.

doubled. While Hakluyt claimed that his collected narratives all possessed a certain truth value grounded in the actual experiences of their authors, these kinds of claims were becoming as commonplace as the perception that travel writing was nothing but fabrication and lies. Featuring authors ranging from John Mandeville to Walter Raleigh, Hakluyt's collection reflected the capacious range of travel writing that circulated in the period and its blurring of the line between truth and fiction.

If travel narratives attracted suspicions about their veracity that in some ways enhanced their popular appeal, the travelling persona also emerged as a kind of performative trope in the period. English travellers such as Fynes Morison, Thomas Coryate, William Lithgow, George Sandys, Henry Blount, and many others wrote books that followed similar conventions but also exhibited highly distinct narrative voices. In turn, English travellers were perceived by popular audiences in a variety of ways. Some like Francis Drake and the Shirley brothers were celebrated as national heroes. Strategically marketed to cultivate their legendary potential, these figures attained near-celebrity status, while at the same time offering examples of how landless men or second sons could rise in social status, or even become landed through colonial plantations. On the negative side, the social climbing associated with travel also fuelled anxieties about the English traveller's susceptibility to degeneration, his loss of Englishness, his indiscriminate assimilation of foreign influences, and at worst, his risk of becoming a lawless renegade. Travellers such as Thomas Coryate and John Taylor made light of these anxieties, self-consciously playing up their eccentricities to provide amusement to readers. A woodcut illustration of Coryate balancing precariously atop an elephant in India depicted in ways both provocative and unthreatening the displacement of Englishness in a foreign world.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, English travellers who re-invented themselves through foreign fashions became a source of parody. Portia's dismissal of her English suitor in *The Merchant of Venice* seems to evoke comically anxieties about the hybridization of the English subject due to the effects of travel and trade: 'How oddly he is suited! I think he bought his doublet in Italy, his round hose in France, his bonnet in Germany, and his behaviour every where' (1.2.70-3). Such parodies seem equally invested in exposing English susceptibility to foreign influences and mocking illegitimate class pretensions made possible through foreign travel and trade. A text such as *Coryate's Crudities* (1611) played up the pretensions of an aristocratic world traveller to comic effect through Coryate's self-mocking performance and the inclusion of pangeyric verses appended to the text. Assuming a more serious response to anxieties about the effects of foreign influences on English gentlemen, Roger Ascham's *The Scholemaster* (1570) attacked 'Italianate Englishmen,' whose bodies and souls were corrupted through travel, and asserted the virtues of staying at home to receive one's education in England.

Many other writers attempted to dissuade English travel by emphasizing its physical and moral risks. Thomas Nashe's *The Unfortunate Traveler* (1594) offers a purely

<sup>17</sup> See Thomas Corneil traveller for the English wit: greeting from the Court of the Great Mogul (London: 1616), title-page.

fictional account of one Jack Wilton's adventures in France, Germany, and Italy that depicts travel as dangerous and corrupting. The book seems to suggest that the best way to experience the world is not to travel but simply to stay home and read about it. Of course, the dangerous exploits and death-defying escapes described in travel narratives were exactly what made people want to read Nashe's book and why travel was such big business for publishers of books and pamphlets. A wealth of travel and captivity narratives describing torture, enslavement, and forced conversion in the dominion of the Ottoman Empire elevated the potential dangers of travel to an extreme level.<sup>18</sup> These stories not only detailed the physical hardships inflicted by merciless Turks, but also described the terrifying possibility of being converted to Islam, or 'turned Turk'—a fate that was understood to be worse than death. As Desdemona's entrapment by Othello's traveller's history demonstrates, stories of travel and travail were powerfully seductive. And for most audiences, travel narratives offered the excitement and suspense of travel without the risks of death or conversion.

## THE ROLE OF THE STAGE

At a time when travel was dangerous, impractical, and relatively rare, the stage played a significant role in bringing the world home to English audiences. In addition to addressing audiences' curiosities about foreign worlds, it afforded travel without travel. Although small numbers of English travellers were venturing to increasingly distant reaches of the world, most English theatregoers would never leave England. The same was true of playwrights like Shakespeare, whose knowledge of foreign places was based on travel narratives, chronicles, newbooks, hearsay, maps and atlases, and other plays and literary texts. By contrast, London theatres themselves were increasingly visited by foreign travellers, merchants, and diplomats. In 1599, the Swiss physician Thomas Platter attended two plays, a cockfight, and a bearbaiting in London, and subsequently observed in his journal, 'With these and many more amusements the English pass their time, learning at the play what is happening abroad . . . since the English for the most part do not travel much, but prefer to learn foreign matters and take their pleasures at home.'<sup>19</sup> Platter characterized as 'English' the tendencies both to stay home and to learn about the world by going to the theatre. An outpouring of plays between 1580 and 1610 featured travel to distant places and were known by titles such as *Fortune By Land and Sea*, *The Travails of the Three English Brothers*, *John Mandeville*, *Captain Thomas Stukeley*, *The New World's Tragedy*, *The Fair Maid of the West*, *Eastward Ho!*, *The Four Pericles of London*, and, of course, *The Tempest* and *Pericles*

<sup>18</sup> See Nabih Matric, *Islam in Britain 1581-1685* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), and Daniel Vikas, *Turning Turk: English Theater and the Multicultural Mediterranean* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).

<sup>19</sup> Thomas Platter's *Travels in England*, 1599, trans. Clare Williams (London: Jonathan Cape, 1997).

