

From Scotland to the Holy Land: Renegotiating Scottish Identity in the Pilgrim Narrative of William Lithgow*

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I. An Unlikely Pilgrim

That an early modern Presbyterian Scot deeply distrustful of Catholics and Papist practices and highly suspicious of the beliefs and actions of Islamic “infidels” should undertake a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, then part of the Ottoman Empire, seems an unlikely event. That he should arrive there in a caravan guarded by Turks, tour sacred sites with Catholic guides, acquire relics, and attempt to serve an intermediary role between King James VI/I and the Catholic Padre Guardiano of Jerusalem on his return appears even more improbable. But such is the case of William Lithgow of Lanark, Scotland, who, six years after the Union of the Crowns, set out on a lengthy journey, chiefly on foot, that included a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Lithgow details his adventures in the Levant and elsewhere in his travel narrative first published in 1614 as *A most delectable, and true discourse, of an admired and painefull peregrination from Scotland, to the most famous kingdomes in Europe, Asia and Affricke* and later renamed *The totall discourse, of the rare adventures, and painefull peregrinations of long nineteene yeares travayles, from Scotland, to the most famous kingdomes in Europe, Asia and Affrica*. Lithgow revised, expanded, and added illustrations and prefatory material to his travelogue during his lifetime—other versions appearing in 1616, 1623, 1632, and 1640—taking into account new journeys as well as changing personal and historical circumstance.¹

*For debates inspired by this article, please check the *Connotations* website at <<http://www.connotations.de/debnelson-alker01912.htm>>.

At first glance, the experiences of William Lithgow (1582-c.1645) in Europe, Asia, and Africa, in which the Turk, Arab, and Moor are often negatively stereotyped, seem to lend themselves to post-colonial readings, but Linda Colley, Nabil Matar, and others have rightly cautioned against imposing a colonialist or imperialist hermeneutic on works like *Rare Adventures* which contain little material on colonial efforts.² As Colley reminds us in *Captives: Britain, Empire and the World, 1600-1850*, early modern British subjects were routinely captured and enslaved in foreign lands, deprived of their agency and power. Matar details this disempowerment of “European Christians” in countries under Islamic rule in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, emphasizing that “[n]o Muslim fell on his knees before a Briton: rather he hunted down, humiliated, and often held captive, the ‘Goure’ (*kafir*, infidel) who could not but submit to the indignity” (*Islam in Britain* 4). William Lithgow is all too aware of his status as a member of both subjugated ethnic and religious groups that suffer indignities in the Holy Land. In this capacity, he is the object of the Turkish gaze and is regularly referred to as a “Frank”—a term used by the Ottoman colonizers of the Holy Land and neighbouring nations to describe a person of “Western nationality” (*OED* “Frank” *n.*¹ and *a.*¹ A.2.). Lithgow’s Scottishness and Protestantism, from the perspective of the Turk, is elided, and he is reduced simply to the nebulous and inferior Western Christian ‘other.’

This is not to say that aspects of “colonial or imperial fantasies” (Nayar 2) do not appear in non-colonial early modern British works such as *Rare Adventures*. Matar proves the contrary in *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery*, arguing that it was all too common for the British to transfer the language used to describe colonized American Indians onto the Oriental colonizer in the Ottoman Empire in a bid to feel superior despite the obvious subjection of the British to the Turk (16). More recently, in *English Writing and India, 1600-1920*, Pramod K. Nayar shows that, in describing their pre-colonial experiences in South Asia, the British often imagined India in terms of the marvellous and monstrous, categories Edward Said associates with

Orientalism (2). Nevertheless, though similar images of alterity appear in colonial and non-colonial texts, the latter should not be read in terms of British colonization or empire building since they do not operate within a framework of “an insidious and all-powerful imperialism” nor draw on “a systematic discourse of power and knowledge” (Melman 107). Therefore, as Felicity A. Nussbaum suggests, it is essential to “look beyond the European empire and its reaches to other perspectives” if we are to attain a more nuanced understanding of early modern “global relations,” particularly in such a demographically diverse region as the Holy Land (7-8).

In this paper, we attend to the complexity and instability of William Lithgow’s heterogeneous encounters with the religious, racial, or ethnic other, considering how his multifaceted identity, and the competing discourses of which it is constituted, generates fluidity and volatility in his conception of subjectivity and alterity in the Holy Land as well as other foreign regions. We hope to show that a Scottish Presbyterian Royalist with a criminal past who leaves behind an unstable nation to undertake a pilgrimage to a land controlled by Muslim Ottomans and filled with people of countless faiths and nations and who visits religious sites with Roman Catholics as interpreters is not capable of maintaining any simple notion of self (sameness) and otherness. Lithgow’s narrative of his pilgrimage to the sacred space of the Holy Land—marked as it is by an uneasy blend of personal and national narcissism, religious skepticism, spiritual devotion, and the simultaneous attraction to, and fear of, difference and diversity—provides us with a complicated, yet more accurate, view of the unstable response of early moderns to religious, ethnic, and cultural alterity.

II. The Instability of Self, State, and Discursive Practice

Concepts of the self are fractured in every age, but Lithgow is a particularly useful example of the multiplicity of this fracturing. Lith-

gow's life circumstances produced a personal identity under threat, making it difficult for him to conceive of himself in a stable relation to the other. He recalls that in his youth he was "inveigled" and "inforced, even by the greatest powers then living in my Country, to submit [...] to arbitrement, satisfaction and reconciliation"; later realizing the "hainousnesse of the offence" of which he is accused and the "unallowable" nature of the "redresses" to which he submitted, he chose "to seclude" him "selfe from" his native "soyle" (*Total Discourse* 1640, 7).³ Gilbert Phelps explains that "the family tradition is that when the four brothers of a certain Miss Lockhart found Lithgow in the company of their sister they set about him and cut off his ears—so that he acquired the local nicknames of 'Lugless Will' and 'Cut-lugged Willie,' and was forced to leave Scotland for fear of further complications" (Introduction 8).⁴ So Lithgow begins his journey "dis-placed" and "disoriented" by his fellow Scots who have marked him as other by disfiguring him, compelling him to commence, what Neil Keeble calls in another context, "wilderness exercises" (142).

