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Dissertation

PERSIAN RECREATIONS:
THEATRICALITY IN ANGLO-PERSIAN DIPLOMATIC HISTORY, 1599-1828

by

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B.A., Boston University, 1986
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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
1999
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank Professor Lawrence Breiner for his generous help and great kindness. This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of the late Professor Celia Millward of Boston University.
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THEATRICALITY IN ANGLO-PERSIAN DIPLOMATIC HISTORY, 1599-1828

(Order No.  )

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Boston University, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, 1999

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation analyzes British overtures to Persia in two periods--initial contacts at the start of the seventeenth century, and the re-establishment of diplomatic relations at the beginning of the nineteenth. It argues that the performative nature of British diplomacy in Persia challenges Edward Said's reading of Orientalism as a fixed and repressive discourse. This study thus complicates the power/discourse paradigm, which claims that European representations of the Orient are not neutral depictions but exercises in power, by considering the theatricality of Empire building and the perplexities which underscored Oriental masquerades. Citing the works of Clifford Geertz, Tzvetan Todorov, and Stephen Greenblatt, it argues that any articulation of Orientalism needs "thick description," not macro-historiography. Hence this essay reads the refraction of British eyewitness accounts across genres in diaries, correspondences, pamphlets, plays, and novels.

After a brief summary of Elizabethan knowledge of Persia, chapter one analyzes Anthony Sherley's mission to Persia (1599) and how recreating the Persian became an exercise in self-fashioning for the amateur diplomat in his apologia, Sir Anthony Sherley His
Relatio of His Travels in Persia (1613), and in other English texts which celebrated him.
The second chapter, in considering the two missions of Robert Sherley to England on behalf
of Shah Abbas (1613; 1624), investigates the perception of the Persian ambassador in John
Day's play, The Travails of the Three English Brothers (1607), as well as in official and
private documents. In its discussion of the resumption of Anglo-Persian diplomatic relations
(1800-1810), chapter three probes the Persian impersonations of John Malcolm and Harford
Jones as recounted in their respective travelogues Sketches of Persia (1828) and An Account
of The Transactions... (1834). Chapter four examines representations of Abul Hassan Khan
Shirazi, Persian ambassador to the court of George III and the prototype for the protagonist
of James Morier's novels The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan (1824) and The
Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan in England (1828), a figure in which the English author
and his Persian subject merge. The diplomatic perils the British envoys encountered in
Persia led them to masquerade and play; such theatricality suggests the inadequacy of seeing
Orientalism as merely a discourse of domination.
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The Persian at the Door

1. Eyeing the Persian

Sir Walter Scott prefaces his review of James Morier's *The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan in England*, a book of which much shall be said later, with an anecdote. "An old acquaintance of ours, as remarkable for the grotesque queerness of his physiognomy, as for the kindness and gentleness of his disposition, was asked by a friend, where he had been? He replied, he had been seeing the lion, which was at that time an object of curiosity--(we are not sure whether it was Nero or Cato)--: 'And what,' rejoined the querist, 'did the lion think of you?'"¹

Most readers of Scott's review in 1828 would have known of Hajji Baba, a fictional Persian picaro, whose escapades in his homeland had been described four years earlier in Morier's popular *The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan*. The reference to the lion, then, would have registered with the informed reader. He has arrived; Hajji Baba, the Persian, is in England. Scott's anecdote briefly and fleetingly assimilates the native and the foreigner, the Persian character and the English reader. For the jest appears as much directed at the lion as it is at the "old acquaintance," and though the Persian analog is a caged animal, the stand-in for the English man, the "old acquaintance," appears comically stunted. The anecdote sounds chatty, amused, accepting. Scott dismisses such a reading in the very next paragraph. The tale of the visit to the lion illustrates a more serious question: "When a civilized people have gazed, at their leisure, upon one of those uninstructed productions of rude nature whom

they term barbarians, the next object of natural curiosity is, to learn what opinion the barbarian has formed of the new state of society into which he is introduced—what the lion thinks of his visitors" (74).