(as well as many others). Collectively, these plays express a wide range of views about travel, including fantasies of mastery, pronounced anxieties about cross-cultural contact, excitement about the unknown, caution about the dangers of travel, and reassurance in the form of exemplary models and Christian providence.

Even plays not overtly concerned with travel engaged English interests in foreign worlds in numerous ways. The majority of Shakespeare's plays are set in foreign or otherworldly settings and often in past temporalities, thus exhibiting a layering of ancient and topical resonances. In addition, the materials of global trade frequently found their way into the fictions, as well as the property and costume inventories, of Shakespeare's plays and are casually referred to by characters both high and low. In *The Comedy of Errors*, Antipholus of Ephesus offers instructions for locating his purse of ducats in a desk 'that's covered o'er with Turkish tapestry' (4.1.104). His possession of a Turkish tapestry seems both unremarkable and temporally disorienting, given the play's ostensible setting in ancient Ephesus. Perhaps similarly, King Lear's objection to 'the fashion of [Edgar's] garments', which he presumes Edgar will say are 'Persian', displaces a reference familiar to the English through contemporary eastern trade onto Lear's eighth-century BC reign (3.6.37-9). Other plays invoked English desires for foreign commodities by drawing attention to their absence on the stage. In *Messire for Messire*, Pompey the clown describes serving stewed prunes in dishes that 'are not China-dishes', but 'good dishes' nonetheless (2.1.92). His reference to Chinese porcelain as a standard for judging his own household items reflects chinaware's inflated value and relative inaccessibility at the time. By contrast, a prop such as Othello's handkerchief suggests its vulnerability to all sorts of contextual reinscriptions through its very commonality and lack of distinction.<sup>20</sup> The handkerchief's contradictory histories as a gift given by an Egyptian to Othello's mother and as an object sewn by a slyly from the silk of 'hallowed' worms and 'dy'd in mummy' seem to establish its elusive and mysterious origins while also referring to materials and processes that assumed new significance for the English because of eastern trade (3.4.73-4). At once a common trifle and a rare gift with 'magic in the web of it', the handkerchief demonstrates the potential for an object's value to become destabilized as the result of promiscuous travel from place to place, and it may also stand in for the human subject's susceptibility to being reconstituted as the result of travel across cultural boundaries (3.4.69).

Shakespeare's plays also reflect the ways that innovations in the development of globes, maps, and atlases registered and helped shape new conceptions of the world and England's place within it. As Broton has shown, terrestrial globes started to become popular in the first decades of the sixteenth century.<sup>21</sup> As exemplified in images such as Hans Holbein's portrait of *The Ambassadors* (1533), the globe came to function as a shorthand for European claims of conquest and awareness of an expanding world.

Maps, too, were becoming increasingly familiar to early modern audiences due to the advent of print, though they still remained relatively rare and precious objects. Early modern maps reflected new levels of geographical accuracy, but they were also influenced by subjective geopolitical interests. If medieval 'T and O' maps privileged a Christian worldview by placing Jerusalem in the centre, early modern maps privileged other kinds of authority, such as royal dominion. For example, in the opening scene of *King Lear*, the King uses a map to illustrate the division of his kingdom into three parts, which he intends to parcel out to his daughters based on his perception of their deserts. In this way, the play models the use of a map to lay claim visually to territorial possession, power, and empire. Similarly in *Henry IV*, rebels plotting to overthrow the King bring a map onto the stage in order to divide the kingdom visually among each rebel leader. As John Gillies has discussed, isolated moments such as these demonstrate Shakespeare's conversance with geographic discourses and cartographic technologies, though they also distinguish his approach from playwrights such as Christopher Marlowe, whose *Tamburlaine* exhibits a cartographic knowledge that 'seems to be translated into the symbolic structures of the play as a whole'.<sup>22</sup>

Another localized example of Shakespeare's deployment of cartographic knowledge occurs in *The Comedy of Errors*, where the globe is metaphorically invoked to chart the foreign space of a woman's body. In this case, Dromio of Syracuse describes Nell's body as 'spherical, like a globe' (3.2.116-17) and proceeds to locate specific countries, different parts of her body. In addition to identifying a number of European countries, including Ireland, Scotland, France, England, Spain, Belgium, and the Netherlands, he also locates America and the Indies 'upon her nose', which is 'all o'er embellished with rubies, carbuncles, sapphires' (3.2.137-8). His comical charting of Nell's body inwardly reflects a knowledge of foreign trade and colonial hierarchies. In addition to comparing the embellishments on Nell's nose to the riches of America and the Indies, Dromio of Syracuse describes how they give way to Nell's breath, thereby 'declining their rich aspect to the hot breath of Spain, who sent whole armadas of carracks to be ballast at her nose' (3.2.39-41). Spain's location underneath America and the Indies, where it provides a 'ballast' or support for receiving their riches, reflects a commercial and colonial relationship rather than a geographical one. The only play in Shakespeare's canon to invoke 'America' explicitly, *The Comedy of Errors*' mapping of America in relation to Spain, also underscores Spain's rather than England's claims to America's riches.

This is not to say that Shakespeare's plays did not freely embrace fantasies of colonial subjection and express them in both local and more general ways. At the most local level, a character such as Falstaff in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* asserts a claim of sexual mastery through a language of imperial geography. He boasts of his intention to maintain two lovers at once: 'They shall be my East and West Indies, and I will trade to them both' (1.3.64-5). By contrast, a play such as *Othello* revises Venice's imperial past,

<sup>20</sup> For a reading of the fluctuating value (both economic and religious) of Othello's handkerchief as it circulates between multiple social spheres, see Elizabeth Williamson, *The Materiality of Religion in Early Modern English Drama* (Farnham: Ashgate Press, 2009), Coda.