The religious and political instability of Scotland and England at the time Lithgow composed various editions of *Rare Adventures* also destabilized his national identity, his sense of Britishness. As Lithgow first set out for the Holy Land, the notion of the holy or sacred was in the process of being redefined and solidified in Scotland. As Michael Lynch has argued, "a genuine Calvinist consensus" had begun to emerge in Scotland by the late sixteenth century (228). Indeed, Calvinist theology is unmistakable in Lithgow's later poetry, in which he envisions "mans stinking flesh" as a "Mass of ill! The Chaos of corruption," "rotten slyme" and "the pudle of inruption," whose "best, is but base filthynesse" (*Gushing Teares* 78).⁵ Despite this theological accord north of the border, the relationship between the political world and the religious one continued to be turbulent after the Union of the Crowns. Scottish Calvinists distanced themselves from 'Papist' English reformers whom they accused of tainting the true Christian church. As Matar reminds us, the evolving religious discord eventually led to the Bishops' Wars, viewed as a "holy war" "between the

English monarchy and Scottish covenanters" by William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury (*Turks, Moors, and Englishmen* 159). With the marriage of Charles I to the Catholic Henrietta Maria in 1625, anxiety continued to mount, contributing to the tensions that led to the English civil wars.⁶ Lithgow's problems with the union were not purely of a religious nature, however. He was, as Gerald M. MacLean notes, especially disturbed by the unhappy relocation of the centre and source of Scottish power, celebrating in his poem *Scotlands Welcome to Her Native Sonne, and Sovereigne Lord, King Charles* the "Scottish church and Parliament" while lamenting the "unemployment and [...] loss of capital investment in Scotland since the court left for London with the Stuarts" (*Time's Witness* 98). Lithgow criticizes the policies enacted by king and parliament in London, yet remains loyal to the Stuarts who now hold court in that urban centre, producing a tension between his identities as a Scot and a British subject (*Time's Witness* 98-100).

Lithgow's religious and political identity was further destabilized within a broader European context because of the fracturing of the Christian West. Lithgow begins "The Prologue to the Reader" in the 1623 edition of *Rare Adventures* by describing the "tumultuous age" in which he lives. The "combustions of Christendome," he believes, led to the tragic torment of his spirit and flesh in Spain by the Inquisitors, whom he views as Christians in name only ("Prologue" sig. A3). Therefore, although Lithgow thanks God for his "safe return to Christendom" (*Rare Adventures* 229) on several occasions throughout his narrative, soon after uttering these words, he recounts the defects and dangers of these Christian nations, and many of their people, to which he has been safely returned (230).

Personal, religious, and political instability render less certain the relationship of Lithgow to the foreign landscapes, cultures and peoples he encounters on his pilgrimage to the Holy Land, an uncertainty exacerbated by the discursive fluidity of early modern travel writing. Travelogues of the period are forged from an assortment of what we might call political, historical, religious, and proto-scientific discourses associated with various genres. Though Lithgow identifies

Rare Adventures as a “true history” at one point, sections of his narrative share features with, for example, political handbooks, Presbyterian sermons, picaresque prose fiction, private memoirs, cultural ethnography, natural history, captivity narratives, Protestant martyrology, and expense sheets. As William H. Sherman explains, “early modern travel writing was so varied that it may not even be appropriate to describe it as a single genre” (“Stirrings and Searchings” 30).⁷ This is indeed the case, as travel writing should be viewed as a linguistic site of intersecting, and often conflicting, discourses, each of which is informed by a distinct interpretive framework, leading writers to perceive, shape, and give meaning to their experiences from a range of perspectives. As Lithgow frequently shifts between discourses in *Rare Adventures*, which can be jarring, his constitution of, and reaction to, alterity can noticeably change. He is unable to resolve and unify these experiences with a single voice; rather he selects from a repertoire of discourses based on the distinct nature of each encounter with unfamiliar individuals or groups. Peter Womack has argued that “[t]he vitality of Renaissance travel writing consists in its failure to achieve the ideological closure which imperialism would later necessitate” (159). Lithgow’s work cannot, of course, “fail” to achieve an imperially-inspired harmony that is not yet politically present or culturally available, but it can reveal the significance of discursive practices in constituting identity and alterity in an age of travel.

III. A Scot in the Holy Land

Writing from a place of instability on multiple fronts, Lithgow frequently attempts in *Rare Adventures* to achieve a static undifferentiated identity by distinguishing himself from those deemed the enemies or adversaries of the orthodox Presbyterian Scot or Briton—the Jew, the Muslim, and the Catholic. In order to establish himself as a unified and superior subject he must, as Richard Kearney explains, engage in a number of psychological “evasion strategies” (5) to avoid

seeing aspects of himself in strangers and strangers in himself, which would weaken his representation of the Scottish or British subject as the elevated term in a simple dyadic structure.

The most marked strategy deployed by Lithgow is to assert the foreign, strange, or monstrous nature of the non-Protestant, non-British peoples he comes across, drawing on ready-made negative discourses of the other. In Lithgow's account of the Holy Land and surrounding areas, we see evidence of his intolerant attitude toward the Turks—or the self-titled “Mahometans”—whom he envisions as terrorizing “Infidels” who “offer up [...] satanicall prayers to Mahomet” and whose “devilish religion” leads them to perform “ridiculous ceremonies” (*Rare Adventures* 115). In describing his travels in Syria, Lithgow invokes a familiar bestial metaphor to describe them lying together asleep in groups with their “coverlet[s] above them”: “I have seen hundreds of them after this manner lie ranked like dirty swine in a beastly sty or loathsome jades in a filthy stable” (122). In his treatment of the Muslim other, Lithgow attempts to differentiate between, and place in a hierarchy, three groups with whom he comes in contact in “the territory of Canaan,” yet ultimately rhetorically unites them as the anti-Christian other: “The [civil] Arabians are for the most part thieves and robbers; the [“sun-burnt”] Moors cruel and uncivil, hating Christians to the death; the Turks are the ill best of the three, yet all sworn enemies to Christ” (136). Though the Jews are little spoken of in Lithgow's account of the Levant, as he enters Northern Palestine, he readily declares that the Land, “together with the Jews” who inhabit it, have been cursed by God (127).⁸

Many of the habits or practices of certain believers in Christ—Catholic and Greek orthodox—are viewed as no less alien or foreign than the Turk, Arab, Moor, or Jew. This is clear in Lithgow's account of the “ridiculous Ceremony” of the Catholics and “orientall Christians” in Jerusalem on Palm Sunday (141). They engage, he recounts, in an “apish imitation of Christ” which can only be characterized, Lithgow believes, as “ignorant devotion” (141). When they are violently beaten by the Turks for their “clamour,” returning to the mo-

nastery “groaning and laden with black and bloody blows,” Lithgow and his fellow Franks “did laugh in [their] sleeves” (141-42). These “slavish people,” he is convinced, lack “civility and government” and behave “as if they had been all mad or distracted of their wits” (152-53); therefore, he concludes that their physical abuse at the hands of the Turks is both justified and comical.

