Recent Studies in the English Renaissance

ELR bibliographic essays are intended to contribute a topical review of research within a reasonably complete bibliography. Scholarship is organized by authors or titles of anonymous works. Items included represent combined entries listed in the annual bibliographies published by *PMLA*, *YWES*, and *MHRA* from 1971 through, in the present instance, 2016. The format used here is a modified version of that used in *Recent Studies in English Renaissance Drama*, ed. Terence P. Logan and Denzel S. Smith, 4 vols. (Univ. of Nebraska, 1973–1978).

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This essay covers scholarship dedicated to the practices and understandings of religious conversion in early modern England. It includes biographies of converts, studies on literary representations of converts and conversion, and analyses of conversion in relation to intersecting issues, such as politics, gender, and race.

RECENT STUDIES IN RELIGIOUS CONVERSION

LIEKE STELLING

Initiating Studies

The study of religious conversion begins in the field of psychology, and focuses on subjective experiences of individuals. As such, it is defined by Protestant traditions of self-scrutiny, self-surrender, and fostering a personal relationship with a Christian God. In his seminal and classic work *Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902), William James defines conversion as follows: "to be converted, to be regenerated, to receive grace, to experience religion, to gain an assurance, are so many phrases which denote the process, gradual or sudden, by which a self hitherto divided, and consciously wrong inferior and unhappy, becomes unified and consciously right superior and happy, in consequence of its firmer hold upon religious realities." James largely bases himself on the one hundred case studies of evangelical church members that are presented in Edwin Starbuck, *The Psychology of Religion* (1899). James's work was followed by G. Stanley Hall, *Jesus the Christ in the Light of Psychology* (1917) and the first book-length study of the subject: Sante De Sanctis, *Religious Conversion: A Bio-Psychological Study* (1927). Both Alfred Clair Underwood, in *Conversion: Christian and Non-Christian: A Comparative and Psychological Study* (1925), and Arthur Darby Nock, in

English Literary Renaissance, volume 47, number 1.

Conversion: The Old and the New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo (1933), departed from a strictly Christian understanding of conversion. Nock's landmark investigation into classical perceptions draws a distinction between conversion as a radical transformation of the soul typically promoted within the prophetic religions of Judaism and Christianity, and a gradual "acceptance of new worships as useful supplements and not as substitutes" that we find in classical forms of paganism.

In the course of the twentieth century, new impulses mainly came from sociology: John Lofland and Rodney Stark, "Becoming a World-Saver: A Theory of Conversion to a Deviant Perspective," *American Sociological Review* 30 (1965), 862–75 and Eileen Barker, *The Making of a Moonie: Choice or Brainwashing?* (1984); from anthropology: Robin Horton, "African Conversion," *Africa* 41 (1971), 85–108; "On the Rationality of Conversion, Part I," *Africa* 45 (1975), 219–35; and "On the Rationality of Conversion, Part II," *Africa* 45 (1975), 373–99; and from the study of conversion in religions other than Christianity, notably Islam: Nehemiah Levtzion, *Conversion to Islam* (1979) and Richard W. Bulliet, *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period: An Essay in Quantitative History* (1979).

I. General Studies

In the introduction to their collected volume *The Oxford Handbook of Religious Conversion* (2014), pp. 1–47, Lewis R. Rambo and Charles E. Farhadian chart seven defining issues in the current study of religious conversion: 1) emphasis on continuity rather than discontinuity, 2) the active agency of converts, 3) the religious and non-religious complexity of motivations, 4) the understanding of narrative as an integral part of conversion, 5) the importance of the human body and other material aspects, 6) post-conversion life, and 7) the use of conversion analyses in the study of historical events and people and *vice versa*.

Working from the premise of conversion as a metaphor, Karl F. Morrison's influential *Understanding Conversion* (1992) argues that eleventh- and twelfth-century artistic representations of conversion were crucial in shaping its understanding in succeeding ages. Analyzing cases of conversion from the thirteenth to the twentieth centuries in a global and largely missionary perspective, Kenneth Mills and Anthony Grafton, ed., *Conversion: Old Worlds and New* (2003) draw attention to the shaping influence of paradigmatic converts and well-known conversion narratives, and show how these were adapted an appropriated by the communities of new worlds. The essays in *The Turn of the Soul: Representations of Religious Conversion in Early Modern Art and Literature* (2012), ed. Lieke Stelling, Harald Hendrix, and Todd M. Richardson, take conversion first and foremost as a cultural construct, and approach the subject from three questions that informed early modern artistic and literary understandings of conversion: how is conversion authenticated, where is agency located in conversion, and what is the role of imitation

in helping to bring about spiritual revelation? In a special issue on conversion, Peter Mazur and Abigail Shinn, "Introduction: Conversion Narratives in the Early Modern World," *JEMH* 17 (2013), 427–436, discuss early modern practices of communicating conversions to wider audiences by means of narration, translation, and dissemination. The latest general volume on the subject, *Conversions: Gender and Religious Change in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Simon Ditchfield and Helen Smith (2017), takes gender as its point of departure, offering chapters on the interplay between constructions and perceptions of gendered identity on the one hand and conversion on the other.

II. Studies of Selected Topics

A. *Catholic-Protestant*

Examining the early days of the English Reformation, Peter Marshall, "Evangelical Conversion in the Reign of Henry VIII," in *The Beginnings of English Protestantism*, ed. Peter Marshall and Alec Ryrie (2002), pp. 14–37 (rpt. in his *Religious Identities in Henry VIII's England* (2006), pp. 19–42), proposes the term "evangelical conversion" to describe the experiences of religious regeneration that involved the rejection of Catholicism and embrace of persuasions that would only later be categorized as Protestant. Hardly ever documented in autobiographical accounts, conversion in this period, Marshall argues, was typically understood as a "profound yearning for personal religious renewal" and as a desire to explain this experience in theological terms. In his comprehensive study of the political significances conversion took on in a time of unprecedented confessional polemic, Michael Questier, *Conversion, Politics and Religion in England, 1580–1625* (1996), reminds us of the remarkable pervasiveness of "flux in religion," and helps establish the importance of conversion as a tool to explore the ambiguities and instabilities of religious allegiance. Alec Ryrie, in his section on conversion in "The Protestant Life," in *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain* (2013), pp. 407–68, examines conversion as part of the everyday lives of Protestants, and devotes particular attention to the discrepancy between, on the one hand, the Protestant ideals of conversion by preaching and the process of conversion following a clear scheme, and, on the other, the "messier" and less predictable practice.