<sup>21</sup> Jerry Brotton, *The Renaissance Bazaar*, ch. 5, and his *Trading Territories*.

<sup>22</sup> John Gillies, *Shakespeare and the Geography of Difference* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 52.

by reimagining the Christian loss of Cyprus to the invading Ottomans as a Christian victory in which the Turks conveniently drown on their way to Cyprus. This bald fantasy expresses the desirability of Christian imperial conquest over the Ottoman Turks while also acknowledging its unreality. In a different way, *The Tempest* models European subjugation of a foreign colonial space as a means of resolving problems of governance at home. The questions of whether the play is set in the Mediterranean or in the New World, and whether its chief concern is colonialism or political usurpation, have prompted heated critical debates. While these debates may obscure the ways that the play disrupts these binaries, linking Old World to New and colonialism to the restoration of political power, the distinction between a Mediterranean and New World setting has crucial implications, particularly in terms of topical resonance. While European colonialism in the New World was at least tentatively under way, Europeans harboured little to no hope of colonizing Mediterranean territories controlled by the much more powerful Ottoman Empire. On the one hand, the contemporary distinctions between eastern and western geographies seem not to matter in *The Tempest*—a play whose title refers to the displacement of its characters rather than the place where they land. In addition, the island seems to be as indebted to the magical realms of romance as it does to any 'real' place. But on the other hand, even a reading of the play's setting as otherworldly must take into account the topical significance of a journey from Tunis to Naples, or of the published reports of a Bermuda shipwreck that Shakespeare drew upon, in order to understand why Shakespeare adapts these contemporary associations in the ways that he does. In addition, the resonances of individual discourses of place—ancient or contemporary, empirical or fictional, eastern or western—are not necessarily mutually exclusive. The idea of a shipwreck on the way from the North African coast to Italy could not have been received in neutral ways by early modern audiences, who were undoubtedly familiar with news of shipwrecks and other calamities experienced in the notoriously unpoliced waters of the Mediterranean. As Anthony Parr puts it, 'The crusade against Islam, the shipwreck on a desert isle, and the trope of the world turned upside-down are long-established motifs made subject to modification by the pressures of contemporary events and discoveries.'<sup>25</sup>

## POTENTIAL CONTEMPORARY RESONANCE: *TWELFTH NIGHT'S* ILLYRIA

How can an appreciation of England's expanding worldview around 1600 help us read Shakespeare's plays better or differently? I would like to address this question by considering how the contemporary geopolitical resonances of the setting of *Twelfth*

*Night* might open up a broader interpretation of the events and relationships depicted in the play. Like *The Tempest*, the action of *Twelfth Night* is set in motion by a shipwreck that displaces characters onto an unknown foreign coast. The specific implications of their location affect both how the characters perceive their predicament as strangers in a strange land and how the audience understands their predicament. In her first line of the play, at the opening of the second scene, Viola mimics no words in posing the pointed question, 'What country, friends, is this?' (2.1.1). The 'friends' Viola addresses are her fellow shipmates, and as we later learn from the one named Antonio, the distinction between friend and foe in orienting oneself to this foreign country may indeed have dire significance. The Captain's reply, 'This is Illyria, lady', does little to quell Viola's anxieties (2.2.1). Suspecting that her brother has drowned and that she is without male protection in this strange land, Viola poses a second crucial question: 'And what shall I do in Illyria?' (2.2.3).

Questions about where exactly Viola has landed, what kind of place it is, and what kind of world it belongs to bear crucially upon what Viola 'shall do in Illyria'. Modern critics have tended to downplay Illyria's precise geographical significance by reading the play's setting as a timeless, placeless hinterland of Shakespeare's imagination.<sup>26</sup> Consistent with this reading, they tend to approach the play as one of Shakespeare's cross-dressing comedies, presuming that its playful negotiations of gender have nothing to do with the specificity of its setting. By contrast, I want to consider how Illyria's specific contemporary resonances might make possible a deeper understanding of the play's treatment of Viola's sexual vulnerability, her strategy of cross-dressing, and the tensions that animate the relationships between strangers and natives in this vexed setting.

For early modern audiences, Illyria's significance was informed by both classical and contemporary sources. According to classical authors such as Pliny, Ptolemy, and Thucydides, 'Illyria' referred to a vast stretch of coastline extending from modern-day Croatia to Greece. Though Greek settlements were established in the southern part of Illyria, according to Thucydides, the Greeks considered it a foreign and barbarous territory because of the different language spoken there. The characters' names in *Twelfth Night* reinforce the play's ties to a classical setting. The names Cesario, Sebastian, and Olivia all figured importantly in the life of Caesar Augustus, who lived in Illyria, had the Greek name Sebastos, and married a woman called Livia. At the same time, a number of early modern publications linked Illyria with a different kind of 'barbarity', that of the contemporary Ottoman Empire and the menacing figure of the Turk. It is invoked in this context by travel writers such as George Sandys and William Lithgow,<sup>27</sup> Sandys explicitly notes that the Christians of Illyria must pay tribute to the

<sup>25</sup> Anthony Parr, Introduction, *Three Renaissance Travel Plays* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), 4.