When engaged in such criticism of the ethnic or religious other, Lithgow often falls into what we might term Presbyterian homiletics, and the seemingly objective description of what he observes as a traveler or the apparently impartial history of the area he inhabits is displaced by passionate and often vituperative sermoniac prose marked by an opening apostrophe or exclamatory phrase. Such is the case in his description of Northern Palestine when he looks upon the “heap of stones” believed to be the remains of “the house where Mary dwelt when Gabriel saluted her” (128). Recalling that the “Romanists say” that this house was “transported by the angels” to Italy, Lithgow declares: “Now thou bottomless gulf of Papistry, here I forsake thee: no winter-blasting furies of Satan’s subtle storms, can make a shipwreck of my faith, on the stony shelves of thy deceitful deeps” (128-29). Gilbert Phelps describes this rhetorical phenomenon in the following way: “There are times when the anti-Papist railings take on an air that is either perfunctory or frantic, as if he had suddenly recalled what was expected of a staunch Protestant” (Introduction 15). In falling back on such discourses, Lithgow indeed attempts to take advantage of travel writing as a space in which the self can engage in the “process of Othering” that offers “a wonderful opportunity for self- (and national) (re)invention, a way of encountering, and then countering, difference” (Hooper and Youngs 5).⁹

Regardless of its purpose, this type of description of the Catholic, Muslim, or Jewish other proliferates in *Rare Adventures* and should not be dismissed as uncharacteristic of Lithgow’s prose. It is complemented (as is also the case in conventional colonial texts) by his periodic attempt to assert strongly his Scottish or British identity—which

on one occasion in Jerusalem, he literally inscribes on his flesh. In the 1616 edition of *Rare Adventures*, Lithgow describes his tattooing thus:

In the last night of my staying at *Jerusalem*, which was at the holy Grave, I remembring that bounden duty, and loving zeale, which I owe unto my native Prince, whom I in all humility (next and immediate to Christ Jesus) acknowledge, to be the supreme Head, and Governour, of the true Christian and Catholic Church; by the remembrance of this obligation I say, I caused one *Elias Bethleete*, a Christian inhabitour of *Bethleem* [*Bethlehem*], to ingrave on the flesh of my right arme, *The Never-conquered Crowne of Scotland*, and *the now Inconquerable Crowne of England*, joyned also to it; with this inscription, painefully carved in letters, within the circle of the Crowne, *Vivat Jacobus Rex*. (*Most Delectable* 1616, 113-14)

It should be said that the extremity to which he goes here, with the painful etching of a curiously large and complex tattoo on his arm suggests an atypical need to establish a distinctive religio-political identity for himself. Juliet Fleming has shown that while most Protestant pilgrims to Jerusalem “receive[d] tattoos either at the site of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, or in Bethlehem,” Lithgow’s elaboration of the “standard pattern (a Jerusalem cross) with some devices of his own designed to celebrate the union of the Scottish and English crowns” was highly unusual (*Graffiti* 109). Lithgow is willing to undergo excessive suffering in the Holy Land to imprint permanently on himself what he views as a politically and religiously coherent identity. This is, of course, ironic given that the symbols used hold together elements—England, Scotland, king, and the Christian religion—that Lithgow knows are themselves unstable and uneasy at this moment in history. However, this and the other strategies of evasion he deploys are ways for Lithgow to mark himself and his nation rhetorically and physically as fixed superior entities. He thereby fashions himself as a representative Anglo-Scottish epic hero of an Odyssean sort, mocking other cultures as superstitious, devilish, bestial, or sexually perverse, and elsewhere surviving shipwrecks or persuading a ship’s captain and crew to fight off attackers. Therefore, we do observe in *Rare Adventures* some of the emergent features of

“colonial or imperial fantasies” (Nayar 2), despite the fact that Lithgow is neither colonist nor imperialist.¹⁰

However, Lithgow’s evasion strategies do not keep alterity at bay in either an internal or external sense. Over the course of *Rare Adventures*, we see him experience great difficulty maintaining an identity which can be consistently defined against the alien or monstrous other. This difficulty manifests itself in four distinct ways in Lithgow’s travel narrative: the intermittent identification with, and imitation of, the other; the admission of alterity within the self; the recognition of the singularity of particular others; and the acceptance of the complexity of alterity.

First, despite his Prebyterian sermonical denunciation of the Catholic or Muslim other, Lithgow seems more inclined to internalize Papist and Islamic habits and practices than he would like to admit openly. Lithgow’s impulse to undertake a pilgrimage, collect relics, produce icons, and be moved to tears at sacred spaces in the Holy Land seems fairly pronounced despite his repeated mockery of these conventionally Catholic exercises and experiences. Though James Ellison has recently argued that “[f]or Protestants as much as Catholics, Jerusalem remained the ultimate goal of a life-time, even if some Protestants had difficulty allowing that it was a specially holy place” (1), Grace Tiffany maintains that early modern Protestants viewed “traditional *physical* pilgrimage [...] as a wholly carnal enterprise” and thus re-wrote the Catholic notion of pilgrimage by satirizing, secularizing, or internalizing it (15).¹¹ At times Lithgow makes use of the former two strategies while, paradoxically, on a “*physical* pilgrimage,” secularizing his pilgrimage by describing aspects of his experience of the Levant in historical, topographical and economic terms on the one hand, while unmercifully mocking Catholic sacramental concepts of pilgrimage and monumentalism on the other.¹² In these ways, Lithgow strives to justify his desire to visit the Holy Land as a pilgrim on his travels, while distancing himself from Catholic, as well as Greek Orthodox, doctrines and rituals.¹³