Questier's chapter "'Like Locusts all over the World': Conversion, Indoctrination, and the Society of Jesuits in Late Elizabethan and Jacobean England," in *The Reckoned Expense: Edmund Campion and the Early English Jesuits*, ed. T. McCoog (1996), pp. 346–70, analyzes the proselytizing strategies and techniques of English Jesuits to reveal the multifaceted and surprisingly intricate relationship between English Catholicism and the Church of England. In his effort to establish the importance of "Catholic writing and experience" to early modern English culture, Arthur F. Marotti, "Performing Conversion," in his *Religious Ideology and Cultural Fantasy: Catholic and Anti-Catholic Discourses in Early Modern England* (2005), pp. 95–130, surveys the conversions of prominent new Catholics, including

William Alabaster, Francis Walsingham ("namesake and kinsman of Queen Elizabeth's Catholic-hating secretary of state"), and Sir Toby Matthew, and the political discourse surrounding their changes of faith. In "Dumb Preachers: Catholicism and the Culture of Print," in her *Catholic Reformation in Protestant Britain* (2014), pp. 235–83, Alexandra Walsham discusses the importance of Catholic print in making converts. Noting that women were not only seen as more likely converts, notably to Catholicism, than men, but also as capable of converting others, Claire Canavan and Helen Smith, "'The Needle May Convert More than the pen': Women and the Work of Conversion in Early Modern England," in Ditchfield and Smith (I), pp. 105–26, argue that women's devotional needlework, often regarded as an act of domestic passivity, was in fact an instrument of pious agency.

Analyzing the cases of William Alabaster, Marc Antonio De Dominis, and William Chillingworth, Holly Crawford Pickett, "Motion Rhetoric in Serial Conversion Narratives: Religion and Change in Early Modern England," in *Redrawing the Map of Early Modern English Catholicism*, ed. Lowell Gallagher (2012), pp. 84–112, draws our attention to the difficult position of serial converts. Having to defend themselves against accusations of inconsistency and opportunism, they used language of natural philosophy, motion, and discovery to explain their decisions. In so doing, Pickett argues, they made attempts "to transcend ecclesiastical boundaries" that are reminiscent of medieval traditions, as well as of Enlightenment interests in natural science, religious toleration, and ecumenism. See also III, A *Alabaster*; B *Bale*; C *Carpenter*; F *Donne*; I *Jonson*; L *Middleton*; M *Perne*; N *Shakespeare* 3. *Other Plays*; O *Southwell*; P *Spira*; T *Woodes*.

B. *Muslim-Christian*

The most prolific author on Anglo-Ottoman relationships, Nabil Matar, "The Renegade in English Seventeenth-Century Imagination," *SEL* 33 (1993), 489–505, and *Islam in Britain 1558–1685* (1998), was the first to examine the renegade as a stock character and product of English anxieties over perceived alarming numbers of British Christians who converted to Islam. Maintaining that the stage renegade embodied the "internal evil that threatened Christendom" and served as a disturbing reminder of the worldly appeal the expansionary Ottoman empire held for many Englishmen, Matar notes that contrary to their historical counterparts, who happily lived ever after, fictional renegades met with divine retribution to "inject fear about the consequences of apostasy," or repented. Lois Potter, "Pirates and 'Turning Turk' in Renaissance Drama," in *Travel and Drama in Shakespeare's Time*, ed. Jean-Pierre Maquerlot and Michèle Willems (1996), pp.124–40, discusses dramatic references to piracy and apostasy to Islam against the backdrop of the English piracy that flourished under James I's reign. Barbara Fuchs, "Faithless Empires: Pirates, Renegadoes, and the English Nation," *ELH* 67 (2000), 45–69, rpt. in her *Mimesis and Empire: The New World, Islam and European Identities* (2001), pp. 118–38, too, surveys the role and reputation of renegade pi-

rates in early seventeenth-century England. Dennis Britton, "Muslim Conversion and Circumcision as Theater," in *Religion and Drama in Early Modern England: The Performance of Religion on the Renaissance Stage*, ed. Jane Hwang Degenhardt and Elizabeth Williamson (2011), pp. 71–86, analyzes the ways in which stage renegades use tricks, props, and costumes to counterfeit circumcision and hide their true religious convictions—an unsettling reminder of the idea that the religious identities of real-life converts may be equally prone to dissimulation. Considering the stage renegade in the light of the Civil War, Matthew Birchwood, "Turning to the Turk: Collaboration and Conversion in William Davenant's *The Siege of Rhodes*," in *Remapping the Mediterranean World in Early Modern English Writings*, ed. Goran Stanivukovic (2007), pp. 207–226, and reprinted in his *Staging Islam in England: Drama and Culture, 1640–1685* (2007), pp. 96–128, claims that during the Protectorate, the political relevance of the character of the renegade increased and became more defined, as Oliver Cromwell was compared to a Turkish tyrant and his supporters to renegades having betrayed the monarchy. In the *Siege of Rhodes*, Davenant complicates this image by having the Turkish despot transform into the epitome of Christian kingship.

Daniel Vitkus, *Turning Turk: English Theater and the Multicultural Mediterranean, 1570–1630* (2003) argues for a generic approach to Christian-Islamic conversion plays, that is, by documenting patterns in conversion plots and their relation to the "powerful conjunction of sexual, commercial, political, and religious anxieties in early modern English culture." Vitkus is particularly perceptive on the metaphoric significance of Christian-Islamic stage conversion, especially the trope of "turning" and its sexual and political connotations. A Biblical approach to the semantics of "turning turk" comes from Patricia Parker, "Preposterous Conversions: Turning Turk, and Its 'Pauline' Rerighting," *JEMCS* 2 (2002), 1–34, who notices that the idea of the preposterous "as both the 'unnatural' and the 'reversed' or 'turned,'" having its roots in Paul's Galatians and Romans 1, was used in English polemical discourse against Muslims in general and specifically against conversion to Islam. Jonathan Burton, Claire Norton, Bernadette Andrea, and Jane Hwang Degenhardt, are, like Vitkus, interested in the wider economic, political, racial and gender-related significance of dramatic conversions to and from Islam. Burton, "English Anxiety and the Muslim Power of Conversion: Five Perspectives on 'Turning Turk' in Early Modern Texts," *JEMCS* 2 (2002), 35–67, and *Traffic and Turning: Islam and English Drama, 1579–1624* (2005) and Claire Norton, "Lust, Greed, Torture, and Identity: Narrations of Conversion and the Creation of the Early Modern Renegade," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 29 (2009), 259–68 complicate Vitkus's analysis by introducing the ignored viewpoints of early modern Muslims, and Andrea, *Women and Islam in Early Modern English Literature* (2007), that of women. Degenhardt, *Islamic Conversion and Christian Resistance on the Early Modern Stage* (2010) pays special attention to proto-racial conceptions of Islamic identity and to the ways in which (the threat of) conversion

to Islam was construed in terms of erotic seduction. She also shows how these presentations were inextricably linked to national debates about Protestant reform.

Jacqueline Pearson, "'One *Lot* in *Sodom*': Masculinity and the Gendered Body in Early Modern Narratives of Converted Turks," *Literature & Theology* 21 (2007), 29–48, shows how Protestant accounts of the rare baptisms of Turks in England make extensive use of gender stereotypes to portray the Turkish enemy as effeminate and grotesque, and, by implication, English Protestant identity as its self-controlled and virile antipode. See also III, D *Daborne*; E *Dekker* and *Massinger*; K *Massinger*; N *Shakespeare* 2. *Othello*.

