After Shylock: The "Judaiser" in England

LLOYD EDWARD KERMODE

Summary: In Elizabethan England it was common to blame the country's economic problems on some hated Other, in most cases the Jews who came to represent the stereotypical usurer. This paper investigates how two plays — William Haughton's Englishmen For My Money (1598) and John Marston's Jack Drum's Entertainment — comment on this socio-economic situation. After establishing the primacy of the usurer figure in Haughton's play, the paper will attempt to show how Marston manipulates earlier iconographic and dramatic achievements to foreground the fear of usury in England.

In 1596, Thomas Johnson asked rhetorically, "[w]hat countrie or nation in the world is there at this presente that nourisheth so manie Aliens from all parts of the world as England doth?" The significant foreign visibility in the capital and major trading ports of England at a time of economic hardship created a volatile atmosphere for satirical writers, who exploited the long-standing xenophobia of the English against their close neighbors and visitors, mainly the French and the Dutch. The Elizabethan Englishman (or the dramatist) who was determined to lay the blame for England's economic problems at the door of some hated Other could trace his way back to the Jews, who had allegedly instigated usury, the avaricious, unchristian vice of money-breeding. Money borrowed on usury permitted international trade, which in turn encouraged all manner of strangers to come into England, some to settle. As a consequence of this period in which the importance of tactical trade and careful use of resources were at a premium, the Italian (as the stereotypical merchant) and the
Jew (as the stereotypical usurer) were added to the fore of satirical drama. This paper investigates how two plays at the close of the sixteenth century commented on the development of this socio-economic situation. The plays show how the trade of usury came from abroad to England, and they display stages of the accompanying metamorphosis of the usurer (or “judaiser,” as Francis Bacon called him) from foreign Jew to English non-Jew. This movement of place and identity is part of the culmination of years of iconographic development, from medieval images of diabolical Jews and the travel reports of the sixteenth century, to the more recent portrayals brought to the London public by Nashe, Marlowe, and Shakespeare. I argue that William Haughton’s play, Englishmen For My Money (1598), the role of Pisaro, the usurer, includes a warning for England, for he stands on the brink of naturalization. Just two years later, in John Marston’s boys’ play, Jack Drum’s Entertainment, the suggested dangers have become reality: usury has not just entered England in the form of a foreigner who creates xenophobic havoc, but is incarnated in the English character Mamon, the usurer “with a great nose” (so designated in the list of dramatis personae). A vice amid English society, Mamon is vengeful, hateful, and disruptive in the extreme. Marston’s satire bites deeper than Haughton’s nipping humor and shows us the end state of usury’s corruption of Englishmen.

Since the 1570s anti-usury tracts — both intellectual and popular — had proliferated in England; so by the time Philip Henslowe paid 20 shillings for the new book entitled “a womon will have her wille” (the subtitle to Haughton’s Englishmen For My Money) usury was old, bad news. To make his work fresh, lively, and entertaining, Haughton played up another aspect of contemporary society, namely the relationship more generally of Englishmen to foreigners, and specifically the importance of languages to the handling of that relationship. The play reaffirms Robert Wilson’s acute reading of London’s social and economic state in his play, The Three Ladies of London (1581), but fits its matter to the time by clothing the potential dangers of usury in a lightly woven, fashionable text of domestic comedy. After establishing the primacy of the usurer figure in Haughton’s play, I will attempt to show how Marston manipulates earlier pictorial and dramatic achievements to foreground the fear of usury in England.
I

In *Englishmen For My Money* we find the Portuguese merchant and usurer, Pisaro, living comfortably in London. He is the widower of an English wife and is attempting to secure matches in marriage for his three daughters with three foreign merchants — Delion (French), Alvaro (Italian), and Vandal (Dutch). The women themselves do their best to elope with their true English loves — three men who are in debt to Pisaro, held financially captive through usurious bonds on their property. The English men triumph over the foreigners, and with a little help from their friends (through feats of disguise, practical joking, and feigned sickness) marry the daughters and win back their property. Pisaro, in a surprising scene, graciously accepts defeat, and the marriages are celebrated with a feast at the usurer’s house. Since his mercantile and usurious achievements have left him in the financial and social position where he is able to employ and direct the three strangers to disrupt the social life of the English, Pisaro’s dramatic status is always superior to any of the trio of foreigners. Vandal, Delion, and Alvaro are weak figures in stock comic roles, and the London audience would find the game of identifying these stage-foreigners by the type of broken English they speak particularly enjoyable — and probably difficult. Londoners generally confused identities of Continental foreigners or did not consider the difference between a Dutchman, a Frenchman, and an Italian particularly important.

Pisaro, we suppose, learned his trade of usury from the Jews of Portugal; but the question of whether Pisaro is himself a Jew is a vexed one. To be sure he is a mixed bag of characteristics: Pisaro’s “snoute,[is] Able to shadow Powles, it is so great” (B”), and he suffers from gout. These are characteristics of the usurer, only the former originating in racial observation, and too generally applied in the period to denote a Jew unequivocally. Pisaro is a Portingale, and the greatest Jewish contact with England in the sixteenth century was from the Portuguese-Jewish and “Marrano” merchants and escapees traveling between Portugal and the Low Countries; but no such background is presented for Pisaro. The emphasis in the play on that fact that Pisaro lives in Crutched Friars seems important, since it was the quarter of town where the Jews mostly resided in the late-sixteenth century; we have records of sixteenth-century Jewish activity in Seething Lane (Sydon Lane), Crutched Friars, Hart Street, Fenchurch, and Duke’s Place. In Robert Wilson’s *Three Lords and Three Ladies of London* the character Simony says to Usury, “thy parentes were both Jewes, though thou wert borne in London” (F4).
Thomas Coryate further records meeting an English Jew in Constantinople, "Master William Pearch . . . invited mee . . . to the house of a certaine English Jew, called Amis, borne in Crootched Friers in London, who hath two sisters more of his owne Jewish Religion, Commorant in Galata, who were likewise borne in the same place."  James Shapiro records a slightly later incident, where one "Vincente Furtado told the Inquisition in 1609 that four years earlier he had visitid with Jews in London . . . Furtado even listed those 'resident in London' who celebrated the holiday [of Passover] with them."  Pisaro, then, could be a Jew by the circumsstantial evidence of geographical history. It should be noted, however, that Crutched Friars also housed a number of the Huguenot community and other non-Jewish immigrants. The characters' words themselves can be taken for evidence on both sides (depending on whether they are read as deliberate irony, or taken straight): Delion threatens to eat up Pisaro's bacon (B4); Pisaro swears "by'r lady"; and Marina (Pisaro's daughter) swears "Ile be no Nunne" (A3) when she considers the austerity of philosophy.