And yet, Lithgow's writings exhibit what Anthony Milton, Roberta Albrecht and others have argued is evidence of "residual Catholicism" or "pre-Reformation culture" in early modern Protestant England (Albrecht, *Virgin Mary* 158). Each time he experiences anything close to a Roman Catholic emotion, he does attempt to undermine or qualify it. Yet such emotions remain present in the work. We see traces of a pre-Reformation awareness of the incomprehensible holiness of sacred space in Lithgow's description of his passionate response to the site of Jerusalem: "At last we beheld the prospect of Jerusalem, which was not only a contentment to my weary body, but also, being ravished with a kind of unwonted rejoicing, the tears gushed from my eyes for too much joy" (137-38). In this passage, there is a mystical sense of rapture, something to which he is unaccustomed, but which instinctively comes over him. In the Levant, Lithgow also happily visits monuments and risks his life to stand physically on the "mountain whereon Christ fasted forty days" (146). The mountain seems, in this instance, more than a memorial or symbol for Lithgow, who is also desirous of collecting relics of various sorts. He is particularly pleased by his acquisition of a branch of a Turpentine tree in Jordan, which he describes "as the rarest gem of a Pilgrim's treasure" (145)—later presented to James I—and he accepts gifts, some indented with relics, from the friar whose life he saved as they descended the mountain on which Christ was tempted; he receives "twelve crosses made of the olive wood of Mount Olivet, each cross having twenty-four relics indented in them, with forty pair of chaplets made of the same wood, two Turkish handkerchiefs, and three pair of garters and girdles of the Holy Grave, all wrought in silk and gold, with divers other things etc." (156). His passing claim that these were not "so thankfully received as they were [...] given" does not mitigate the pleasure he takes in detailing the richly ornamented religious objects which he carefully keeps in his possession throughout the remainder of his travels, gifting some of them to Queen Anne on his return (156).

That Lithgow accepts a “patent under their great seal” from the secretary of the Guardian at Jerusalem to confirm his presence in Jerusalem, while fairly commonplace, still indicates a willingness to move beyond a staunch Presbyterian identity—to recognize the authority of a Catholic figure (158).¹⁴ Other British travelers of the period, such as John Sanderson, are known to have secured certificates from “the Greek Patriarch of Jerusalem” rather than the Catholic Guardian (O’Donnell 129), to avoid even the perception of submission to Papal authority in the Holy Land. And Lithgow on occasion seems to attribute a supernatural power to the patent, which is successful in warding off Calabrian bandits intent on murdering him. So too, we would suggest that his desire for a tattoo—despite his attempt to render it Protestant and political—and his reproduction of the tattoo in editions of *Rare Adventures* demonstrates the commitment of Lithgow, and many other Protestant pilgrims, to a deeply-entrenched pre-Reformation visual culture.¹⁵ It seems rather ironic that Lithgow creates a detailed *icon* on his flesh—and in his book—despite his profoundly iconoclastic rhetoric.

Other British Protestant pilgrims contemporary with Lithgow managed to dissimilate in order to avoid Papist practices. In his *Itinerary*, the Englishman Fynes Moryson details his own evasion strategies:

And when our superstitious consorts, being now to leave *Jerusalem*, had gathered great heapes of stones from the monuments, to carrie into their Country, and had received of the Guardians gift, for great treasure, holy beades, Agnus Dei, and like trash, wee so refused to take any such burthen, as still we bewailed our misfortune, that we being not to return the right way home, as they did, but to passe to *Constantinople*, could not carrie such reliques with us, lest they should fall into some Turks hands, who might abuse them. And when our consorts at *Bethlehem* printed the signe of the Crosse with inke and a pen-knife upon their armes, so as the print was never to bee taken out, wee would not follow them in this small matter, but excused our selves, that we being to passe home through many Kingdomes, we durst not beare any such marke upon our bodies, whereby wee might be knowne. (237)¹⁶

In this light, Lithgow seems far more receptive to Catholic views of the sacred than some other members of the English or Scottish church.

It is true, as O'Donnell contends, that Lithgow often attempts to resignify Catholic objects and images to give them a secular, rather than a devotional, meaning. O'Donnell believes that for Lithgow such objects are "not relics of holy places but tokens of his valour and hardiness as a traveler" and their "transcendent aspect [...] is flattened" because they are "tokens in social and credit relations abroad and at home" (133).¹⁷ However, O'Donnell admits the complexity of Lithgow's perception of religious objects, stating that his treatment of his Catholic patent and his recent presence at the Holy Sepulchre "could imply either faith in the document's intrinsic protective efficacy or pragmatic awareness of its power to disarm malefactors who are superstitiously reverent towards Christ's tomb," recognizing that the former reading "has the potential to destabilize his stance of Protestant resistance to the devotional aspects of travel to Jerusalem" (129-30). O'Donnell asserts that only one of these readings is possible, contending that, when Lithgow describes the power of the object, he is engaging in parody. Yet, nothing in the text suggests this is the case, and it seems more likely that Lithgow, who frequently moves between discourses to comprehend and to operate within day-to-day experience, has absorbed multiple ways of seeing and knowing, even when these, from a rational perspective, cannot easily be reconciled.¹⁸

To survive in a global context, Lithgow needs a measure of discursive flexibility, and he does not describe this in the language of dissimulation as does Moryson. After all, Lithgow finds that he must rely on the consciousness and hermeneutic of the Catholic other as he negotiates the topography and religious and cultural significance of the Holy Land. He writes of Jerusalem in *A most delectable and true discourse* (1616):

Lo, I have plainly described, the whole Monuments I saw within, and about *Jerusalem*, by the order of these 12 severall daies: the like heretofore, was never by any Pilgrime, so lively manifested. But as I said in the beginning of my description, so say I now also at the conclusion; some of these things are ridiculous, some of manifest untruths, some also doubtfull, and others somewhat more credible, and of apparant truth. The recapitulation whereof, is onely by me used, as I was informed by *Gaudentius Saybantus* the *Padre*