C. *Jewish-Christian*

In his influential *Shakespeare and the Jews* (1996), James Shapiro traces how Elizabethan conceptions of national, racial, and political identity raised questions over the very possibility of the conversion of Jews. Focusing on confessional changes of the Reformation in relation to early modern conceptions of Jews, Jeffrey Shoulson, *Fictions of Conversion: Jews, Christians, and Cultures of Change in Early Modern England* (2013) claims that the Jew functioned as an ideal figure onto which the "alarming implications" of the "confessional transitions and shifts" of the Reformation could be projected. While his potential conversion was perceived to be of great Scriptural significance, it was the possibility of dissimulation and deceit that made him an embodiment of these fears.

In "The Calling of the Jews," in his *Philo-Semitism and the Readmission of the Jews to England 1603–1655* (1982), pp. 89–126, David S. Katz examines the importance English millenarians attached to the idea that the mass conversion of the Jews to Christianity would not only herald the Second Coming, but also confirm England as its chosen facilitator. He notes that the idea "provided a receptive climate for discussion," but did not change the minds of most of the English, who felt attracted more to its theoretical and theological implications than to the practice of readmitting contemporary Jews to England. Also writing about seventeenth-century Millenarianism, Guibbory Achsah, "Conversation, Conversion, Messianic Redemption: Margaret Fell, Menasseh ben Israel, and the Jews," in *Literary Circles and Cultural Communities in Renaissance England*, ed. Claude J. Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth (2000), pp. 210–34, considers how the Quaker leader Margaret Fell, by means of the printed pamphlet, sought to create an international spiritual community of Quakers and Jews in an attempt to bring Jews to the Quaker fold.

Martin Mulsow and Richard H. Popkin's collection, *Secret Conversions to Judaism in Early Modern Europe* (2004), publishes relevant essays on a direction of conversion that was often considered improbable. Their introduction (pp. 1–17) presents six contextual frameworks in which—often secret—conversions from Christianity to Judaism occurred, ranging from the anti-Trinitarianism that some

Protestants shared with Jews, and Christian philosemitism, to the desire of forcibly Christianized Jews to return to their original faith. With his essay "Can one be a True Christian and a Faithful Follower of the Law of Moses? The Answer of John Drury" (pp. 33–50), Richard H. Popkin presents the case of this Scottish Calvinist minister and intellectual, whose attempt to unite Christian denominations "might well have extended to bringing Jews into Christianity and Christians into Judaism." See also III, J *Marlowe*; N *Shakespeare* 1. *The Merchant of Venice*; S *Tremellius*.

D. *Pagan-Christian*

Linda Gregerson, "The Commonwealth of the Word: New England, Old England, and the Praying Indians," in *Empires of God: Religious Encounters in the Early Modern Atlantic*, ed. Linda Gregerson and Susan Juster (2011), pp. 70–83, focuses on missionary pamphlets, produced during the Commonwealth period, that were aimed at creating a community of Puritan fellow believers in America. She pays special attention to the transcribed and perceived subversive questions of the "praying Indians," about the missionary ideas of their teachers. Dennis Austin Britton, *Becoming Christian: Race, Reformation, and Early Modern English Romance* (2014) asserts that the Christianizations of non-white infidels as radical transformations of identity is an important topos of romance, which typically presents them as miracles. The reason why this possibility was questioned or even dismissed in works of writers such as Edmund Spenser and William Shakespeare is because they wrote in a Church of England tradition, which not only rejected the miraculous powers of baptism, but in so doing also "transformed [Ethiopians, Moors, Turks, and Jews] into figures of sin, as well as Christians, into racialized subjects." See also II, E Stelling; III, E *Dekker* and *Massinger*; G *Fletcher*; Q *Shirley*.

E. *Multiple Religions*

Daniel Vitkus, "Poisoned Figs, or 'The Traveler's Religion': Travel, Trade, and Conversion in Early Modern English Culture," in *Remapping the Mediterranean World in Early Modern English Writings*, ed. Goran V. Stanivukovic (2007), pp. 41–57, shows that early modern drama drew analogies between English travel and commercial exchange on the one hand, and conversion to Catholicism and Islam on the other, in attempts to warn against the corruptive influence of foreign religion and culture. This idea is further explored in his "Turning Tricks: Erotic Commodification, Cross-Cultural Conversion, and the Bed-Trick on the English Stage, 1580–1630," in Ditchfield and Smith (I), pp. 236–57, as part of three popular and often converging forms of stage trickery: commercial, religious, and erotic deception,. Lieke Stelling, "'Thy Very Essence is Mutability': Religious Conversion in Early Modern English Drama, 1558–1642," in Stelling, Hendrix, and Richardson (I), pp. 59–83, argues that playwrights invested stage conversions

from Judaism, Islam, and Paganism to Christianity with death and marriage as forms of irreversibility to rescue Christian identity from the destabilizing effect of conversion on the sense of a stable national identity. Matthew Dimmock, "Converting and not Converting Strangers in Early Modern London," *JEMH* 17 (2013), 457–78, considers the relatively random and unrehearsed nature of baptismal services for non-Christian "strangers"—'Indians,' Jews, 'Blackmores,' and 'Turks'—and notices that unlike the other groups, Jews and Muslims were "requited to speak" because they were perceived as members of religions that posed a serious threat to English Protestantism. In "Whatever Happened to Dinah the Black? And Other Questions about Gender, Race and the Visibility of Protestant Saints," in Ditchfield and Smith (I), pp. 258–80, Kathleen Lynch explores ways in which the lives and identities of "trophy converts," such as afro-Caribbean women, were represented to fit the agendas of the gathered churches in Civil War English society. See also II, D Britton.

F. *Spiritual Experience*

Judith Pollmann, "A Different Road to God: The Protestant Experience of Conversion in the Sixteenth Century," in *Conversion to Modernities: The Globalization of Christianity*, ed. Peter van der Veer (1996), pp. 47–64, draws attention to the fact that sixteenth-century Protestants, as opposed to their seventeenth-century counterparts, were remarkably silent on their conversion experiences, arguing that they perceived their conversions not in paradigmatic Pauline or Augustinian terms, but as a less radically transformative learning experience. As is suggested by Kathleen Lynch, "Any Politic Body: The Polemics of Conversion in the 1620s," in her *Protestant Autobiography in the Seventeenth-Century Anglophone World* (2012), pp. 31–72, in England this changed after the *Confessions* was published for the first time in an English translation by Tobie Matthew. Lynch notices that the *Confessions* was appropriated by Catholics and Protestant alike to strengthen their doctrinal positions. Tobie Matthew and John Donne, friends and converts in opposite directions, receive special attention for autobiographically responding to the *Confessions* in spiritual ways that went beyond doctrinal polemics. In her "Conversion Narratives in Old and New England," in *The Oxford Handbook of Literature and the English Revolution*, ed. Laura Lunger Knoppers (2012), pp. 425–41, Lynch considers the central role of conversion narratives, with St Paul and Augustine as classical but not wholly unproblematic models, in authenticating spiritual experience and building Independent and Congregational Churches in seventeenth-century England and America.