For my argument here, however — surprising as it may at first seem —, it does not really matter whether Pisaro is a Jew. The progression I am following is of the stage representation of usury, not Jews. What is important — and why I have spent time laying out the suggestive and inconclusive evidence — is exactly the ambiguity with which Haughton invests his main character. By this time usury was not immediately associated just with Jews but with "infidel" (i.e. non-Protestant) religions as a whole; hence, for instance, the title of an anonymous morality tract, The ruinate fall of the Pope Usury, derived from the Pope Idolatry. Details such as that Pisaro lives in Crutched Friars or that he has a big nose are indications not that he is a Jew but that he has "Jewishness" within him, which causes him to practice the trade of usury. "Jewishness," (being like a Jew) is the term that the Judge in Wilson's The Three Ladies of London uses to describe the Christian merchant Mercadorus, with his evasive and damnable behaviour (sig. F). If we are to approximate the contemporary thought of possible playgoers it is this concept of "Jewish" behaviour, along with Bacon's idea of Christian "judaising", that should be applied to Pisaro.

In general, when the Jewish or "Jew-like" character is used in Elizabethan drama, he takes on a powerful, catalytic role at the center of the plot action. Albert Croll Baugh writes in the introduction to his 1917 edition of Englishmen For My Money, "The usurer motive is the most important in the plot of the play and is the basis of the action," although he is not denying the importance of the other "major element," that of "the national motives," Issues of nationhood no doubt appeal more to today's critical taste, but they are inextricably bound
up with the important fiction of blaming the Jews — and the subsequent usurers of all nations — for causing the conflicts of nationality we see acted out in the streets of London in the 1580s and 1590s and rehearsed on the stage. The character who enters the stage with “Jewish” traits is the one without whom the conflicts in the plot would never arise. What would happen in *The Merchant of Venice* without the steadfastness of Shylock? Where would be the Maltese drama had Barabas been as submissive as his fellows? Pisaro’s multiple status (as foreigner yet domestic resident; as judaiser but Anglicized) makes him a vital figure in facilitating the shift of usury’s allegiance that I contend occurred at the end of the sixteenth century — the shift from foreign Jew to English usurer. Pisaro is more important than the famous Jews in a couple of ways: he survives, unlike Barabas, and he continues to live in the heart of England, not in some distant city like Shylock’s Venice.

Because of this vivacious visibility, Pisaro remains an important figure behind the scenes in which the “national motive” provides the main setting. Modern interpretation has largely ignored this fact, concentrating instead on discussing the relative power of Englishmen and foreigners. A. J. Hoenselaars, for instance, writes, “the satire previously heaped on the stereotyped foreigner is increasingly employed to criticize or mock the Englishman.” 12 The satirist can use these foreign figures in a way that mocks the Englishman because those foreigners are members of “beaten” nations, no longer a threat to the cultural or ideological fabric of England. By 1598 the main Armadas, including the unexpected third, had been defeated and the anti-alien disturbances of mid-decade had quietened. Alvaro’s report in *Englishmen For My Money* that bad weather scuppered the Spanish pirates’ attempt to raid Pisaro’s ships (C3) may be a reference to the vital sinking of the *San Bartolomeo* in October 1597, and certainly would have been recognized as a joke about the failure of the Armadas in general. The foreigners, then, are part of a tame comedy, and the English playgoers feel they can laugh at their own weaknesses because the English political and social infrastructure can withstand such shocks to the ego-system. Having said this, Hoenselaars goes on to present the other side of the coin. “Haughton’s play marks a shift” in the Elizabethans’ view of the foreigner, he says, because the foreigner

is no longer capable of scheming successfully like his predecessors but instead is eminently gullible… Whereas the English in the earlier plays were inspired by fear and hatred, those in Haughton’s comedy are motivated by national pride. This national pride, by definition, causes anything not English to be inferior. And what is inferior no longer inspires fear. It can be ridiculed or derided in a carefree, comic fashion.13
It is clear that what is at stake in all cases of competition — international, domestic, or personal — is pride. Shylock’s and Barabas’s pride led them to their downfall; Pisaro in turn takes his fall. But the pride of the English will catch up with them also. Hoenselaars has not taken into account that the decline in the potency of the foreigners is a palimpsest of the weakness and unguardedness of the English, which in turn has let the insuppressible activity of usury into England. For the English audience “Jewishness” has been getting literally “closer to home,” and the satirical dramatist makes a play on the way the English pride over the Continental foreigners has in fact left the English vulnerable to “corruption” from the “Jewish” usury. The potential danger of the “judaiser” Pisaro is recognized in Englishmen For My Money, but because he acts only as the agent for the laughable foreign suitors his long-term potency is diminished. Hoenselaars’s observation is useful up to a point, then, but it fails to differentiate between the acceptable, comic characters (the three foreign suitors) and the ever-present figure of warning, Pisaro.