Guardiano, Lorenzo Antonio il Vicario, and the Troughman John Baptista.
(113)

Here Lithgow admits that it is through a Catholic framework that he must experience the Levant. He must “transpose” himself “into alien horizons,” to borrow Gadamer’s terms (*Truth and Method* 303). The “prejudices” or “fixed set of opinions and valuations” that he carries with him to the “hermeneutical situation” (*Truth and Method* 305), as he attempts to give meaning to the Holy Land, must confront and engage with the horizon of the Catholic other in Jerusalem and elsewhere in the Levant.¹⁹ While he definitely questions the truth of the Catholic interpretation of the Levant, he also accepts that some of it might be a “credible” or an “apparent truth.” And upon his arrival to England, Lithgow adopts a diplomatic role, representing the interests of the Guardian to James I with respect to the possible financial contribution of Britain to the Guardian for the preservation of “sacred monuments at Jerusalem” and the “support [of] their afflicted lives” (157); in this case, it is hard to determine if Lithgow views himself as the ambassador of the Stuart monarch or the envoy of the Guardian.

Lithgow’s limited identification with the Catholic other is not unlike, at times, his reluctant admiration and emulation of the Turks. In his complex attitude toward the Ottoman Empire, Lithgow is hardly unusual.²⁰ Billie Melman finds in much travel writing on the Middle East in this period, “an attraction to that culture and its site” as well as a “repulsion perpetuated in the cultural stereotypes” (106). Lithgow was well aware of the danger of “turning Turk,” and acknowledges early on in his narrative, in an account of the Dardanelles, that he has seen the sad plight of Christians of both sexes who, to avoid “perpetual slavery,” have “turned Turk”; elsewhere, he remarks upon Christians who “turn Turk” for economic gain (86, 202). Lithgow never imagines himself in these terms,²¹ yet in the 1632 edition of *Rare Adventures*, he proudly presents himself in a portrait in Turkish dress (“The Author’s Effigy”) which faces the title page. The image is accompanied by the following descriptive lines of verse:

*Loe here's mine Effigie, and Turkish suite;
 My Staffe, my Shasse, as I did Asia foote:
 Plac'd in old Ilium; Priams Scepter thralles:
 The Grecian Campe design'd; lost Dardan falles
 Gird'd with small Simois: Idae's tops, a Gate:
 Two fatall Tombes, an Eagle, sackt Troyes State. (Totall Discourse 1632)*

Though Lithgow's "Turkish suite" is something of a necessity on his pilgrimage to the Holy Land, his posture and expression of self-assurance in the effigy, and the visual association of his Turkish dress with the epic heroism of an ancient past, seems to reflect a desire to put on the exoticness and the military, political, and economic success of the Ottomans. As he navigates an "islamocentric environment" (Matar, *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen* 16), experiencing "imperial envy" (MacLean, "Ottomanism" 87) and witnessing the captivity and abuse of "poor slavish [...] Christians" (*Rare Adventures* 95) it seems impossible for Lithgow to resist entirely "turning Turk."

In fact, even as Lithgow ridicules the attire of various Muslims and Catholics, he recognizes that his survival and dignity depends, on occasion, on his ability to garb himself as the ethnic or religious other. Immediately after he secures the branch from the Turpentine tree in Jordan, Lithgow must flee Arab attackers; to do so, he must quickly move from one state of (un)dress to another:

In the end, pondering I could hardly or never escape their hands [...], I leaped down from the tree, leaving my Turkish clothes lying upon the ground, took only in my hand the rod and *shasse* which I wore on my head, and ran stark naked above a quarter of a mile amongst thistles [...]. which when the Guardian [...] saw my naked body, he presently pulled off his grey gown and threw it to me, whereby I might hide the secrets of nature: by which means in the space of an hour I was clothed three manner of ways—first like a Turk; secondly like a wild Arabian; and thirdly like a grey friar, which was a barbarous, a savage, and a religious habit. (145-46)

Though Lithgow clearly jests here at the expense of others, the episode reminds us of his need to adapt to changing circumstances in the Holy Land, to in-habit the other in order to preserve the self. No doubt, Lithgow believes he can adapt his exterior without altering his

interior condition. He says as much in his encounter with Catholics when he promises the Guardian, after he is caught laughing at their suffering, "to abstain from scandaling and mocking [their] rites and ordinary customs [...] seeing [that his] outward carriage in going along with them to see their customs tended no way to hurt the inward disposition of our souls" (142). And yet outward conformity points to some understanding of, and submission to, the beliefs and practices of the "foreigner" or "stranger" with whom he routinely interacts.²²

Not only must Lithgow be willing to don the dress of the other on his way to Jerusalem, gesturing toward constructedness of identity, he also conflates on occasion the Turkish and Christian self. In describing the "religion and customs of the Turks," Lithgow addresses the Turkish emperor Achmet, writing, "[he] was the most gentle and favourable to Christians, who rather for his bounty and tenderness might have been intitulated the Christian emperor than the Pagan king" (99). Although Lithgow privileges the Christian in this comparison, at the same time he implies that the categories of Muslim and Christian are fluid rather than fixed since they overlap in this instance and depend on external actions rather than a static internal nature, weakening a simple view of the other as irrevocably or essentially different from the self.²³ Furthermore, Lithgow also hints at the superiority of the Ottomans on some occasions, indirectly suggesting that imitation of them, or internalization of their values, is warranted. For example, Lithgow mentions more than once the religious freedom enjoyed by the subjects of the Ottoman Empire, remarking, "they permit to all and every one of theirs to follow his own religion as he pleaseth, without violence or constraint" (105). The repetition of this fact leads us to suspect that in this the Ottoman rulers may, in Lithgow's mind, be superior to their Christian counterparts in Britain and elsewhere.