Helen Wilcox, "'Return unto Me!' Literature and Conversion in Early Modern England," in *Paradigms, Poetics and Politics of Conversion*, ed. Jan M. Bremmer, Wout J. van Bekkum, and Arie L. Molendijk (2006), pp. 85–106, reflects upon the complex and gradual processes of Protestant spiritual conversion as a "creative stimulus" in a large variety of early modern English literary works. In her *The Po-*

etics of Conversion in Early Modern English Literature: Verse and Change from Donne to Dryden (2009), Molly Murray discusses the way in which the convert-poets William Alabaster, John Donne, Richard Crashaw, and John Dryden expressed their religious experience in verse, a genre that lends itself particularly well to addressing the paradoxes and quandaries raised by conversion. Indeed, Murray pays special attention to the ways in which the poets embraced its continuously unsettling effects on their self-identities. Helen Smith, "Metaphor, Cure, and Conversion in Early Modern England," *RQ* 67 (2014), 473–502, reminds us of the strikingly intimate connection between the language of physical illness and bodily cure on the one hand, and spiritual suffering and conversion on the other, arguing that the likeness between these categories enabled early moderns to express and produce religious experience in a bodily and a spiritual sense.

Bruce D. Hindmarsh, "Early Modern Origins," in his *The Evangelical Conversion Narrative: Spiritual Autobiography in Early Modern England* (2005), pp. 33–60, argues that the Puritan theology of introspection and self-scrutiny in the late sixteenth century and the first half of the seventeenth created the conditions that would give rise to the spate of Evangelical conversion narratives in the mid-eighteenth century. One collection of (anonymous) radical Protestant conversion stories mentioned by Hindmarsh, *The Spirituall Experiences of Sundry Beleevers* (1653), is scrutinized by Abigail Shinn, "Gender and Reproduction in the Spiritual Experiences," in Ditchfield and Smith (I), pp. 81–101, who observes that most of the "sundry beleevers" are women, the many "female gender signifiers" and references to motherhood rendering it a "reproductive text," or work "designed to draw the reader into a fertile, and ever-expanding textual congregation."

Alizon Brunning, "'Thou art damned for alt'ring thy religion': The Double Coding of Conversion in City Comedy," *Plotting Early Modern London: New Essays on Jacobean City Comedy*, ed. Dieter Mehl, Angela Stock, and Anne-Julia Zwierlein (2004), pp. 154–62, recognizes the structure of the Protestant conversion narrative in *Eastward Ho*, *The Honest Whore Part I*, and *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, which invites the audience to consider critically whether the repenting characters are being sincere in their expressions of remorse. Alan Rudrum, "God's Second Book and the Regenerate Mind: Some Early Modern Conversion Narratives," in *Renaissance Ecology: Imagining Eden in Milton's England*, ed. Ken Hiltner (2008), 201–16, discusses the spiritual conversion narratives of Jacob Boehme, George Fox, and Henry Vaughan, and argues that they are marked by new and heightened understandings of the natural world. Philip Major, "'Most Necessarily to be Knowne': The Conversion Narratives of Samuel Smith," in Stelling, Hendrix, and Richardson (I), pp. 153–75, demonstrates how the Church of England minister Samuel Smith presented biblical models of conversion in a way that allowed both for the Protestant understanding of conversion as the work of God alone and for the desire of preachers to offer biblical models of conversion that could be followed by parishioners as well as fellow clergymen.

Naomi McAreavey, "Reading Conversion Narratives as Literature of Trauma: Radical Religion, the Wars of the Three Kingdoms and the Cromwellian Re-Conquest of Ireland," in *Region, Religion and English Renaissance Literature*, ed. David Coleman (2013), 153–170, employs a framework of trauma theory in discussing mid-seventeenth-century conversion narratives of members of Independent congregations as tools for expressing and responding to traumatic experiences suffered during the Wars of the Three Kingdoms. See also III, F *Donne*; H *Herbert*; P *Spira*; R *Trapnel*; T *Woodes*.

III. Studies of Individual Authors and Converts

A. *William Alabaster*

Challenging the common assumption that the conversion narrative is an exclusively Protestant genre, Molly Murray, "'Now I am a Catholique': William Alabaster and the Early Modern Catholic Conversion Narrative," in *Catholic Culture in Early Modern England*, ed. Ronald Corthell, Frances E. Dolan, and Arthur F. Marotti (2008), pp. 189–215, discusses William Alabaster's "highly stylized" autobiographical account of his conversion to Catholicism, with special emphasis on Alabaster's literary interest in "formally determined aspects of religious change." A hypertext critical edition of Alabaster's conversion narrative is offered by Dana F. Sutton, "William Alabaster, Alabaster's Conversion (1599): A Hypertext Critical Edition," ed. and introd. Dana F. Sutton (2012) http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/alabconv/. See also II, A Marotti, Pickett; F Murray.

B. *John Bale*

Oliver Wort, *John Bale and Religious Conversion in Reformation England* (2013) addresses different aspects of John Bale's rejection of his life as a Carmelite friar and his embrace of "a reformed faith." Crucial to its approach are the notion of conversion as a drawn out process rather than a specific moment, and questions of the "narrative construction" of Bale's religious transformation, including those of differing conversion accounts and of authentication. Wort concludes that Bale's pre-conversion Catholic beliefs and identity continued to play a shaping role in his life as an evangelical reformer.

C. *Richard Carpenter*

Alison Shell, "Multiple Conversion and the Menippean Self: The Case of Richard Carpenter," in *Catholicism and Anti-Catholicism in Early Modern English Texts*, ed. Arthur Marotti (1999), pp. 154–97, discusses the way in which this English Protestant, who had converted to Catholicism and recanted, used Menippean satire to portray his life of travel and his enemies' religious changeability.

D. *Robert Daborne*

Matthew Dimmock, "Materialising Islam on the Early Modern English Stage," in *Early Modern Encounters with the Islamic East: Performing Cultures*, ed. Sabine Schülting, Sabine Lucia Müller, and Ralf Hertel (2012), pp. 115–32 explores the material aspects of the staging of Islam and conversion to Islam in *A Christian Turn'd Turke*.

E. *Thomas Dekker and Philip Massinger*

Jane Hwang Degenhardt, "Catholic Martyrdom in Dekker and Massinger's *The Virgin Martyr* and the Early Modern Threat of 'Turning Turk,'" *ELH* 73 (2006), 83–117, describes the way in which the tragedy repurposes notions of Catholic Martyrdom as models for resisting the threat of forced conversion to Islam. Holly Crawford Pickett, "Dramatic Nostalgia and Spectacular Conversion in Dekker and Massinger's *The Virgin Martyr*," *SEL* 49 (2009), 437–62, shows how the play engages with questions of conversion in relation to sincerity and salvation, reason and theatricality in nostalgically drawing from a tradition of medieval drama that sought to bring about spiritual conversions of its audiences.