<sup>26</sup> An exception to this is Ganan Stavroukovic, 'Illyria Revisited: Shakespeare and the Eastern Adriatic', in Tom Chayton, Susan Brock, and Vincent Forts (eds.), *Shakespeares and the Mediterranean* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2004), who emphasizes Illyria's multivalent associations and its ties to romance.

<sup>27</sup> George Sandys, *A Relation of a Journey Begun Anno Domini 1610* (London: 1615), 2–3, and William Lithgow, *An Admirable and painful peregrination* (London: 1616), 21.



Turks, in addition to gifts and entertainment provided to the 'Grandseignor', in order to purchase their peace and a discharge of duties throughout the Ottoman empire'.<sup>26</sup>

Though Illyria eludes a precise location, its positioning along the stretch of the eastern Adriatic coastline sets it on the unstable border of what would have been the Ottoman Empire at the time of Shakespeare's play. During the mid to late fifteenth-century reign of Mehmed II, the Ottomans conquered most of the territory along the Adriatic coastline of Croatia, Bosnia, Yugoslavia, Albania, and Greece. Throughout the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, this vast territory remained an actively contested battleground between the Venetian and Ottoman empires, marking a border zone between Christendom and Islam. As we learn in the beginning of the second act from Viola's twin brother Sebastian, he and Viola have come from Messina, Sicily, suggesting that perhaps their ship was headed east (toward the rich trading ports of the eastern Mediterranean) when it failed to clear the southern coast of Greece and instead became redirected north into the Adriatic Sea. Given the geopolitical division of territory at the time of the play's performance, Viola and Sebastian's shipwreck effectively relocates them from the then Spanish-owned territory of Sicily to the western border of the Islamic Ottoman Empire, or the dominion of the Turk.

My objective here is not to close down the ambiguities of *'Tweelfth Night's* setting by aligning it with this single context, but rather to consider how its association with a border zone between East and West, Christianity and Islam, might inform the sexual implications of Viola's disguise. Toward this end, perhaps the label of 'cross-dressing' does more to obscure the precise nature of Viola's disguise in *'Tweelfth Night* than to clarify it. Why, we might ask instead, is *'Tweelfth Night* the only one of Shakespeare's cross-dressing plays to imagine the cross-dressed figure as an eunuch? The reference to Viola's eunuch disguise comes early on in the play, but it has generally been disregarded by critics. When Viola learns of the noble Duke Orsino and his hopeless suit for a noble lady named Olivia, she resolves to secure a position at Orsino's court and petitions the Captain to aid her:

Conceal me what I am, and be my aid  
For such disguise as happy shall become  
The form of my intent. I'll serve this duke.  
Thou shalt present me as an eunuch to him. (1.2.49–52)

To be sure, most editors have dismissed the significance of Viola's desire to pose as a eunuch, which the play refers to only once more in the same scene. But there is also reason to consider the opposite: the implicit pun of Viola's cross-dressed name, Cesario, as well as Malvolio's later reference to the 'e's, u's, and 's' that prove his lady's identity through her handwriting, may suggest that the play remembers its earlier reference to Viola's eunuch disguise. Responding to this possibility, Stephen Orgel has argued that Viola's implied surgical neutering renders her 'double-gendered'

and simultaneously heterosexual and homosexual.<sup>27</sup> But critics have not yet considered how such double-gendering might be inflected, and refigured, in a contemporary eastern context. From the perspective of early modern audiences, the Ottoman Empire was notorious for importing foreign slaves and forcibly castrating them to serve in the emperor's palace. White eunuchs served as officers of the seraglio, and black eunuchs guarded the harem; like Viola, they played a vital role in guarding the thresholds of the sultan's inner court and were used to convey messages back and forth between male and female domains. The fact of their castration enabled them to be trusted as guards of the harem; in this sense, their anatomical difference de-sexualized them rather than making them doubly-sexed.

Given this context for the play, Viola's planned disguise may be seen as providing a kind of sexual prophylactic against her vulnerability as a single maid in Orsino's court. If we think back to Orsino's opening speech of the play, we might detect hints of the stereotypical oriental despot in his sensuality, decadence, and lechery: 'If music be the food of love, play on, | Give me excess of it, that, surfeiting, | The appetite may sicken and so die' (1.1.1–3). In other English plays of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the stereotypical oriental despot took the specific form of a reigning Turk. Plays such as Thomas Kyd's *Soliman and Perseda*, Thomas Heywood's *The Fair Maid of the West*, and Robert Daborne's *A Christian Turned Turk* featured male Turks lustful after young Christian maidens. It is perhaps no coincidence that in each of these three plays, the vulnerable female who finds herself the object of the sultan's merciless sexual persecution cross-dresses in order to protect her maidenhood. Viola's plan to disguise herself as an eunuch in order to enter into service in Orsino's court plays upon the early modern stage's frequent representation of vulnerable female sexuality in the courts of eastern tyrants. This context may also enable us to appreciate in broader terms the stakes of Viola's exogamous marriage to Orsino, the count of Illyria. Even this largely playful comedy cannot quite envision such a marriage coming to fruition: as many critics have observed, Viola never does shed her disguise and re-inhabit her maiden weeds.