The text is deceptive, for not only is the warning for England disguised, but the Jew-like elements of Pisaro are cleverly sanitized. When he loses his daughters and the obligations to the three Englishmen he should, by rights, do one of three things: go mad, religiously convert, or die. Certainly he should rage, “My bonds, my daughters, my bonds,” or some such lament. He does none of these, but instead invites everyone, foreigners and Englishmen, to a celebration feast — the rules of romantic comedy prevail. The comic tradition is again apparent in the inevitability of the foreigners’ failure in their marital mission, for the Jew is getting old and his daughters must escape his paternal grasp. The emphasis is on the superior Englishmen’s comic putting down of the already-harmless foreigners. It is Frisco, Pisaro’s servant, who finally directs attention toward his master’s dangerous, multiple status as both big-nosed “judaiser” who causes economic turmoil and foreigner taking up English living space:

I goe (old huddle) for the best Nose at smelling out a Pin-fold that I know: well, take heede, you may happes picke up Wormes so long, that at length some of them get into your Nose, and never out after. But what an Asse am I to thinke so, considering all the Lodginges are taken up already, and there’s not a Dog-kennell empty for a strange Worme to breed in (13'-I4).

Couched as it is in difficult language, such a suggestion of the infection of England by judaisers is easy to miss, and tempting to ignore.

When not disguised in arcane syntax, the issues (i.e. the topics, and the offspring) of “Jewishness” are played out under the rubric of “national motive”
and the romantic-comic genre. The urgency of the Englishmen's quest for Pisaro's daughters, for instance, is born of three dams: romantic love is one, certainly; but reclaiming their lands pawned to Pisaro is another; and Anglicizing the half-foreign women is the third. In the scheme of things (social, economic, and political) the latter two have wider-reaching importance. The combination of the father's usury (the "Jewishness") and the daughters' mixed birth (the foreignness) must be conquered for the play to remain in the realm of comedy. The comic foreigner sequences reveal national political issues on the one hand and earnest combat with the serious danger of usury on the other. The serio-comic conflicts are simultaneously codified and revealed in *Englishmen For My Money* through the use (and misuse) of native and foreign language. Hoenselaars comments on the efforts of two of the Englishmen to disguise themselves as foreigners:

One interesting aspect of Anthony's case is that his lack of French is the crucial flaw in his disguise. Frisco, too, only manages with an immense effort to produce some broken Dutch. To a modern reader, both characters' defective foreign-language skills provide an ironic counterpoint to the foreign merchants' ultimately disastrous inability to speak proper English. The play itself does not elaborate or comment on this irony. Haughton unwittingly adopts a double standard, providing the play with that flaw by which patriotism thrives — namely, a blindness to one's own national weakness.¹⁴

This needs expansion because it is not right to say that Haughton "unwittingly adopts a double standard." Patriotism in this play comes from a recognition of the importance of the native tongue, and English victory in war has made the English language a powerful tool of social, sexual, and hierarchical politics. The Englishmen's inability to speak foreign languages is simply proof of such skills' lack of worth. At this level of belief, patriotism enters the bitter heights of (what we might today call) nationalism. However, we should not confuse the "unwitting" behavior of the play's tunnel-visioned or bigoted characters with the level of awareness of the author himself.

This emphasis on the power of the tongue proves to be another agent that binds the duality of foreignness (language) and "Jewishness" (usury and economy-wasting). Frisco gives Heigham, the English suitor, his summation of the Frenchman:

I am seeking a needle in a Bottle of Hay, a Monster in the likenesse of a Man: one that in stead of good morrow, asketh what Porrage you have to Dinner, *Parley vous signiour*? one that never washes his fingers, but lickes them cleane with kisses; a clipper of the Kings English: and to conclude, an eternall enemie to all good Language (B2°).
As a “Monster,” “a clipper of the Kings English,” a foreigner (according to Frisco) is a debaser of the realm’s ubiquitous currency, the English language — it is the one binding common denominator of Englishness and prone to forgeries. The failure of Vandal, Delion, and Alvaro’s “forgeries” of language as they stand below the sisters’ window and impersonate the Englishmen is a sign of the weakness of foreign linguistic currency. “Ah! gentlemen,” Frisco continues with the conceit, “do not suffer a litter of languages to spring up amongst us” (B2'). Just as coin currency is bred illegally by cutting usury, so the linguistic currency is infected with breeding of foreigners in England. Pisaro’s daughters emphasize the importance of preserving their Englishness through breeding and language: “I have so much English by the Mother,” says Mathea, “That no bace slavering French shall make me stoope” (G4'). Once again Frisco ironically tells it like it is: “Oh the generation of Languages that our House will bring foorth: why every Bedd will have a propper speach to himselfe, and have the Founders name written upon it in faire Cappitall letters, Heere lay, and so foorth” (I3'). The “Heere lay” is a pun on the sexual “death” of the foreign man, whose prodigy increases the foreignness of the Pisaro household; and the death of the Englishness of the woman who “lay” in that bed. This prophesy must be avoided, and since the girls “are Portingale by the Fathers side” (G4'), it would be politic to minimize that heritage by marriage to Englishmen; this aspect of the marriages is a comic dilution of the trend of conversion of Jews’ daughters by Christian men.