F. *John Donne*

Gregory Kneidel, "John Donne's 'Via Pauli'," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 100 (2001), 224–46, contends that four of Donne's sermons that address the diversity of ways in which individual conversion can take place comprise his clearest explanation of conversion, and suggests that Donne's saw his own change of faith as both pragmatic and truly spiritual at the same time. In his section on Donne's conversion, Brian Cummings, "God's Grammar," in his *The Literary Culture of the Reformation: Grammar and Grace* (2002), pp. 365–417, reads Donne's conversion in the light of the biblical conversion of Saul as a persecutor of Christians, observing that Donne's complex conversion is "symptomatic" of the "convoluted history of the English Reformations." Focusing on his poetry—particularly the *Holy Sonnets*—Murray (II, G) argues that Donne shows a deep commitment not to a particular devotional identity but to the idea of conversion as such. This prompts Murray to conclude that for Donne the convert's process of choosing is itself "the source of individual spiritual authenticity" and the truest way of professing Christianity. This view is corroborated by Robert V. Young, "Donne, Crashaw and Prophetic Conversion," in *Les Voix de Dieu: Littérature et Prophétie en Angleterre et en France à l'Âge Baroque*, ed. Line Cottegnies, Claire Gheeraert-Graffeuille, Tony Gheeraert, Anne-Marie Miller-Blaise, and Gisèle Venet (2008), who claims that both Donne and William Crashaw (who converted in the opposite direction) were chiefly concerned with the very individual and personal act of choosing faith. Catherine Gimelli Martin, "Experimental Predestination in Donne's Holy Sonnets: Self-Ministry and the Early Seventeenth-

Century 'Via Media'," *Studies in Philology* 110 (2013), 350–81, suggests that rather than straightforwardly adopting Calvinism or Arminianism, Donne opted for the middle way of "experimental predestination" that was promoted by William Perkins.

Stephenie Yearwood, "Donne's *Holy Sonnets*: The Theology of Conversion," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 24 (1982), 208–21, argues that in the *Holy Sonnets*, Donne expresses his understanding of conversion from a doctrinal and emotional point of view, using them to bring about a conversion in his readers. Jeanne Shami, "Anatomy and Progress: The Drama of Conversion in Donne's Men of a 'Middle Nature'," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 53 (1984), 221–35, observes that Donne in his *Sermons, Devotions*, and satires dramatizes a "pattern of 'anatomy and progress'" of precisely ordinary people in order to help his audiences enter into a personal relationship with God.

Rather than discussing ways in which Donne's verse offers insight into his personal shifts of religious loyalty or into the notion of individual conversion, Jayme M. Yeo, "Converting England: Mysticism, Nationalism and Symbolism in the Poetry of John Donne," in Stelling, Hendrix, and Richardson (I), pp. 177–98, addresses the ways in which Donne used poetry to examine the conversion of the English nation as a whole. She argues that his and his contemporaries' attempts at investing Catholic symbolism with Protestant meaning was complicated by the destabilizing effect of colonialism on Catholic symbols found on traditional T-O maps and coins. "Donne's poetry," Yeo notes, gives "maps and coins [. . .] a new artistic framework that ultimately resurrects them as icons of a unified Protestant nationality." Maria Salenius, too, is interested in Donne's attempts at reformulating Catholic ideas for Protestant audiences, and claims that he did so in his sermons in order to establish a sense of continuity and Protestant community, in "'. . . those marks are upon me:' John Donne's Sermons for a Community in Transition," in *Writing and Religion in England, 1558–1689: Studies in Community Making and Cultural Memory*, ed. Roger D. Sell and Anthony W. Johnson (2009), pp. 151–68.

G. *John Fletcher*

Ania Loomba, "'Break her will and bruise no bone sir': Colonial and Sexual Mastery in Fletcher's *The Island Princess*," *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 2 (2002), 68–108, discusses Quisara's conversion as a "fantasy of colonial and sexual possession." Jeanette N. Tran, "'Does This Become You, Princess?': East Indian Ethopoetics in John Fletcher's *The Island Princess*," *Indography: Writing the "Indian" in Early Modern England*, ed. Jonathan Gill Harris (2012), pp. 197–207, problematizes Loomba's interpretation by arguing that Quisara's surrender of her selfhood and will, as well as other contradictions that surround her conversion, are typical of the "unstable ethnographic and racializing practices of Indography."

H. *George Herbert*

Richard Strier, "The New Life: Conversion" in his *Love Known: Theology and Experience in George Herbert's Poetry* (1983), pp. 114–42, discusses how George Herbert, in *The Temple*, articulates his conception of conversion as a release from anxiety and a divinely imparted sense of assurance.

I. *Ben Jonson*

In "He Took His Religion by Trust: The Matter of Ben Jonson's Conversion," *Renaissance and Reformation* 22 (1998), 53–70, James P. Crowley reconstructs the immediate social, political, and religious contexts and conditions in which Ben Jonson converted to Catholicism while imprisoned for murder. In so doing, he challenges the common assumption that Jonson's turn was motivated by fear or rash opportunism. Discussing Jonson's *The Masque of Blacknesse*, written at the request of Jonson's fellow-convert to Catholicism Queen Anne of Denmark, Molly Murray, "Performing Devotion in *The Masque of Blacknesse*," *SEL* 47 (2007), 427–49, argues that the masque's ambiguous references to the whitening of African nymphs can be read as Jonson's commentary on the instability of confessional identity. Peter Lake, "Ben Jonson and the Politics of 'Conversion': *Catiline* and the Relocation of Roman (Catholic) Virtue," *Ben Jonson Journal: Literary Contexts in the Age of Elizabeth, James and Charles* 19 (2012), 163–89, reads *Catiline* (1611) in the context of James I's accession to the throne, Jonson's official reconversion to the Church of England in 1610, and Jonson's continuing Catholic sympathies, observing a striking contrast between the religio-political purports of *Sejanus* and *Catiline* and using this to elucidate Jonson's ambivalent epigrams to Robert Cecil in his 1616 edition of his works.