The strategies of estrangement by which Lithgow strives to distance himself from an inferior other in *Rare Adventures* are further undermined by his recognition of the "monstrous" or "foreign" within the self, either in his own soul, in particular English or Scottish individu-

als, or in the collective Anglo-Scottish self.²⁴ This recognition can be attributed in part to the Calvinist theology to which Lithgow subscribes. As a Scottish Presbyterian, Lithgow tends to interiorize evil rather than simply to exteriorize it, to such an extent that the Islamic or Jewish other is rendered less “foreign” or abject. If we turn to the religious poetry published by Lithgow after he returned from his pilgrimage, it is clear that the religious or ethnic other is no more base or sinful before God than is he, and, by extension, than are other Reformed Christians:

Now having seene, rude *Lybians*, nak'd, and bare,
Sterne barbrous *Arabs*, savage *Sabuncks'* od;
Sword-sweying *Turkes*, and faithlesse *Jews* alwhere,
Base ruvid *Berdoans*, godlesse of a God:
Yet when from me, on them I cast mine eye,
My life I find, fare worse, then theirs can be.

The rustick Moorish, sterne promiscuous sexe,
Nor *Garolines*, idolatrizing shame;
The *Turcomans*, that even the Divell doe vex!
In offering up, their first-borne, to his name:
Nor *Jamnites*, with their foolish Garlick god,
Are worse then I, nor more deserve thy rod. (*Gushing Teares* 218-19)²⁵

While in the Levant and surrounding lands, evidence of the stranger “within ourselves,” to borrow Julia Kristeva’s phrase, is not difficult to unearth (1). Lithgow finds that those Christians with whom he naturally identifies are capable of great villainy. Such is the case in Northern Palestine when a “Christian [...] named Joab” is appointed as his group’s guide (129). Lithgow discovers that Joab has hatched a “treacherous plot,” sending “a private messenger” to inform “about three hundred Arabs” living nearby that a “rich and well provided” party will soon be coming to their land, ripe for robbery and murder (129-30). Lithgow and the Turks, Armenians and others with whom he travels to Jerusalem, are saved by a Turkish soldier, who notes the suspicious behaviour of the “villain” Joab, and by the quick thinking of the Turkish Captain, who prevents their “massacre” (130). Along similar lines, when Lithgow finds himself under attack by former

French Christians (apostate Franks), his life is saved by “friendly Turks, who leaped out of their boat and relieved me” (84). So too, when Lithgow travels through Crete on his Levantine pilgrimage, “an English runagate [apostate] named Wolson” plots to kill him because Wolson’s brother was beheaded on “Burnt-Island in Scotland by one called Kear.” Wolson explains to three Englishmen, “I have long since sworn to be revenged of my brother’s death on the first Scotsman I ever saw or met, and my design is to stab him with a knife this night” (65-66). Ironically, the tensions played out by the English and Scots in Britain are mapped out on the interactions of English and Scottish travelers in Crete, and Lithgow’s salvation from the British ‘arch-villain’ comes in the form of another Englishman and three Catholic “Italian soldiers” (66). This type of experience with fellow Britons or non-British Christians likely confirms Lithgow’s Calvinist doctrine of total depravity and unsettles any effort simply to project evil onto those he works to represent as other.

Many of Lithgow’s intimate interactions with non-British, non-Christian individuals also subvert his attempts to align the monstrous, strange, and foreign with the Turk, Moor, Jew, Catholic, Armenian, and so forth. Time and again, Lithgow’s inherited discourses of the religious, ethnic, or racial other are inadequate to describe encounters with, for example, kind Jews who entertain him and other Franks “gratis” as they travel from Jerusalem to Gaza (161). These Jews become in short order his “Hebraic friends” (161). When the German Protestants die unexpectedly, it is a wise “Jewish physician” and the Catholic French Consul who ensure that Lithgow receives most of the bequests left to him in the will of the last one to die, goods the Venetian factor had seized (169). Neither does Lithgow have access to a single discourse that can articulate his pleasure in the company of four friars of “great cheer” with whom he drinks Malmsey and dances, even though he tries to dismiss them as “beastly swine” (67). After all, he tells his reader that he would “gladly [...] not have left the monastery,” but had to continue on with his travels as scheduled (66).

Perhaps the most poignant example of Lithgow's personal experience coming into conflict with negative cultural stereotypes occurs when he is imprisoned and tortured by Spanish inquisitors who capture him on his return to Britain. Viciously abused by those he deems only "titular Christians," Lithgow finds himself cared for by an enslaved "natural Turk," Hazier, and a cook, Elinor, a Christian "Indian negro woman" (269, 284). These individuals are not stereotypical figures who conform wholly to Lithgow's inherited discourses on the Turk or Indian, but rather they are named, psychologically authentic people in his story, who are rich in compassion. When Lithgow relates his narrative of false imprisonment and unjust suffering, Hazier weeps and speaks in familial terms to this fallen Scottish Protestant, "Brother, brother, it is much needful for you to take all in patience, for it is impossible now you can escape some fearful trial" (269). Hazier and Elinor secretly tend to his physical and psychological needs, and when Hazier is deceived into keeping his distance for a period of time from Lithgow, on his return, Lithgow refers to him as his "former friend" (285). That Lithgow would ever conceive of Hazier, a "slavish infidel" (285), as a friend is as striking as his affection for his "Hebraic friends" just outside of Gaza (161).

Yet this kind of friendly encounter, in which two distinct subjects interact momentarily as equals of a sort, undermines his dominant understanding of the religious, ethnic, or racial other. On such occasions, Lithgow is compelled to see individuals outside of traditional categories of otherness. In Kearney's terms, Lithgow fleetingly "recognize[s] the stranger before [...] [him] as a singular other who responds, in turn, to the singular otherness in each of us" (5). This, for Kearney, is an ethical moment, because "ethics rightly requires [...] [us] to respect the singularity of the other person" (80). In these moments, "[t]he other is not so traumatically estranging as to hold me hostage. Nor is it so miserably abject as to make me imperious. In ethical relation, I am neither master nor slave. I am a self before another self" (81).²⁶

Andrew Hadfield does not envision early modern travel narratives, including *Rare Adventures*, as avenues for ethical engagement with the other. Rather, he argues that they function as indirect commentary on the politics of Britain and Anglo-Scottish relations—that is, on a collective British “self”—rather than a work truly caught up in the “other” of foreign lands. He suggests that in the travel narratives of this period, the other simply becomes a “trope” or a “metaphor” of the national self (1).²⁷ And Lithgow does, in a dedicatory epistle to Charles I in the 1632 edition, associate his travel narrative with the humanist imperative to advise the king on political matters: “The general discourse itself is most fixed upon the laws, religion, manners, policies, and government of kings, kingdoms, people, principalities and powers—and therefore so much the more fit for Your Majesty” (25).