If the disguise of the castrated eunuch offered a form of protection for female sexual vulnerability, it also conveyed anxieties about masculine vulnerability. In contemporary plays, male Christian characters who were tempted or forced to convert to Islam by means of enslavement, torture, sexual seduction, or the promise of wealth and social advancement sealed their conversions by undergoing circumcision. The slippery slope between circumcision and castration constituted a running joke on the stage. In Thomas Heywood's *Fair Maid of the West*, the clownish servant Clem is duped into undergoing castration by the promise of social mobility. More tragically, in John Mason's *Barnuchus*, a character described as 'a free borne Christian's sonne in Cyprus' made captive 'when Ramagusta by the Turke was sackt' laments his fate at the hands of his Turkish captors: 'They wrongd nature in me, mad[de] me an Eunuch | Disabled of

<sup>26</sup> Sanders, *A Relation of a Journey*, 3.

<sup>27</sup> Stephen Orgel, *Impersonations: The Performance of Gender in Shakespeare's England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 56.

those masculine functions | Due from our sex' (1.2.89–91). In addition to completely emasculating a subject, the condition of being circumcised or castrated was frequently associated with a pronounced vulnerability to anal penetration, which Turkish males were also perceived to be notorious for desiring. Ironically, of course, while Viola's eunuch disguise protects her at least temporarily from Orsino's sexual desire, it opens her up to Olivia's desire. On the one hand, this possibility is comically defused by the fact that it does not threaten penetration; but on the other hand, the underlying fact of the actors' male bodies raises the more perverse spectre of anal penetration. The Turkish threats of castration and buggery might also vaguely inform the danger that Antonio senses in Illyria. While we never fully learn what Sebastian and Viola are doing on the ship, we learn in Act 3 that Antonio has served before as a professional seaman and that he was previously involved in a 'sea-fight' against Orsino's galleys. He warns Sebastian that the streets of Illyria could 'prove rough and inhospitable' to one who is a stranger, 'unguided and unfriended' (3.2.10–11), adding:

I do not without danger walk these streets.  
Once in a sea-fight 'gainst the Count his galleys  
I did some service of such note indeed  
That were I 'twixt here it would scarce be answered. (3.3.25–8)

Antonio's somewhat cryptic allusion to his past offence and endangerment to captivity in Illyria suggests that he has plundered a ship of Orsino's during a sea-fight. Playgoers would have easily associated the dangers facing Antonio with the contemporary dangers of captivity, conversion, circumcision, and castration experienced by English privateers and pirates operating in the waters of the Ottoman Empire.

I have explored this potential contemporary resonance of Illyria not to suggest that it constitutes the correct or most important context for understanding *Twelfth Night*, but that it offers *one possible* context for interpreting the play's multivalent setting. As with *The Tempest*, Shakespeare seems in *Twelfth Night* to refuse the specificity of setting, instead exploiting a multiplicity of potential resonances and the extent to which geographical locations are layered by multiple temporal histories. Illyria's significance as a place of constant and violent struggle is informed by its multiple histories of Roman, Venetian, and Ottoman conquest, as well as by its location on the border between East and West. The hybrid identity of Shakespeare's Illyria sustains traces of all three conquests. Thus, in a sense, Illyria is less a timeless and placeless setting devoid of meaning (as some critics have suggested) than a place packed with too many meanings, inflicted by a layered history of struggles between East and West.

## SHAKESPEARE'S SETTINGS AS BORDER ZONES

The foregoing consideration of *Twelfth Night's* temporally layered setting offers a model for approaching the multivalent settings in many of Shakespeare's plays. The

Ottoman Empire resonates in a number of these plays, including *The Comedy of Errors*, *Peticles*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *Othello*, all of which are set in geographical territories ultimately conquered by the Ottomans. Due to its commercial importance as well as its association with interreligious and imperial strife, the Mediterranean was considered by Shakespeare and his audiences to be one of the most highly charged regions of the world. For example, *The Comedy of Errors* engages contemporary commerce in the Mediterranean and its attendant dangers by projecting the fungibility of commodities onto human bodies. In adapting the setting of Plautus' *Menaechmi*, which is set not in Ephesus but in Epidaurum, Shakespeare presents an Ephesus defined by mercantilism that also signifies in multiple and inconsistent ways: it is both pre-Christian and post-Christian, classical and contemporary, familiar and foreign.<sup>28</sup> Riddled with Pauline references, the play registers Ephesus' biblical connection to St Paul, who spent two years in Ephesus converting the Gentiles to Christianity. In addition, it engages Ephesus' significance as a Mediterranean port of the Ottoman Empire, a place that Christian merchants valued for its rich trade but also entered with serious concerns about the safety of their bodies and souls. As Arthur F. Kinney has pointed out, 'the business of *The Comedy of Errors* is business'; every character in the play has some good or service to sell or trade, and the word 'gold' occurs thirty times—far more than in any other Shakespeare play.<sup>29</sup> The contemporary location of Ephesus meant that it was a place where English merchants and adventurers were putting their own baptisms to the test by trading and consorting with Muslims, Jews, and Catholics. In analogizing the conversions associated with Christian universalism and global commerce, the play exposes the dangers that emerge when human bodies are subsumed into cross-cultural systems of exchange.