J. *Christopher Marlowe*

Carolyn Scott, "Consuming Sorrow: Conversion and Consumption in *Tamburlaine: Part One*," in *Christopher Marlowe the Craftsman: Lives, Stage, and Page*, ed. Sarah K. Scott and M.L. Stapleton (2010), pp. 199–213, suggests that Marlowe employs a Pauline conversion narrative in making his protagonist experience a conversion from "savage Other to the civilized Self" on the road to Damascus. Chloe Preedy, "False Conversion and Conformity," in her *Marlowe's Literary Scepticism: Politic Religion and Post-Reformation Polemic* (2013), pp. 62–91, notes that in his plays the religious skeptic Marlowe uses false conversion to explore the tension between the "outward conformity and inner indifference" that was a consequence of the Elizabethan enforcement of church attendance. Vanessa L. Rapatz, "Abigail's Turn in the *Jew of Malta*," *SEL* 56 (2016), 247–64, recognizes a meaningful connection between Abigail as a figure of conversion, the material and spatial conversion of the Jewish mansion into a nunnery, and a "turn": an architectural feature of early modern monasteries that allowed nuns to give and receive items anonymously. This conjunction leads Rapatz to argue that Abigail's

conversion must also be understood in strategic terms, positively enabling her female agency.

K. *Philip Massinger*

Bindu Malieckal, "'Wanton Irreligious Madness': Conversion and Castration in Massinger's *The Renegado*," *Essays in Arts and Sciences* 31 (2002), 25–43, contends that in *The Renegado*, castration servers as a metaphor for conversion and is suggestive of the "spiritual emasculation" of its eponymous hero. Jane Hwang Degenhardt, "Catholic Prophylactics and Islam's Sexual Threat: Preventing and Undoing Sexual Defilement in *The Renegado*," *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 9 (2009), 62–92, argues that the tragicomedy reverts to Catholic and typically embodied forms of Christian resistance to counter the threat of sexual debasement that Islamic conversion was believed to pose.

L. *Thomas Middleton*

James Doelman, "Claimed by Two Religions: The Elegy on Thomas Washington, 1623, and Middleton's *A Game at Chesse*," *SP* 110 (2013), 318–49, reads the play as an allegory of the English concerns over a possible conversion to Catholicism of Charles, that were caused by his 1623 visit to Spain to woo the Infanta.

M. *John Milton*

Benjamin Myers, "Grace, Conversion and Freedom," in his *Milton's Theology of Freedom* (2006), pp. 143–62, discusses the importance of the conversion of Adam and Eve in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, drawing attention to the theological significance of God's grace in relation to the freedom of the will.

N. *Andrew Perne*

Patrick Collinson, "Perne the Turncoat: An Elizabethan Reputation," in his *Elizabethans* (2003), pp. 179–218, treats the life and posthumous reputation of the dean of Ely and vice-chancellor of Cambridge Andrew Perne as a notorious serial convert between Catholicism and Protestantism. Showing how his changes of religious affiliation were informed by practical and political insights, Collinson argues that his vilification must be seen as a symptom of the "late Elizabethan age of satire."

O. *William Shakespeare*

1. THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

James Shapiro (II, C) reads Shylock and Jessica's conversion in the context of Elizabethan discourses of economics, gender, race, millenarianism, and reformation theology, as well as of a variety of historical narratives of Jewish-Christian conversion. In another chapter, he claims that the play metaphorically presents

Shylock's demand for a pound of Antonio's flesh as a threat of circumcision, and Antonio's demand for Shylock's conversion as a figurative uncircumcision. Edmund Valentine Campos, "Jews, Spaniards, and Portingales: Ambiguous Identities of Portuguese Marranos in Elizabethan England," *ELH* 69 (2002), 599–616, takes the execution of Queen Elizabeth's Portuguese physician Roderigo Lopez in 1594 and *The Merchant of Venice* as starting points to complicate the early modern perception of England's Jewish inhabitants. In so doing, Campos contends that the depiction of Jews on the Renaissance stage was informed not only by theological questions but also by Anglo-Spanish politics, as embodied in the complex figure of the Portuguese *marrano*.

Janet Adelman, *Blood Relations: Christian and Jew in* The Merchant of Venice (2008), points to the thematic centrality of conversion in play, claiming that in its portrayal Jewish-Christian conversion, the comedy betrays an anxiety over the problematic relationship between Christianity and Judaism as both its theological origin and antagonist. Julia Reinhard Lupton, "Merchants of Venice, Circles of Citizenship," in her *Citizen-Saints: Shakespeare and Political Theology* (2005), pp. 73–101, asserts that Shylock's conversion is not so much a tragic event of religious coercion, as an early attempt at Jewish emancipation that involves both a loss of Jewish identity and an entry into citizenship. Heather Hirschfeld, "'We all expect a Gentle Answer Jew': *The Merchant of Venice* and the Psychotheology of Conversion," *ELH* 73 (2006), 61–81, uses psychoanalysis and Reformation theology to examine the play's conflicting attitudes of both desiring and rejecting Shylock's conversion. Marianne Novy, "*The Merchant of Venice* and Pressured Conversions in Shakespeare's World," in *Shakespeare's World / World Shakespeares: The Selected Proceedings of the International Shakespeare Association World Congress Brisbane 2006*, ed. Richard Fotheringham, Christa Jansohn, and R. S. White (2008), pp. 108–18, recognizes a connection between the forced conversion of Shylock and the practice of pressured conversion within Christianity and specifically the pressure that was put on archbishop Cranmer before he was burned at the stake for heresy.

The first to provide a sustained analysis of Shakespeare's Jessica as a figure of conversion, Mary Janell Metzger, "'Now by My Hood, a Gentle and No Jew': Jessica, *The Merchant of Venice*, and the Discourse of Early Modern English Identity," *PMLA* 113 (1998), 52–63, argues that while her character elucidates the ambivalence in Elizabethan attitudes towards Jews, the play also invites us to see her as the fair and female alternative to Shylock, which allows her to successfully adopt a Christian identity. Lisa Lampert, "'O what a goodly outside falsehood hath!': Exegesis and Identity in *The Merchant of Venice*," in her *Gender and Jewish Difference from Paul to Shakespeare* (2004), pp. 138–67, asserts that while Jessica's conversion may be a triumph for Christianity, the ambiguities that surround her baptism, her treacherous behavior, and the fact that she, as a woman, can produce Jewish children, make her a "continual and disruptive Jewish pres-

ence." Janet Adelman, "Her Father's Blood: Race, Conversion, and the Nation in *The Merchant of Venice*," *Representations* 81:1 (2003), 4–30 (reprinted as chapter three in her *Blood Relations*), too, is less positive about Jessica's ability to shed her Jewishness, which is confirmed by the fact that she keeps being treated as an outsider after her conversion.