Yet, even if Lithgow’s original intent was to read the foreigner as no more than a metaphor for aspects of the British self, his personal experiences with a host of singular others take him outside of his Scottish Protestant subjectivity. The “polysemy of alterity” that Lithgow experiences in the Holy Land in particular unravels a neatly wrought “self-other dyad” that informs much of his writing (Kearney 81). In Jerusalem in particular, Lithgow witnesses the “pluralism of otherness” (Kearney 81), taking note, for example, that “[t]here are seven sorts of nations, different in religion and language, who continually (enduring life) remain within this church, having encloistered lodgings joining to the walls thereof” in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (*Rare Adventures* 152). Here the complexity of alterity—and the way in which identity is forged in relation to it—is intensified, as national and linguistic difference sits side by side with a measure of spiritual and spatial sameness.²⁸

We are not arguing here that Lithgow’s Protestant pilgrimage to Jerusalem should be viewed as a benevolent gesture of broadmindedness. Recently, James Ellison has anatomized the pilgrimage to Jerusalem of George Sandys, Lithgow’s contemporary, arguing that Sandys is interested in the ideas of “religious unity” and “tolerance” (Had-

field 2).²⁹ Lithgow does not seem especially attracted to toleration as a principle; as a Scottish Presbyterian who feels threatened by both Anglicanism and Catholicism, he shares little of Sandys's vision of religious unity. However, we would argue that Robert Crawford's description of him as a "Reformation Presbyterian bigot"—a representative view of Lithgow—needs to be tempered given the complexity of his conception of the other in his travel narrative, towards which Crawford himself gestures (171). Peter Erickson has argued in *Early Modern Visual Culture* that unstable concepts "infringe upon and complicate binaries" based on "true and false religion, civility and barbarism" (58). He continues, "[w]ith Europeans' increasing experience and expectation of global variation, concepts of nation, region, [...], complexion, mode of dress and living all begin to jostle and reassemble" (59). Given these circumstances, even Lithgow, a resolute Scottish Presbyterian, must theorize and write alterity in more complex ways than conventional discourses of "othering" allow.

Though, as we have seen, Lithgow works in *Rare Adventures* to operate within formulaic Anglo-Scottish views of Catholic, Jew, Turk, and Moor (among others), his identification and recognition of points of convergence with the other leads him to half-formed notions that his point of origin alone does not form his identity, that selfhood inevitably alters in relation to the other, that the other may be a subject rather than simply an object of his gaze, and that he is the other in foreign lands.³⁰ There may be some truth in the claim that there is in early modern travel writing a "pre-colonial imaginary that while not necessarily functioning as a teleological point of origin, can be seen as contributing to a later colonial discourse" (Aune 4.1). It is certainly possible to read Lithgow's conception of identity and alterity in these terms. However, as Womack observes, authors of pre-colonial travel narratives had "no stable discourse for representing Englishmen's [or Scotsmen's] relations with the rest of the world, and the attempts to develop one are exasperatingly but enliveningly hit and miss" (159). Lithgow therefore cannot help but explore new ways to posit identity in relation to encountered others, some of which involve seeing the

self within the other and folding encountered elements into the self. Because he is not yet attached to the concepts and critical apparatus of empire that would later define the discourse of colonialism, Lithgow's narrative might also be seen to contribute to, or at least point toward, modern discourses that "*de-alienate* the other" (Kearney 80).

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NOTES

¹Five versions of the work appeared (1614, 1616, 1623, 1632, and 1640) before 1645, the presumed year of Lithgow's death. The tenth edition was published in 1692. Hereafter, the work will be referred to as *Rare Adventures*. The Folio Society's abridged edition of the 1632 version of *Rare Adventures*, Gilbert Phelps (ed.), *The Rare Adventures and Painful Peregrinations of William Lithgow* (London: The Folio Society, 1974), will be cited throughout by page number, except where noted otherwise.

²It is only on his third journey that Lithgow speaks with an emergent colonial voice, since he appears to view himself as part of the Stuart colonial project in Ireland, mentioning his people in "our colonies" in Ireland, which he differentiates from the defective Irish population, whom he characterizes as suffering from the defects of "Ignorance and Sluggishness" (250).

³*A most delectable, and true discourse, of an admired and painefull peregrination from Scotland, to the most famous kingdomes in Europe, Asia and Affricke* (London, 1640), n.pag. (chapter 1). Little is known about the life of Lithgow beyond what he shares in his writings.

⁴Lithgow figures his attackers as "blood-shedding Wolves," "life-betraying foes" intent on "facily devour[ing]" "one silly" and "innocent" "stragling Lamb." To leave Scotland is to flee from "evill" and toward "grace" (*Total Discourse* 1640, 7).

⁵The poem is dedicated to James Graham, the first Marquis of Montrose, who was a Covenanter (and hence a Presbyterian) but later a Royalist (he fought for Charles I during the civil wars). Lithgow shared the Marquis's religious and political allegiances (Stevenson).

⁶Lithgow's last known work was on "The Siege of Newcastle" in 1645, which he claimed to have witnessed.

⁷Sherman's "typology of travel writers" (21-30) is a useful paradigm through which to approach this early modern genre, and his warning not to impose on

'travel writing' of the period a single definition (for example, that it represents "true accounts of actual travels" [31]) is invaluable advice.

⁸Earlier in his travelogue, Lithgow aligns Catholic and Jew in an anti-Jesuitical and anti-Semitic diatribe: "The Jews and the Jesuits are brethren in blasphemies; for the Jews are naturally subtle, hateful, avaricious, and above all, the greatest calumniators of Christ's name: and the ambitious Jesuits are flatterers, bloody-gospellers, treasonable tale-tellers, and the only railers upon the sincere life of good Christians" (43). Such disturbing discourse was commonplace in early modern Britain. One need only read Christopher Marlowe's *Jew of Malta* for an example of anti-Semitic rhetoric of the period.