It is clear that Haughton is continually making pertinent contemporary comments that are far from “run-of-the-mill,” and Elizabeth Shafer did well to attack G. K. Hunter for using such a label in his earlier dismissal of the play.15 Haughton imitates in order to ironize, and he subverts or invents in order to stamp his own authority as a playwright of note. The opening of the play, with Pisaro, solus, is surely mock imitation of Marlowe’s Machiavel and Barabas; it suggests a character type which is adapted gradually throughout the play until Pisaro is finally the accepting father of comedy, not the “Judas-like” (A2) villain his own words proclaim him to be at the beginning. The foreign merchants, too, although ineffectual, are not particularly nasty either. Against the seeming run of the play, Haughton makes the Englishman Ned Walgrave the vicious one, who turns on Pisaro in a way that is reminiscent of Graziano’s attack on Shylock in the trial scene of The Merchant of Venice. Walgrave has to be restrained by his fellow Englishmen and threatens Pisaro that he will lie with his daughter Mathea “before thy face, / Against the Crosse in Cheape, here, any where” (H2).16 These are unnecessarily violent words and expose the over-zealousness and unguardedness of the victor’s pride.
Even when the comedy in *Englishmen For My Money* seems harmless enough, it is grounded in deeper cultural values and prejudices than first appear. For example, when the Frenchman, Delion, asks for directions to Crutched Friars where he hopes to find his English love, Heigham gives the deceptive reply, "Marry this is *Fanchurch-streete*, / And the best way to Crotched-friers, is to follow your nose" (F4). Delion is already in Crutched Friars, as he suspects, and "following his nose" would take him through the Poor Jewry to Aldgate. In fact, even if he were truly in Fenchurch Street the foreigner would still find himself leaving the city of Aldgate. The wily words to the Frenchman may seem like a simple piece of fun, but they contain two greater resonances. First, there seems to be a joke on the meaning that one's nose can be followed to Crutched Friars, because the area smells of foreigners, Jews, and usurers. In Nashe's *The Unfortunate Traveller* Zadoch the Jew reveals the potency of the Jew's smell as he conspires with his accomplice to commit murder: "Ile come and deliver her a supplication, and breathe upon her. I knowe my breath stinkes so alredie, that it is within halfe a degree of poison." Frisco makes the most of using his nose to find the way to Crutched Friars on a dark night (G'); and at the very beginning of the play we are warned of the potency of Pisaro's pots of stew, which give off a "precious Vapour, let but a Wench come neere them with a Painted face, and you should see the paint drop and curdle her Cheekes, like a piece of dry Essex Cheese toasted at the fire" (A4). Second, the turning out of the city is a trope of expulsion that was evident in *The Jew of Malta* and is a cultural response to Otherness in general that I will discuss in relation to Marston's *Jack Drum's Entertainment*.

Another example of the cultural depth of the jokes can be found just prior to the Delion/Heigham encounter. Here we are treated to a nighttime escapade in which the mischievous Frisco loses the Dutchman, Vandal, in the dark streets of London and slips away with the foreigner's cloak. Frisco warns Vandal at one point, "take heede sir hers a post" (F2), opening the way for simple rough-and-tumble physical comedy with characters running into stageposts. Andrew Gurr has noticed that the identification by Frisco of the stageposts as maypoles (G') implies

that they were set in enough open space to allow dancing around them. But there might also be a joke built into the visuals in this play, if the characters blundering blindly through the London streets are seen coming dangerously close to the edge of the stage when they encounter the posts. The latter — ironic — option seems more likely to me, since this comic vein continues: we hear from the Italian, Alvaro, "I hit my hed by de way, dare may be
de voer Spouts” between Leadenhall and Crutched Friars (F3), and Vandal complains “ic go and hit my nose op dit post, and ic go and hit my nose op danden post” (possibly wandering back and forth hitting each of the stage-posts [G2′]).

As stage-posts indicate the largely invisible border between stage space and audience space, so they represent ideological limits and the edges of the Englishmen’s control. They are used as “weapons” by the English as they give the foreigners the runaround. John Orrell has reminded us recently that the history of the pillars and posts in the theater includes their confused connection to the columns that represented enslaved, dismembered, and encumbered foreign bodies in the “caryatids and atlantes of ancient buildings.” The architectural Term (or column) was linked to these carved depictions of defeated enemies, set up to public display in literal support of the conquerors’ edifices of power. It is a sound mechanism adopted by Haughton, therefore, to have the Englishmen inflict pain on, and embarrass, the foreigners through the use of this feature of the structure of the public theater.

Alert to the available options, Haughton plays with some stereotypes of foreignness to their full comic extent, but debunks others. For instance, when the English suitor, Harvey, feigns fatal sickness in a ruse to win the hand of Marina, his Italian counterpart in the wooing competition assures Pisaro that “if he will not die” from the sickness, “I sal give him sush a Drincke, sush a Potion sal mak him give de Bonos noches to all de world” (K3). Alleged Italian skill at poisoning was well known; we are warned in The Unfortunate Traveller that “If thou dost but lend half a looke to a Romans or Italians wife, thy porredge shalbe prepared for thee, and cost thee nothing but thy lyfe.” In fact, when Harvey does not die, Alvaro denies any knowledge in the art of poisoning before the devastated Pisaro.

Throughout this play viewpoints are shifted subtly; the prejudices of the Englishman against foreigners are also the prejudices of one foreigner against another of a different nationality. The picture is not at all black and white, for the colorful Pisaro not only takes on a stereotypical stance against his friend, Alvaro, but also threatens to commit the slippery schoolmaster, Anthony, to Bridewell for deceiving him in the process of marrying off his three daughters. When Pisaro orders the punishment he thinks the disguised Anthony is a Frenchman and says that he will make Anthony “sing at Bride-well for this trick” (K3). As well as being a prison and a workhouse for the idle poor Bridewell was a place for torture. Torture is designed to produce sound, to make the victim “utter” (the most commonly used word in relation to torture at Bridewell in the Acts of the Privy Council); that extracted utterance is made in the victim’s own language and reveals his own identity and fate. Bridewell was also used for something else, less notoriously,
and that was holding foreign prisoners. Such a place, then, is precisely the
enclosure to “out” someone like Anthony, to make him utter the truth in his
own language. Anthony’s own language, ironically, is English, and such a
confession would expose the weakness of the Englishman behaving in an un-
English manner.

Anthony does not end up in Bridewell, of course, because his plans
succeed; this is in sharp contrast to Mamon’s conclusion in Bedlam in Jack
Drum’s Entertainment, where the torture of whips is not designated to make
the victim utter comprehensibly, but to make him “sing” only the noises that
confirm madness, unlexical sequences of howls that bear no relation to any of
the languages spoken outside the walls of the “hospital.” Again, this vocality
confirms the victim’s status of self as an unilingualistic madman, to be kept
isolated from those with language. Foreigners — whose utterances are
themselves illegal, since they clip the king’s English — are similarly held as
speakers of something unknown to the proud Englishman, something base,
ugly, infectious, and likely to breed. Like madmen, suspect foreigners must be
isolated by a double process of expulsion (sent out of the gates of London), yet
also enclosure (sent to sing in Bridewell).