Focusing on Jessica's absent mother rather than her infamous father, M. Lindsay Kaplan, "Jessica's Mother: Medieval Constructions of Jewish Race and Gender in *The Merchant of Venice*," *SQ* 58 (2007), 1–30 traces the medieval roots of the racial conceptions of Jewish identity, "construed in religious, class, somatic, hereditary and gendered terms," and claims that Jessica's capacity as "subordinate female" and potential mother of her husband's Christian children makes her conversion successful. Michelle Ephraim, "Her 'flesh and blood'? Jessica's Mother in *The Merchant of Venice*," in her *Reading the Jewish Woman on the Elizabethan Stage* (2008), pp. 133–51, too, concentrates on Jessica's mother, but notes that it is precisely she who confirms Jessica's "exclusive ties to Jewish history," which, according to Ephraim, renders her conversion problematic. Brett D. Hirsch, "Counterfeit Professions: Jewish Daughters and the Drama of Failed Conversion in Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* and Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*," *EMLS* 19 (2009), 37 paragraphs, argues against the exceptional status of female Jewish stage converts, and notes that the Elizabethan racial interpretation of Jewishness rendered them equally impervious to true conversion and assimilation as their male counterparts. Lara Bovilsky, "Exemplary Jews and the Logic of Gentility," in her *Barbarous Play: Race on the English Renaissance Stage* (2008), pp. 67–102, also focuses on Jessica's lack of success in fully assimilating into the Venetian society and argues that the way in which she is being addressed after her conversion is dominated by often racialist criticism that "insist on her Jewishness."

2. OTHELLO

Comparing Shakespeare's tragedy with Lope de Vega's *El negro de mejor amo*, Ana Manzanas Calvo, "Conversion Narratives: Othello and Other Black Characters in Shakespeare's and Lope de Vega's Plays," *SEDERI* 7 (1996), 251–56, explains how the plays reflect ironic early modern Spanish and English understandings of the conversion of Africans to Christianity. While they present black characters' embraces of Christianity as successful, these characters' attempts at assimilating into the western societies of Cyprus and Sardinia only confirm their status as outsiders, stereotypical Others, and eventually lead to the destruction of their ethnic identities. In "Turning Turk in *Othello*: The Conversion and Damnation of the Moor," *SQ* 48 (1997), 145–76, Daniel Vitkus demonstrates that conversion is not only relevant to Othello's character, but is a dominant theme in the play as a whole, which becomes apparent through its rich use of "tropes of conversion—transformations from Christian to Turk, from virgin to whore, from good to evil, and from gracious virtue to black damnation." Vitkus's work

has sparked new interest in *Othello* as a play that addresses questions of Islamic, Christian, and racial identity in conversion.

A central issue in critical readings following Vitkus's article is why Othello's social integration into Venice as a convert ultimately breaks down. Jonathan Burton, "'Bondslaves and Pagans Shall Our Statesmen Be': *Othello*, Leo Africanus and Muslim Ambassadors to Europe," in his *Traffic and Turning* (II, B), pp. 233–56, addresses this question by comparing Othello to the historical convert Leo Africanus. Burton notes that Othello, unlike Africanus, eventually fails to recognize Christian racism and misogyny and does not use this knowledge strategically to define himself as a noble convert against "women and dark-skinned Africans as [. . .] 'more other'." According to Julia Reinhard Lupton, "Othello Circumcised" (III.N.1), pp. 103–24, it is the possibility that Othello has converted from Islam, rather than from paganism, that renders problematic his integration into the Christian community. Lupton nevertheless concludes that Othello's death must in fact be seen as a successful reconversion to Christianity. Contrary to Lupton, Dennis Austin Britton, "Re-'turning' Othello: Transformative and Restorative Romance," *ELH* 78 (2011), 27–50, argues that Iago largely succeeds in reconverting Othello back to Islam by appropriating the genre of the romance to "restore" Othello's identity as a racial and religious other. Jane Hwang Degenhardt, "Dangerous Fellowship: Universal Faith and its Bodily Limits in *The Comedy of Errors* and *Othello*," in her *Islamic Conversion and Christian Resistance on the Early Modern Stage* (2010), pp. 32–72, focuses on Othello's racial difference in the play's presentation of problematic "deeper claims of Pauline universalism." According to Degenhardt, *Othello* suggests that the Christianization and assimilation of a Moor is not possible because Paul's "Christian universalism" clashes with "the physical badges [that] persist and continue to hold sway for specific communities and epochs," including Shakespeare's. In the first analysis of the play in the context of conversion drama, Lieke Stelling, "'For Christian Shame': Othello's Fall and the Early Modern Conversion Play," *Journal of Mediterranean Studies* 25 [special issue: "Othello and his Islands," ed. Lisa Hopkins] (2016), 19–31, observes that *Othello* is the only play that revolves entirely around the fortunes of a character after their Christianization. This allows Stelling to argue that Othello's downfall is no so much the result of his racial or perceived religious difference, or, indeed, of Venetian xenophobia itself, but the tragic consequence of his success as a convert (from an unspecified faith) who internalizes the Venetian understanding of religious identity as an inherent part of the self, which renders Christianization essentially impossible.

3. OTHER PLAYS

René Girard, "The Crime and Conversion of Leontes in The Winter's Tale," *Religion and Literature* (1990), 193–219, argues that Leontes' delayed recognition of the living Hermione after her apparent return to life must be seen as a conversion similar to those of Christ's disciples who did not immediately recognize

Christ after his resurrection. Jason Gleckman, "'I Know a Bank . . .': *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Fairies, and the Erotic History of England," *Shakespeare* 10 (2014), 23–45, examines the relationship between sexual and religious transformation and argues that the play presents the former as a potential entry to the latter. Gillian Woods, "Catholicism and Conversion in *Love's Labour's Lost*," in *How To Do Things with Shakespeare: New Approaches, New Essays*, ed. Laurie Maguire (2008), 101–130, reads the play, in particular its use of character's names and its concern with "semantic slippage" in the light of contemporary anxiety provoked by the conversion to Catholicism of Henri IV, King of Navarre. This chapter appeared in revised form under the title "Converting Names in *Love's Labour's Lost*" in her *Shakespeare's Unreformed Fictions* (2013), 58–89. Using Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* and *Dante's Purgatorio*, Gregory Maillet, "'Fidelity to the Word': Lonerganian Conversion Through Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* and Dante's *Purgatorio*," *Religion and the Arts* 10 (2006), 219–43, employs the work of the twentieth-century Canadian Jesuit Philosopher Bernard Lonergan to explain how literature, and specifically a character's recognition of Christian truth, can help bring about a "self-transcendence in its readers." Alison Shell, "Good Works: Shakespeare's Use of Religious Moralism," in her *Shakespeare and Religion* (2010), pp. 120–174, draws on several plays, including *As You Like It, Richard II, and Henry V*, to show that Shakespeare engaged with contemporary questions of morality without becoming moralistic, by using tropes of repentance and conversion in an indirect manner.

P. *Robert Southwell*

Hannah Crawford, "A Father to the Soul and a Son to the Body: Gender and Generation in Robert Southwell's Epistle to His Father," in Ditchfield and Smith (I), pp. 61–80, investigates Southwell's poetic and epistolary attempts at (re)converting members of his parents' and succeeding generations to the Catholic faith, his own father in particular, paying special attention to his use of gendered ideas of parenthood.