⁹Here, Hooper and Youngs are reviewing the argument of Helga Quadflieg's essay in their volume, "'As mannerly and civill as any of Europe': Early Modern Travel Writing and the Exploration of the English Self" (29-40).

¹⁰Jyotsna G. Singh describes such elements of pre- or proto-colonial discourse in early modern British travel writing on India as "traces of an incipient colonial ideology" relied upon by "historical subjects struggling to come to terms with a confusingly different culture that seems to threaten the stable categories and assumptions of English cultural identity." These writers hope thereby to establish "dominance rhetorically and imaginatively" (23-24). In a related vein, with respect to the treatment of the Ottoman Empire in early modern English drama, Daniel J. Vitkus theorizes that "the English encounter with exotic alterity [...] helped to form the emergent identity of an English nation that was eagerly fantasizing about having an empire, but was still in the preliminary phase of its colonizing drive" (*Turning Turk* 27).

¹¹Paris O'Donnell summarizes the lengthy scholarly debate over the Protestant attitude towards "the 'physical aspects' of traditional pre-Reformation religious culture, such as pilgrimage and related practices," some arguing that "Protestants abhorred place- and object-oriented practices like pilgrimage and wrote about them in uniformly condemnatory terms" while others point to the "continuing vitality, variety and interest" of such practices (125).

¹²Lithgow repeatedly details the costs of inhabiting the Holy Land—the charges he incurred, for example, "within the walls of Jerusalem." His expenses include tribute money etc. (166).

¹³Daniel J. Vitkus claims that Lithgow (among others) should be viewed as an "iconoclastic anti-pilgrim" who has no "pious" or "devotional" motivations in travelling to the Holy Land ("*Trafficking*" 36). However, Lithgow clearly identifies himself as a pilgrim to the Levant and describes spiritual experiences during his time there. It is perhaps anachronistic to place Lithgow's pilgrimage narrative on one side of the secular/sacred divide. We would suggest that for Lithgow the pilgrimage serves both spiritual and temporal purposes.

¹⁴An illustration of the image of Christ and his twelve disciples on the great seal first appeared in the 1632 edition of *Rare Adventures*.

¹⁵An illustration of Lithgow's tattoo first appeared in the 1623 edition of *Rare Adventures*.

¹⁶We are indebted to Juliet Fleming's *Graffiti and the Writing Arts of Early Modern England* for alerting us to this passage (108).

¹⁷Here, O'Donnell appears to validate Vitkus's reading of Lithgow as an "anti-pilgrim" who refers to his "pilgrimage" in ironic terms ("Trafficking" 36, 43).

¹⁸In the first monograph dedicated solely to the life and works of William Lithgow, *An Intrepid Scot*, Clifford Edmund Bosworth insightfully discusses this complexity in Lithgow. However, he envisions Lithgow as a moderate Protestant who resists, for example, both Catholic iconophilia and Puritan iconoclasm, in the latter case pointing to Lithgow's criticism of Knox and his disciples, who destroyed the "glorious Churches of Abbocies, and Monasteries (which were the great beauty of the Kingdome)" (Bosworth 21; Lithgow, qtd. on 21); Bosworth does not see Lithgow as indebted to a residual Catholicism.

¹⁹A "horizon," according to Gadamer, can be defined as "a range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point" (301).

²⁰See, for example, Linda McJannet, who traces the complex perception of Turks in sixteenth and early to mid-seventeenth-century court and civic drama, in which the English variously depicted the Turks as "models of magnificence," figures of "power and imperial grandeur," warmongering "enemies," or "versions of themselves, as intrepid fellow traders and as representatives of the great cities with which they traded" (251-53).

²¹Bosworth argues that "Lithgow himself was wholly immune from such temptations and contemptuous of renegades" (5). We cannot agree that Lithgow is "wholly immune from such temptations" despite the disdain he expresses for apostates.

²²The question of outward conformity to religious practices in particular was a matter of great importance in England and Scotland in the late sixteenth and early to mid-seventeenth century, especially in terms of the willingness or refusal of Catholic recusants to conform to traditions of the English Church, and of the often violent resistance of Presbyterians to the imposition of such traditions on the Scottish Church.

²³This is not to say that Lithgow, even in this particular chapter, simply admires the "puissance of the Great Turk," for not long after his description of Achmet, he reflects on how "Christian princes could concord and consult together [...] to subdue the Turks and root out their very names from the earth" (100).

²⁴Recall that his very reason for leaving Scotland is to escape evil.

²⁵In a typical attempt to qualify his claim, Lithgow includes an annotation beside the first of these stanzas: "savages are better than bad Christians."

²⁶During Lithgow's imprisonment in Spain, he (a captive), Hazier (a slave), and Elinor (a "drudge") are de facto "slaves" and are thus leveled as beings, since all are wholly subject to the tyrannical rule of an absolutist power.

²⁷Hadfield's thesis is "that much early modern travel writing and colonial writing was written, in whole or in part, in order to participate in current pressing debates about the nature of society, the limitations of the existing constitution, the

means of representing the populace at large, the relative distribution of power within the body politic, fear of foreign influences undermining English/British independence, the need to combat the success of other rival nations, religious toleration and persecution, and the protection of individual liberty" (12).

²⁸Later, while suffering unspeakable pain at the hands of the Spanish inquisitors, Lithgow remarks on his own surprise that he "stuck fast" to his faith, despite being exposed to "so many sects and varieties of religions dispersed over the face of the earth" (285). He recognizes here that "plurality of [religious] alterity" is a threat to the stability of his spiritual identity, though he remains steadfast through "the grace of God in me" (paradoxically the divine Other within the self) (285).

²⁹It is interesting that Edwin Sandys, George's father, "was Elizabeth I's Archbishop of York and a leading defender of the church's duty to persecute dissent in the name of unity," a position from which George Sandys distances himself (Hadfield 2).

³⁰Phelps appears to be pointing to such half-formed notions when he writes that Lithgow "himself seems to have recognized that his travels had affected his outlook, made him in fact a 'citizen of the world'" (Introduction to *Rare Adventures* 15).

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