II

In 1634 the title-page of John Blaxton’s The English Usurer declared that
“An Usurer is not tolerable in a well established Commonweale, but utterly to
be rejected out of the company of men.” In 1600 John Marston was already
effecting this policy in satirical fiction when he wrote Jack Drum’s Entertain-
ment. In the OED we read of “Jack Drum’s Entertainment” that it is “a rough
reception, turning an unwelcome guest out of doors.” This reception is
enacted viciously by Jack Drum and his community toward Mamon the
English usurer, but is also comically applied to any character who will let
himself be fooled, and that includes Jack Drum at one point. Set in the
countryside near London, this play presents us with Mamon, the old usurer,
who is in love with a young woman, Katherine. She already has a young lover,
however, called Pasquill. Mamon attempts to have Pasquill killed and poisons
Katherine when she refuses to return his amorous advances. The comedy of
attempted sexual liaisons and misplaced trust runs throughout the play, and
indeed the play’s 1601 quarto subtitle and running title is A pleasant Comedie
of Pasquill and Katherine. But the “pleasant” comedy turns black as night as
the play progresses. Public hatred for the usurer is shown in the burning of
Mamon’s house and all his goods. Finally, he goes mad and is sent to “Bedlam” for a whipping. Meanwhile, things lighten up for the good citizens: Katherine has been cured of Mamon’s poison by a wondrous “Juice of hearbes” (H4), and the losers in the sexual antics are amply ridiculed.

Mamon is not a Jew, and this time the point is important. Richard Simpson’s edition of the play notes of the line, “Let the Jebusite depart in peace” (B):

By Jebusite, or native of Jerusalem, Jack Drum makes Mamon a Jew. Compare this with the next speech, beginning, — “I, for any Christian,” and with the three facts that (1) Mamon is a usurer, who lends at “thirty in the hundred” . . . (2) He is expressly endowed “with a great nose” (see list of characters. . . ); and (3) In the treatment he gets at the hands of the dramatist there is a likeness to that meted out to Shylock in the Merchant of Venice. . . . Perhaps the stage popularity of Shakspere’s Shylock (1596 or 1597) induced the writer, or writers, of Jack Drum (1601) thus to make Mamon a sort of Shylock.24

There are five points to dismiss in this passage. First, the definition held as a premise in Simpson’s note is not accurate; the conclusion, therefore, is untenable. As Gilbert R. Davis noted some time ago, the term “Jebusite” need not refer to a Jew at all.25 It is used by Barabas to describe Lodowick in The Jew of Malta: “This offspring of Cain, this Jebusite, / That never tasted of the Passover” (II.iii.303-4). As Cain murdered his brother, so Lodowick will murder Mathias and himself be killed. The “Jebusite” is the rejected one, the outcast. It is also a term used to apply generally to the anti-Christian figure, the devil, or more often in the seventeenth century “a nickname for Roman Catholics, esp. Jesuits” (OED, “Jebusite”). We can see that, as the turn of the century comes and goes, terms of abuse and stereotype take on a wider scope — include more victims. The term “judaiser” came to mean a usurer, and “Jew” spread from a theological and racial identification to a citation of occupation, to a damming of anything unethical, evil, harsh, or vindictive. Jack Drum uses the appellation, “Jebusite,” of the one he will reject and turn out of doors — not a Jew, but the ideologically unacceptable un-English Englishman.

Second, when Jack Drum says “I, for any Christian,” referring to the amount of food sufficient for a feast, he is making an ethical rather than racial judgment. The usurer in this play is, from the outset, exactly what he is billed in the list of players at the end of the 1601 quarto: he is Mamon, the money-worshipper. He represents the final invasion of the “Jewish” disease of usury and poisoning into the identity of the English character. The stage community is encumbered with a figure that is “anti-Christian” in deed, and reminiscent
of the “anti-Christian” religious existence of the Jew — a figure of double damnation. Such a diabolical presence is pointed up in the comic exaggeration we hear with reference to Mamon. Usurers traditionally suffer from dropsy because it represents an insatiability, a greed for something of which they can never get enough; and so Jack Drum warns Sir Edward Fortune (Katherine’s father) that his dinner spread is not sufficient for “a yawning usurer” for whom “tis but a bit, a morsell”(B′). His speech continues into pertinent hyperbole, recalling, perhaps, old connections of the usurer’s mouth with hell-mouth-like “Jaws.” The political comments provide a general reminder to the audience of the seriousness of usury’s threat; and the reference to “Monarchies” jogs the playgoers’ memories of Barabas and the executed physician to the queen. Ruy-Lopez — both dangerous Jewish figures subverting the established order:

if you table him, heele devour your whole Lordship, hee is a quicksand, a Goodwin, a Gulfe, as hungry as the Jawes of a Jayle, hee will waste more substance then Ireland souldiers: A Die, a Drabbe, and a paunche-swolne Usurer, devour whole Monarchies: Let him passe sweete knight, let him passe (B′).

Jack Drum’s advice is, of course, a piece of temporary aid. Sir Edward Fortune may let the representation of Mamon “passe” now, but English Mamon remains in their midst. Like an infection his anti-Christian ways will continue to spread after his departure.

The third point (numbered “1” by him) in Simpson assumes that usury was considered to be the sole preserve of Jews. Not so. Nearly two decades before Marston, Robert Wilson’s *The Three Ladies of London* included the warning that Usury was usurping what should reside in the Englishman, Love and Conscience. And Thomas Wilson preceded the drama with his *A Discourse upon Usury* of 1572, in which he compares the Jew and English Christian (both “judaisers”):

for thys cause [usury] they [the Jews] were hated in England, and so banyshed worthelye, wyth whom I woulde wysh the all these Englishmen were sent that lende their money or their goods whatsoever for gayne, for I take them to be no better than Jewes. Nay, shall I saye: they are worse than Jewes. For go whither you wil throughout Christendom, and deale with them, and you shall have under tenne in the hundreth, yea sometimes for sixe at their handes, whereas englishe usurers exceede all goddes mercye, and will take they care not howe much, wythout repsecte had to the partye that borroweth, what losse, daunger, hinderaunce soever the borrower susteyneth.
Not only does the Englishman put on the habit of the Jew, but it fits him better than it did its previous owner. Mamon’s nose (according to the second numbered point, and the fourth overall) might confirm that he is a Jew, but from medieval times it represented a number of moralistic and vice featured such as avarice and infidelity. Mamon’s huge nose — especially as a comic stage property — must be related to his status as an Englishman gone wrong, not a Jew.