Q. *Frances Spira*

John Stachniewski, *The Persecutory Imagination: English Puritanism and the Literature of Religious Despair* (1991), discusses Nathaniel Bacon's *The Fearefull Estate of Francis Spira* (1638) as the best-known English version of the story of this Italian Protestant who became suicidal after he had been forced to recant his Protestant convictions and probably starved to death in a condition of despair in 1548. M. A. Overell, "Recantation and Retribution: 'Remembering Francis Spira,' 1548–1638," in *Retribution, Repentance and Reconciliation*, ed. Kate Cooper and Jeremy Gregory (2004), pp. 159–68, discusses different accounts of Spira's experience that circulated in England before the publication of Bacon's version, and shows how the thrust of each of these accounts was adapted to suit different, sometimes opposing, theological and political messages. See also III, T *Woodes*.

R. *James Shirley*

Alison Searle, "Conversion in James Shirley's *St Patrick for Ireland (1640)*," Stelling, Hendrix, and Richardson (I), pp. 199–223, suggests that in presenting the play as an intrinsically theatrical tale of spectacle and wonder, Shirley was able to cater for the religiously, politically, and ethnically mixed audiences of his Dublin audiences.

S. *Anna Trapnel*

Hilary Hinds, "The Transvaluation of Body and Soul in the Spiritual Autobiographies of Anna Trapnel," Bremmer, van Bekkum, and Molendijk (II, G), pp. 107–21, examines Trapnel's account of her conversion and explains how its emphasis on the transformative power on the body and soul ties in with the radical sectarian program of the Fifth Monarchist movement of which she was a part. Maria Magro, "Spiritual Autobiography and Radical Sectarian Women's Discourse: Anna Trapnel and the Bad Girls of the English Revolution," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 34 (2004), 405–37, explores the conversion narratives and other forms of self-writing of Anna Trapnel and other radical sectarian women as neglected but important factors to the development of the English novel.

T. *Immanuel Tremellius*

Kenneth Austin, *From Judaism to Calvinism: The Life and Writings of Immanuel Tremellius (c. 1510–1580)* (2007) discusses the life of the prominent Professor of Hebrew and Old Testament studies and exile in England. The second chapter provides an account of his conversion, first to Christianity and later, more specifically, to reformed Protestantism (pp. 19–38).

U. *Nathaniel Woodes*

Attempting to date Woodes's dramatic rendering of Frances Spira's story, Celesta Wine, "Nathaniel Wood's *Conflict of Conscience*," PLMA 50 (1935), 661–78, discusses the morality play in the context of the English anti-Catholic climate of the early 1570s. Examining this play, as well as Bacon's *Fearefull Estate* and Bunyan's *Grace Abounding*, Michael MacDonald, "The *Fearefull Estate of Francis Spira*: Narrative, Identity and Emotion in Early Modern England," *Journal of British Studies* 31 (1992), 32–61, argues that Spira's narrative of forced conversion and anguish became a powerful tool in the construction of Protestant identity, and considers the way in which Spira's story was employed as an argument for remaining constant in religion under pressure during the Laudian persecutions. Anna Riehl Bertolet, "'The Blindnesse of the Flesh' in Nathaniel Woodes' *The Conflict of Conscience*," in *The Oxford Handbook of Tudor Drama*, ed. Thomas

Betteridge and Greg Walker (2012), pp. 144–60, focuses on the fact that *The Conflict of Conscience* exists in two versions with two different endings, one in which the imprisoned protagonist hangs himself in a fit of despair, the other in which he reconverts to Protestantism briefly before he starves himself to death. According to Bertolet, the suicide in the latter ending must be regarded not so much in a confessional light but in view of the protagonist's problematic understanding of the difference between the body and the soul.

IV. State of the Field

Having long been a relatively minor topic in studies of early modern religion, conversion has in the past two decades begun to blossom as a subject in its own right. Indeed, the growing interest in the ways in which early moderns intensified their spiritual devotion or changed their religious identities concurs with what has been termed "the turn to religion" in early modern English studies. The critical concern with religion as a matter of faith, rather than a cipher for other social factors, has manifested itself in scholars' attentiveness to the complexities of religious identity, in particular the fluidity of confessional categories. In this context, conversion has proved particularly effective tool for investigating these vagaries of religious experience and adherence.

Most studies of early modern English conversion follow confessional categories. That is to say, they examine shifts between either Protestantism and Catholicism or between Christianity and a single other religion. Of these categories, Jewish-Christian and Muslim-Christian conversion have received the greatest attention. A major issue addressed in relation to the Christianization of Jews is the way in which conversion affects and is influenced by the paradoxical Christian perception of the Jew as the ultimate religious Other against which Christians had always defined themselves, and as a chosen theological kin, whose mass conversion was believed to herald the Second Coming. As opposed to the Jewish-Christian category, questions of Islamic-Christian conversion are informed by relatively large numbers of actual apostasies from Christianity, and focus on sermons, travel narratives, and dramatic accounts that warn against the dangers of renegadism and celebrate the rare baptisms of Muslims. A chief source of information in studies of Jewish- and Islamic-Christian conversion is drama. In this context, critics pay special attention to the theatricality of conversion and to the effectiveness of the theater as a site for negotiating the complexities of religious change. Another recurring theme of discussion is how early modern conceptions of "Jewish" and "Turkish" and "Moorish" race were shaped by religious transformations, and the extent to which ideas of racial identity ruled out the possibility of true Christianization. Critics have further complicated the issue of race in conversion by raising questions of whether men or women are more prone to conversion and how it affects the gender identity of the convert.

In recent years, scholars are beginning to show a renewed interest in other categories, including early modern understandings of classical pagan-Christian conversion and the Christianization of New World native inhabitants. A central question is how sixteenth- and seventeenth-century conceptions of these non-Christian faiths shed fresh light on understandings of the more familiar categories of, for instance, Islam, and by implication of English Protestant and Catholic self-identity.

Another territory being explored is the narrative aspect of Protestant and Catholic testimonies of conversion, the main focus, for instance, of the University of York-based project *Conversion Narratives in Early Modern Europe, 1550–1700: A Cross-Confessional and Comparative Study*, directed by Simon Ditchfield and Helen Smith from 2010 to 2013. The critical attention for conversion metaphors and the figurative language that converts used to describe their experience has, in turn, prompted questions about the reciprocity between religious conversion and other forms of change, such as sexual, social, or political transition, translation, metamorphosis, and commercial transaction. This is one of the questions addressed by the international McGill-based project *Early Modern Conversions* (2013–2018), led by Paul Yachnin, which considers the early modern period as the first and our own as the second "great Age of Conversion." In addition, the growing focus on other aspects of early modern culture in relation to religion—notably space and environment, materiality and physicality, music and emotions—is bringing into sharper focus questions of agency and motives, the nature of the religious change itself, and the post-conversion lives of new believers.

See also (selected):

The following section lists additional scholarship on the subject not glossed in the preceding survey, organized by the same categories. It includes works pertinent to the study of religious conversion in early modern England, but that focus on other parts of the world, other periods of time, are relatively old, and/or discuss topics closely related to religious conversion.

I. General Studies

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II. Studies of Selected Topics

A. *Catholic-Protestant*

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