In addition to creating settings distinguished by multiple temporal resonances, Shakespeare frequently set his plays in unstable border zones between adjacent geographical regions and imperial epochs. In this way, his settings capture cultures in contention or on the brink of transformation. For example, plays such as *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *Peticles* take place on the threshold of Christianity. Ostensibly presided over by Jupiter, Apollo, and Diana, the foreign worlds of these plays exemplify crises of religious authority by fusing together pagan and Christian religious elements. Similarly, *Antony and Cleopatra* explicitly refers to the necessary conditions for Christ's birth through Octavius Caesar's prophecy of the *par romana*, establishing

<sup>28</sup> On the complex cultural and religious resonances attached to Shakespeare's Ephesus, see Linda McJannet, 'Genre and Geography: The Eastern Mediterranean in *Peticles*', John Gillies and Virginia Mason Vaughan (eds.), *The Comedy of Errors: Playing the Globe Genre and Geography in English Renaissance Drama* (London: Associated University Presses, 1998), 86–106; and Randall Martin, 'Rediscovering Athens in *The Comedy of Errors*', in Tom Clayton, Susan Brock, and Vicente Fortes (eds.), *Shakespeare and the Mediterranean: Selected Proceedings of the International Shakespeare Association World Congress, Valencia, 2002* (Newark: University of Delaware Press), 363–79.

<sup>29</sup> Arthur F. Kinney, *The Comedy of Errors: A Modern Perspective*, *The Folger Edition The Comedy of Errors* (New York: Washington Square Press, 2004), 179–96. See also Kinney, 'Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors* and the Nature of Kind', *Studies in Philology* 85.1 (1998), 29–52.

the departure of Hercules as part of the providential design that overlays this Roman tragedy. At the same time, Shakespeare's portrayal of the decadent seductions of Cleopatra's Egypt registers the degeneration associated with ancient Egypt as well as with Egypt's conquest by the Ottoman Empire. John Archer has called attention to how this 'shifting discursive setting' reflects Egypt's instability as a site of both grandeur and degeneration.<sup>30</sup> Other plays, such as *Titus Andronicus*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Julius Caesar*, and *Coriolanus*, represent ancient imperial clashes in ways that recreate old worlds while also evoking contemporary geopolitical concerns and interests in nation- and empire-building.

Shakespeare's *Hamlet* has been read as a timeless tragedy, but it too occupies a setting on a crucial border zone between imperial epochs. If Holinshed's *Chronicles* organized British history before 1066 into four imperial conquests or periods of foreign rule (by the Romans, the Saxons, the Danes, and the Normans), *Hamlet* begins during the Third Rule, when England is 'Denmark's faithful tributary' (5.2.39), and ends with the Norman conquest of Denmark. As Margreta de Grazia has argued, the play inhabits a particular place in world history that has been occluded by the First Folio's equation of 'history' plays with post-1066 English regal history.<sup>31</sup> In addition to capturing a crucial transition in Britain's history of foreign rule, *Hamlet* engages more general concerns related to the fall of world empires and the birth of new ones. In characterizing the fall of the Danish empire, the play alludes to a number of ancient rises and falls, including those of Troy, Carthage, and Rome. In addition, it invites consideration of a future or fifth rule by a foreign power, such as the Ottoman Empire. To understand *Hamlet* as a play that occupies an imperial border zone in world history may also help us situate plays such as *Cymbeline*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, and *King John* in relation to England's historical sense of itself as a nation subjugated under foreign rule.

As I have briefly mentioned above, *Othello* revisits a much more recent imperial clash—that between the Venetian and Ottoman empires over the contested territory of Cyprus. Most recently conquered by the Ottoman Turks in 1571, the island had been hotly contested during the previous century: in 1473 the Venetians won it from the Turks, and in 1570 the Turks attempted unsuccessfully to take it back. In setting four acts of *Othello* in this contested frontier, Shakespeare crucially revises history. Though Cyprus was under Ottoman control at the time of *Othello*'s first performances in 1604, it is represented in the play as a Venetian territory, and the attacking Turks are providentially destroyed in a storm on their way to laying siege to the island. In place of an imperial battle, Shakespeare gives us a domestic tragedy. In some sense, his revision of history represents the stage's role in projecting a bald fantasy, but in another sense, it offers a story that could be more believably enacted on the stage. *Othello*'s stragulation of Desdemona in their marriage bed lent itself to the constraints of the early modern theatre in ways that a full-scale military attack of an island did not.

Notably, Shakespeare's Cyprus evokes very little local texture. It pales in comparison to the exotic places verbally conjured through *Othello*'s traveller's history. Part of the sparseness of Cyprus's setting may have to do with the limited scenery, stage props, and special effects the early modern theatre had at its disposal, but leaving these conditions aside, Shakespeare's script does not endow Cyprus with exotic natives or detailed descriptions expressed through dialogue. The island's otherness is conveyed primarily through its implicit effects on the Christian characters of the play, suggested by *Othello*'s questioning of whether his brawling men have 'turned Turks' and his own descent into tragic violence (2.3.163). This may tell us something about the early modern theatre's particular investments in realism: rather than conjure foreign places through material or descriptive details, it did so through character and action. In addition, Shakespeare seems not to have been interested in offering an accurate depiction of foreign places. Defending poets against the charge that they are 'principle liars', Philip Sidney reasoned that playwrights cannot lie because they never claim to tell the truth in the first place. He further explains that no one goes to the theatre expecting to see reality: 'What child is there, that, coming to a play, and seeing Thebes written in great letters upon an old door, doth believe that it is Thebes?'<sup>32</sup> Shakespeare's plays seem to be consistent with Sidney's view of the theatre. In representing foreign settings, Shakespeare may have been interested in entertainment and moral edification, but not necessarily in realistic portrayals.