Finally, Mamon’s similarity to Shylock has to be considered. In the first place, both are like devils. During the second half of the sixteenth century the iconographic and stage figures of usurer, Jew, devil, and beast were confused, and by the end of the century they became conflated. Early in Act Two of Jack Drum’s Entertainment, we see Mamon’s servant, Flawne, enter, “bearing a light before Mamon.” He says “Now, me thinks I hold the candle to the divel” (C3), and Katherine complains to Pasquil that she has been poisoned by “the divel in the shape of Mamon” (F2r). The echo of Launcelot’s complaints in The Merchant of Venice is apparent: “To be ruled by my conscience,” he says, “I should stay with the Jew my master who, God bless the mark, is a kind of devil; ... certainly the Jew is the very devil incarnation” (II.i.20-2;24-5). Marston then goes for some easy laughs with Mamon’s cry of “Alas my Obligations, my Bonds, my Obligations, my Bonds” (F3), strongly reminiscent of the contract-centered Shylock. Several interpreters have used this outburst as evidence, of course, to argue that Marston put a Jew of his own on the stage. But the similarities of the words here are the pinnacle of Marston’s satire: his romantic scenes are overblown, and his “Jewish” scenes are absurd. Mamon’s Shylock-like words insist that the very “Jewishness” of cutting usury has infected the English breast.

As in Englishmen For My Money, questions of the “Jewish” infection are bound up with those of the evil foreign influence. A prime example of the latter is given us when the Englishman, Brabant Senior, decides to play a joke by presenting his wife to the Frenchman, John fo de King, as a courtesan. Brabant bets on his wife’s fidelity to him, but fo de King manages to seduce her. John fo de King is bald from venereal (“French”) disease, and makes the joke of teaching his prospective wenches French; in other words he will talk to them in French and give them the clap. At the end of Jack Drum’s Entertainment fo de King triumphantly returns, post-coitus, among the Englishmen and offers to teach Brabant Senior French “to t’end of the vorlde” (I3) for his help to a wench. This is a double confirmation of linguistic infection — that Brabant will now get the French disease if he sleeps with his own wife and that Brabant has to be proven un-English by playing the bawd to her. Hoenselaars writes,
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"The foreigner who was initially presented as possible agent of evil in the traditional manner turns out to be more humane than he seemed and is the appropriate scourge of the evil Englishman who needs to be taught a lesson."27 The Englishman in this episode is displaying a tendency to engage with precisely the sorts of behaviour an Englishman should detest — in this case the sport of venery. Similarly but more seriously, Mamon, as “the evil Englishman,” is both destructive and self-effacing; it is the “foreignness” within the breast of this Englishman that causes his English shoulders to be whipped in punishment. We see that the concerns of the two plays are largely the same, with the emphasis shifted. Englishmen must be protected from lecherous, usurious, and damnable vices, hateful to the Christian commonwealth, while Englishwomen must be protected from lustful foreigners and murderous Jews — or rather, from Englishmen who have become “worse than Jewes.”

As both scapegoat for the conscience of the community, and figure of real physical danger, Mamon exists in the play solely to be silenced. Silence follows the cries of protest and pain as one is beaten into submission — beaten comically by stage-posts or beaten viciously by whips. Marston’s Jonsonian lack of sympathy for his character is a reflection of the times and his audience.28 Mamon is all evil: he is the assassin (Abraham and Ruy Lopez return to mind), the lecher, the old seducer, and child molester of medieval iconography. That the myths of Jewish child-abuse and diabolism continued right through the Renaissance period and were ripe for plucking back into the propagandist forefront at any time, is evident from the writings of the traveler, William Biddulph. Lucid and acute in his observations elsewhere, he slips into dramatic reportage in his passage on the Turkish Jews:

They observe still all their old Ceremonies and feasts, Sacrifices only excepted, which the Turkes will not suffer them to doe: for they were wont amongst them to sacrifice children, but dare not now for feare of the Turkes. Yet some of them have confessed, that their Physitians kill some Christian patient or other, whom they have under their hands at that time, in stead of a sacrifice.29

As an English usurer with all the vices of the old Jew firmly stuck in his breast, Mamon shows the ultimate level of the infiltration of “judaising” into English society.

Like all earlier figures of “Jewish” vice this Mamon, set up so hugely, must be knocked down. His servant, Flawne, has no qualms about playing his part in the downfall of his anti-Christian, usurer master; he revels in the
privilege of listing Mamon’s bad fortunes, all working to “laie him up in Bedlame, commit him to the mercie of the whip, the entertainment of bread and water, and the sting of a Usurers Conscience for ever” (F3r). First, the precious bonds of Mamon as the anti-Christian usurer are shredded. The effective poisons used by real Jews — such as Abraham in Selimus31 or Barabas against the convent — become in Mamon horrific intent ultimately negated, countered by the Arcadian antidote of “A skilfull Beldame with the Juice of hearbes” (H4). Indeed, there is an apparent paradox in the whole satirical scenario: the great evil of the figure that represents corrupted Englishness invokes a response that conjures up notions of England as full of natural healing powers, an idyllic utopia of safety and purging. This is not really a paradox, of course, but one example of nature’s contrapuntal matrix: nature marries diseases and cures, poisons and medicines. The soothing dock leaf grows next to the stinging nettle, and the woman who finds the cure for Katherine is a “Beldame,” a name that has been used twice before, contemptuously on both occasions.