### THEATRICAL CONTRIVANCES OF TRAVEL

The physical movement of travel was particularly difficult to enact in the theatre. How could plays even begin to represent the traversal of wide expanses of land or sea within the finite space of the stage? Moreover, how could they capture the length of time that it took to travel to foreign places, the unpredictable nature of travel, and the often directionless wandering that travel entailed in the early modern period? *Perciles* represents Shakespeare's most ambitious attempt to represent travel across multiple geographical settings. Co-authored by George Wilkins, the play follows the journeys of *Perciles* and his family members to six different Mediterranean settings: Tyre, Antioch, Tarsus, Pentapolis, Myrdene, and Ephesus. In total, it charts ten different trips between these various places. *Perciles* was first printed without any act or scene divisions, and its episodic plot structure approximates the wandering quality of early modern travel. In doing so, it appropriates a structural convention of romance, which was also oriented around movements from place to place. As Cyrus Mulready has argued, travel plays tapped into audiences' thirst for foreign worlds, and often defied the Aristotelian

<sup>30</sup> John Michael Archer, *Old Worlds: Egypt, Southwest Asia, India, and Russia in Early Modern English Writing* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002), ch. 1.

<sup>31</sup> Margreta de Grazia, *Hamlet Without Hamlet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), ch. 3.

<sup>32</sup> Philip Sidney, 'The Defense of Poesy', in Katherine Duncan-Jones (ed.), *Sir Philip Sidney: The Major Works* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 235.

unities of time, place, and action.<sup>33</sup> An exception to this is *The Tempest*, which forcefully sustains the unities, seeming to respond to (or even parody) neo-classical critiques of the travel play's episodic structure. But if *Perciles* appropriates romance's digressive nature and eschews unity, it also employs theatrical contrivances such as Gower's role as the Chorus and the use of dumbshow to compensate for the difficulty of enacting sea travel and other movement across wide geographical expanses. In the fifth scene of the play, Gower describes *Perciles'* departure from Tarsus by explaining 'Now the wind begins to blow', causing his ship to be 'wrecked and split' and *Perciles* to be 'tossed' 'from coast to coast' (Sc. 5:29, 32, 34). In effect, Gower's speech inserts chunks of romance narrative into the play to reveal what the stage cannot show. After Gower explains that 'fortune' decided to spare *Perciles'* life and 'threw him ashore', *Perciles* enters, according to the stage direction, 'wet and half naked' (1:5:38, sd.38). Gower's narrative not only stands in for action that is difficult to stage, it also lends a sense of purpose to the otherwise aimless relocations of the characters. In addition, the play's punctuation of the underlying force of providence, as well as its moments of familial recognition and reconciliation, impart a certain kind of unity on its otherwise meandering structure.

Although *Perciles* has largely been derided by modern critics for its loose, baggy structure and its one-dimensional characters, it was widely popular with early modern audiences. This clearly suggests the appeal of plays featuring travel, episodic plots, and old-fashioned discursive models drawn from romance. Shakespeare's co-author Wilkins also had a hand in writing *The Travells of the Three English Brothers*, another popular travel play performed within the same year as *Perciles*. Though *The Travells* is set in contemporary times and fictionalizes the adventures of the real-life Shirley brothers, it mirrors *Perciles'* episodic structure and its depiction of travel in the Mediterranean world. The success of these plays may well indicate the pleasures of seeing travel imperfectly transposed onto the stage. The task of reconciling the traveler's physical movements across vast stretches of space within the limited space of theatre was fairly impossible to accomplish in believable ways, and travel laid bare the limitations of the stage and its most unrealistic contrivances. Could it be that audiences loved *Perciles* not because it transported them to the eastern Mediterranean, but because it made them aware of the disjunction between verisimilitude and theatricality? If so, the popularity of plays about travel and foreign worlds may take on a new significance in terms of revealing the proclivities of early modern English theatregoers. Rather than transport theatregoers into foreign worlds, plays depicting vast geographical expanses made audiences most conscious of the world of the theatre. We might thus interpret the Chorus's opening apology in *Henry V* not in terms of regret for what the stage cannot adequately represent but as a moment in which theatrical enactment is demystified for purposes of pleasure in itself. When the Chorus asks the audience to allow the events

depicted 'within this wooden O' to work on their 'imaginary forces' and thus 'piece out [the stage's] imperfections with [their] thoughts', he invokes the audience's active role in not only making meaning of the play but in observing with pleasure the fabrications of the stage and its inherent disjunction from reality (Prologue, 13, 18, 23). In some sense, then, plays such as *Henry V* and *Perciles* were as much about the Globe Theatre as they were about the terrestrial globe.

Another pleasure the stage offered audiences in depicting travel to foreign worlds was observing a play's chation of other discursive treatments of place. As many examples throughout this chapter demonstrate, Shakespeare's theatrical contrivance of foreign places necessarily involved transposing information from one source or medium to another. Moreover, his settings reflect layers of multiple meanings that were temporarily and generically diverse. And, of course, Shakespeare's negotiation and synthesis of multiple sources helped make discursive treatments of place into new places. The setting of *The Tempest* fuses the geography of the Old World with topical interests in a recent shipwreck off the coast of Bermuda in 1609; it also integrates elements from romance and from Shakespeare's own imagination to create a place unlike anything that existed in the real world.<sup>34</sup> Quite possibly, this is how Shakespeare's settings were also received by early modern audiences—as amalgamations of multiple discourses filtered through the playwright's imagination. Othello's traveller's history, which invokes multiple geographies and discursive genres, seems to illustrate Shakespeare's process for conjuring place. Referred to by Peter Womack as a 'cocktail of discursive conventions', Othello's history integrates discourses ranging from *Mandeville's travels*, to biblical Exodus, to *Leo Africanus* (p. 148). The pleasures of listening to this speech may have come not only from its exotic foreignness but also from an audience's familiarity with its diverse conventions.