And finally, in an episode that is reminiscent of Lincoln’s cries to the crowd in the early 1590s play of Sir Thomas More, Flawne tells Mamon, “Your house with all the furniture is burnt, not a ragge left, the people stand warming their handes at the fire, and laugh at your miserie” (F3r). The relation of this act emphasizes in the present context of the play the ideological anti-Englishness of Mamon, insofar as the crowd in Sir Thomas More was preparing to burn down the houses of the foreigners in London. A shift has occurred away from the threat of Continental foreigners and toward the figure of English “Jewishness.” For some members of the audience, at least, this scene would also have jogged the memory of a whole trend in the history of the Jews: the final repose of the Jew-like usurer — his house — must be taken, and the Jew must be sent to some house of correction or conversion.33 in 1215, John Stow tells us, the walls and gates of London that were wrecked by civil war were repaired “with the stones taken from the Jewes broken houses, namely, Aeldgate being then most ruinous.”34 For centuries, the homes of the Jews have been “converted” into the very structures that hold them in subjection. The homes of the Jews of Elizabethan London were their synagogues, their holy centers, the only domains safe from the Christian oppression.35 One Thomas Wilson (not the writer on usury), a Christian working for a Jewish family, kept a record of the clandestine Jewish services that took place in his employer’s household. He mentions that they moved between parishes for ease of worship, “because they have not been troubled about their Relygyon or use of
superstycyous ceremonyes since they came to dwell there as they now do, where before they were constrayned to come and heare servyce at Fanchurch when they dwelt in Fanchurch streete.\textsuperscript{36} From the tearing down of the German \textit{Judensynagogs} and their replacement with Christian churches, to Barabas’s house, which was turned into a Christian convent, house-taking is the final invasion of the Jew’s life, the final destruction of his world within the world.\textsuperscript{37} So, through Mamon’s suffering of house-loss and incarceration, England is purged of foreign infection and Jew-like usury. The portrayal of this involved trope (turning-out, eviction, and expulsion, and almost simultaneously imprisonment and enclosure) in the plays of the late Elizabethan stage is one illustration of the deep influence of historical example on the production of Renaissance dramatic texts and their performance.

\textit{Englishmen For My Money}, we may have thought (and Hoenselaars supposed), pointed out the end of English fear as the foreigners were put down; in \textit{Jack Drum’s Entertainment} we find England’s social, economic and ideological defenses breached, and there is a new need for the invader’s elimination. Previous dangerous Jews had been safely abroad, but now the “Jewish” vice was in England. Pisaro’s appearance and infection of English space with the Italian, Dutch, and French men were comic, although they also struck deeper resonances; Mamon’s appearance heralds England’s tragedy.

\section*{III}

There are two peculiarities we must keep reminding ourselves of as we move through an interpretation of Marston’s play. In the first place we notice that, while \textit{The Three Ladies of London} and \textit{Englishmen For My Money} are set in the city of London, \textit{Jack Drum’s Entertainment} is set in and around the Highgate country house of Sir Edward Fortune. This countryside is the region of quintessential Englishness. The city, on the other hand, is overrun with foreigners; the cosmopolitan exchange, with its “confusion of languages,” is where Nashe’s Pierce Penniless went to seek a loan of the “divell,” the “old, stradling Usurer” with “a huge, woorme-eaten nose.”\textsuperscript{38} Ironically, then, while Englishness prevails most strongly outside the walls of the city and inside the enclosure of the Highgate estate, outside the walls is also where the enclosure for un-English infidels like Mamon has been built. Mamon craves London (and its lucre) and urges Sir Edward to attend the court, where things are better-ordered and ruled by the “blacke and white” of bonds, obligations, and law. Sir Edward’s countrified revels disturb Mamon because they are loose and
uncontrollable, and it is Mamon’s blindness to the potency and spontaneity of the English countryside that means he will poison Katherine, unable to predict her wonderful recovery and unable to predict that his evil deeds will inevitably return to haunt him.

The second difference between this play and its predecessors on usury, trade, and politics, concerns the type of performance. The Three Ladies of London was a public play in the morality style, which may have been played in a few short runs at The Theatre, or on tour; The Jew of Malta played at The Rose, and The Merchant of Venice at The Globe; Englishmen For My Money was also a Rose play. Marston’s play for the Paul’s Boys and the private theater. Tucking its public forerunners under its belt, Jack Drum re-presents their issues in a vein appropriate to the later date and the smaller, dark space, with its audience of more consistently higher social rank. Marston provides, in effect, a digest of an aspect of recent (public) stage history while retaining a sardonic and telling distance from his characters. Morse S. Allen writes that “On the whole, Jack Drum’s Entertainment contains little satire, since it was written solely to amuse . . . satire would have been out of place.” But we have already seen in Englishmen For My Money that seeming comedy can hide darker purposes. If we read the satire in the play, we expose suppressed truths, such as the fact that vices (under the guise of comedy) penetrate the interstices of a humorous England that had apparently kept its ideology largely impermeable. The justice meted out in Jack Drum’s Entertainment for folly and evil is the unsatirical story designed to tempt patronage for the recently re-established Paul’s Boys of 1600-01, but the hyperbole of the romance reveals the underlying viciousness of the intent to do harm, and a very thin line is drawn between revenge and justice. If we do more than nibble at the meat of Jack Drum’s Entertainment we will be left with a bitter satirical taste. While the failure of Mamon may be part of Marston’s and the Paul’s Boys’ aim for ethical and political correctness, the way that the play uses stereotype and convention to force realism to its limits is an indicator of the unlikeliness of the play’s situation as a whole, including the defeat of Mamon in England. As Philip J. Finkelppearl has noticed, Mamon’s plots for dastardly deeds are not, in the end, all that different from those of the suspicious lover, Brabant Junior, who is not billed directly as a villain, and who remains at large. Mamon and Pasquil go mad at almost the same time and this may indicate another parallel between the “good” and “bad” characters that is hard to ignore.

Marston sutures all the strands of the Jew-usurer-devil icon to create Mamon. As a figure infected with judaizing vices, he has lost any affiliation
with his free-ranging country-folk (in both senses: non-English and non-rural) whose comedy takes place in an idealistic, Utopian, Christian England; instead, he is a contained, isolated, punished figure. Mamon ends up in Bethlem Hospital, another "world" of its own, "a Citie of Jurye" (I)\(^{41}\) where the residents lose sense of their identity, language, and place in space and time. This is, of course, a moral tale, and it is a tale that reminds us that the idealistic English are still the victims of the sin of pride. They judge the sinful and laugh at their own weakness. English usury, English Mamon, must be eradicated in the fashion of the times; thus (like all madmen, Jews, suspect foreigners, and infected Englishmen) this impurity is both expelled, turned out of the walls of the "Christian" city of London, and then forcibly enclosed and mercilessly whipped within the walls of Bedlam.\(^{42}\)

*Rice University*

**Notes**


3. Francis Bacon writes, "Many have made witty inventes against Usury . . . That Usurers should have orange-tawny bonnets, because they do judaize. That it is against nature for money to beget money, and the like," "Of Usury," in *Bacon’s Essays*, ed. F. G. Selby (London: Macmillan, 1989), pp. 105-106. Bacon argues that usury in fact diminishes trade because the making of interest makes it unnecessary to do any work for money. In saying that usury permits trade I am arguing from the standpoint of the prospective merchant rather than the established usurer.

4. The better-known extant usury tracts include Thomas Wilson, *A Discourse upon Usury* (1572); Philip Caesar, *A General Discourse Against the Damnable Sect of Usurers* (London, 1578); Henry Smith, *An Examination of Usurie* (London, 1591); the anonymous *The Death of Usury, or the Disgrace of Usurers* (Cambridge, 1594); and Miles Mosse, *The Arraignment and Conviction of Usury* (London, 1595). It is not unreasonable to assume a sizeable readership for the books printed in London. Mosse makes the point that printing in London
(rather than at one of the universities) makes the work available to the general — and usurious — public.


6. All signature references are to the first quarto of 1616. I have modernized i / j and u / v in all quotations.

7. For a very useful study of the features of the stage usurer see Celeste Turner Wright, “Some Conventions Regarding the Usurer in Elizabethan Literature,” *Studies in Philology*, 31 (1934), 176-197. This work highlights the contemporary confusion in identifying a figure of the Other in racial and religious terms, while pointing to prejudicial behavioral and physical features. For social issues and the appearance of Jews in Europe see Alfred Rubens, *A History of Jewish Costume* (1967; London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973); and Rubens, *A Jewish Iconography* (London: The Jewish Museum, 1954).


9. Samuel Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus, or Purchas his Pilgrimes* (1625; Glasgow: James MacLehose & Sons, 1905), 20 vols., vol. 10, p. 427. At Coryate’s time of writing (1613) Amis was 60 years old, and left London when he was 30; so he was in London 1553-1583.


19. In his edition of the play, Baugh identified the conduit at the junction of Leadenhall and Cornhill streets as the one referred to in this instance (p. 226). Stow writes that a forcer conveyed Thames water through the main pipe, which “with foure spoutes did at every tyde runne (according to couenant) foure wayes, plentifully seruing to the commoditie of the inhabitants neare adjoyning in their houses, and also cleansed the Chanes of the streete towards Bishopsgate, Aldgate, the bridge, and the Stocks Market” (*Survey*, vol. 1, p. 188). Stow also notes that the highly beneficial conduit was built by one Peter Morris, a German, in 1582.

20. John Orrell, “The Architecture of the Fortune Playhouse,” *Shakespeare Survey*, 47 (1994), pp. 23-26. A combination of the Greek derivative, “Herm,” from the god of passing-over, Hermes, and the Roman “Term,” from *terminus*, or boundary, give us a richly suggestive etymological and semiotic context in which to think about the trope of foreigners being kept within limits by hitting their heads on the posts, while being directed to cross over the boundary of the city in the fiction of the play, while in reality heading for the groundling audience at the limit of the stage. Orrell points out the continuation of the iconography of Terms in frontispiece engravings (illus., p. 25).


22. The term “bridewell-bird” was current in the 1580s and 1590s (*OED* “Bridewell”). Shapiro notes that, in response to the Dutch Church Libel, the Privy Council “not only ordered a search and apprehension of those suspected of writing the poem, but sanctioned the use of torture at Bridewell prison” (*Shakespeare and the Jews*, p. 184).

23. *OED* “drum,” entry 3b (the play is not cited in the *OED*). For use of the term see Robert Wilson, *The Three Ladies of London* (London, 1584), D2; Nashe, *The Works*, vol. 2, p. 218; and Shakespeare, *All’s Well That Ends Well*, III.vi.38. A book from 1581 warned travellers to Rome that they could expect to find in that city, “no hoste to intarntaine you, unlessse perhapses, some prettie noppes to make a ryding stocke: would graunt you a breakefaste, and after she had laughed her fill, give you Jacke Drommes, entertainment, and thrust the contemner of Beaute, the dispraiser of love, the despiser of women, and the disparager of their honours, out of the doores,” Barnabe Rich, *The Strange and Wonderfull Adventures of Don Simonides, a Gentilman Spaniarde* (London, 1581), S3.


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30. In Michael Scott’s *John Marston’s Plays: Theme, Structure, and Performance* (London: Macmillan, 1978) we come across a nice typographical error: “a skilful ‘Bedlame’ miraculously restores Katherine to health” (p. 57). Indeed, although the Beldame repairs Katherine’s face, Katherine’s mental health is cured by “Bedlame” because Bedlam locks Mammon further away from her than he can throw poison.


41. The pun is on both Jury / Jewry since justice has been meted out to the “judaiser”; and also on Bedlam / Bethle[h]em as a city of the Jews.

42. My thanks to Prof. Meredith Skura and Martine van Elk for their valuable criticism and necessary support.