Shakespeare's foreign places may have also generated new discursive associations on the part of early modern audiences. Scattered seventeenth-century marginalia in a First Folio of Shakespeare's works housed at the Philadelphia Free Library tell us about the reading practices of one early modern reader.<sup>35</sup> Several of the handwritten notes cross-reference moments in Shakespeare's plays with other early modern texts: a note in *The Tempest* refers to *Purchas his Pilgrimes*; a note in *Hamlet* refers to *Trottel's Miscellany*; and a note in *Measure for Measure* references a song printed in *John Fletcher's Rollo, or The Bloody Brother*. Particularly interesting for our purposes, the marginal note in *The Tempest* links Caliban's entrance at the beginning of 2.1 to Setebos god of y<sup>e</sup> Canibals purch. pil. vol. 1. p. 35. (Earlier, in 1.2, Caliban identifies Setebos as the god of his mother, Sycorax.) This reader's reference indicates a travel narrative in Samuel Purchas's

<sup>34</sup> Pamphlets reporting on the Bermuda shipwreck include Sylvester Jourdain, *Discovery of the Bermudas* (1609); Council of Virginia, *True Declaration of the State of the Colony in Virginia* (1610); and William Strachey, *True Reportory of the Wrack* (1609), which Shakespeare may have read in manuscript form.

<sup>35</sup> My research on this First Folio was conducted in collaboration with Cyrus Mulready. We presented our findings in a talk for the History of Material Texts Seminar at the University of Pennsylvania in 2005.

<sup>33</sup> Cyrus Mulready, "'Asia of the One Side, Afric of the Other': Sidney's Unities and the Staging of Romance", in Valerie Wayne and Mary Ellen Lamb (eds.), *Staging Early Modern Romance: Prose Fiction, Dramatic Romance, and Shakespeare* (London: Routledge, 2008), 47–71.

compendium that comes from the journal of Antonio Pigafetta, a member of Ferdinand Magellan's crew during his 1522 circumnavigation of the globe. On page 35 of *Purchas*, Pigafetta recounts the first contact between Magellan's men and the *Patagoni* of southern South America. He describes how they were able to capture some of the Patagonian 'giants' for slavery by using 'rifles' to lure the men into bondage. Once captured, the Patagonians are said to have 'cried upon their great devil Setebos to help them'. Interestingly, Setebos is connected to the geography of South America rather than to Africa, indicating an adaptation on Shakespeare's part. Before appearing in *Purchas*, Pigafetta's report was published in Richard Eden's 1577 *History of Travayle in the West and East Indies*, which was probably Shakespeare's source for Setebos. While the marginal note in the First Folio is clearly not intended to identify Shakespeare's source (since *Purchas his Pilgrimes* postdated the play's performance), it reveals how an early modern reader linked a detail in Shakespeare's play to information drawn from a more recent compendium of travel narratives. Thus it is possible that for early modern audiences and readers, Shakespeare's representations of the foreign may not only have signalled chthonians from older discourses, but also inspired new discursive connections.

Shakespeare's plays brought foreign worlds home to English audiences, but never in a straightforward way. To create his foreign settings, Shakespeare drew upon and synthesized a range of other discourses, conjuring settings that were at once removed from specific geographical meaning and yet too full of meaning. This chapter has implicitly argued for a reconsideration of the relationship between travel knowledge and the stage. Like all cultural content, travel knowledge underwent a transfer when it was shifted into the space of the theatre. It was necessarily reshaped by dramatic conventions, the particular social and material conditions of the early modern theatre, the strengths and limitations of performance, and the transformations carried out by theatrical enactment. Shakespeare's foreign settings were also crucially shaped by artistic licence and his imagination. What did it mean that he assigned a coastline to Bohemia in *The Winter's Tale*, when early modern maps and travel narratives reflected Bohemia's location inland? Ben Jonson taunted Shakespeare for his ignorance, when another possibility was that Shakespeare willfully disregarded geographical accuracy.<sup>36</sup> His foreign settings both were and were not real places. Some critics argue that Bohemia is a screen for England; others that it merely signifies a pastoral (as opposed to courtly) settings and still others that it signals a completely fictitious and otherworldly place. The best kinds of readings allow for a play of meanings, acknowledging the imaginative, ludic element in Shakespeare's settings. But if Shakespeare's settings are impossible to pin down, they nonetheless wield power. When Brabantio accuses Othello of practising 'witchcraft' on Desdemona, Othello counters that the only 'witchcraft' he has used are the stories he told about his travels (1.3.64, 168). But travellers' tales were like a form of witchcraft: they were powerful, seductive, ensnaring, and potentially dangerous. By 1604, when *Othello* was first performed, the

'Anthropophagi' referred to in Othello's traveller's history had become code for the implausibility and wilful deception of travellers' tales. Yet it was not difficult to understand how Othello's tale of exotic worlds could serve as the basis for Desdemona's seduction, even by one 'she feared to look on' (1.3.98). The Duke proclaims, 'I think [Othello's] tale would win my daughter, too' (1.3.170). On one level he is talking about the power of travellers' tales, but on another level he speaks of the power of theatre itself. In Shakespeare's plays, the two merged. By creating settings that could be so many different things at once, the theatre conjures its own unique and distinctive 'foreign worlds'.

<sup>36</sup> Jonson, 'Conversations with Drummond', in Ian Donaldson (ed.), *Ben Jonson* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 399.