It is tempting to say that this essay articulates the lion's cogitations. Our sympathies rest with it, but the sad fact remains that the journal is kept by its keepers and hence to speak of or for the creature one has to read its tamers. Such a posture frees the author, invariably an erstwhile Third Worlder, to scrutinize the visitor and yet identify with the lion, declaring, with shocked expressions, in its favor. The shock experienced by the writer of the present work, and one which he communicates to the reader only in passing, is of a different nature. I identified with both the lion and its visitor, taken in by that genteel opening. My astonishment sprang not so much from the twist to the anecdote, that mild, wry xenophobia of Scott's (the word "racism" flutters in the mind), but this writer's own initial misconstruing of the tale, the ephemeral and mistaken reading that, for Scott, a joke may be at the expense of the English and Persian alike. One clings to such folly. But for the Third Worlder studying English literature of travel, searching, in essence, for traces of himself in the language that he loves, the metaphor of the cage is applicable only in reverse. At the end of the millennium we are not locked up, but locked out. This is our usual posture: we are, nowadays, looking in. Stared upon or staring, what one wishes to avoid at all costs wherever one stands (in the cage or at the door) is to peek, gape and misunderstand.

This dissertation is an attempt to assume an indeterminate stance, to stand at the door and stare through the bars, to gaze upon my gazers. It considers distinct occasions when the
English eyed the Persian and analyzes the British "rediscovery" of the Persian as a corporeal being rather than a disembodied referent known only through textual sources. It investigates the narratives of these encounters, how British travelers sought to represent and recreate the Persian for English audiences. By "representation" and "recreation" I mean both discursive and mimetic duplication, and the labor of such endeavors in the realms of leisure and diplomacy. Early British overtures to Persia were diplomatic in nature. But British diplomacy in Persia, I shall argue, was performative and theatrical. My texts, therefore, are diverse, ranging from dispatches to recorded gossip, from doggerels to travelogues, private and official correspondences, from the pamphlets which the diplomats commissioned to the plays or novels they inspired.

The narrative is of beginnings, of aborted missions, of grave and comic misunderstandings, ending often in the disgrace or slow decline into obscurity of the ambassadors. For England, the Persian connection was a side plot to her control and protection of India. For Persia, however, British overtures marked a sad chapter in a history that resulted, by the twentieth century, in paralysis and near-partition. Such is the stuff of tragedy, and my concerns here are those of the historian, not moralist, leaving aside, for now, the instability of such categorizations. A caveat: the Persia of this dissertation is an English man's Persia. Indeed, I would have called it England's Persia more consistently had I not hesitated at the laboriousness of the term. My inclination, for the most part, is to remain

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2 Rather than distinguishing between the Persian in his historical reality and the Persian as conceived by the English traveler typographically, I shall use the term "the Persian" or "the Persians" to denote the English conception of the Persian, and shall reserve the more specific descriptions—i.e., "the Persian ambassador"—to refer to individual Persians. Since the English travelers rarely interacted with Persian women, the Persian, in the general or specific sense, invariably refers to male Persians.
within the boundaries of the English texts, rather than stepping outside to compare the vision and the referent. I am not so much interested in the truth of the narrative, as its multiplicity and ownership. One person's reality is so frequently another's phantasm that Vladimir Nabokov, speaking of this dichotomy, often insisted that reality should appear in quotation marks.

What matters in an analysis of the literature of travel is not objective reality but subjective perception, not so much place itself, but how knowledge of place and its inhabitants is formulated and perpetuated. Such a claim will have its detractors. Recent Third-World scholarship has imaginatively engaged European depictions of Moslems in Africa and the Middle East, seeking to dispel stereotypes, to combat subjectivity. In his provocative study of French postcards of Arab women manufactured and disseminated in the first thirty years of the twentieth century, Malek Alloula embarks on a project "to track...through the Colonial representations of Algerian women--the figures of a phantasm--to attempt a double operation: first to uncover the nature and the meaning of the colonialist gaze; then, to subvert the stereotype that is so tenaciously attached to the bodies of women."³ Such an intervention would have been superfluous, Alloula argues, had there existed a record of the Algerian subject gazing back at the French photographer. In the absence of such a record, Alloula proposes to "attempt here, lagging far behind History, to return this immense postcard to its sender" (5).

Although on occasion I shall attempt to form a counter-text to the prevailing narrative

of British diplomacy in Persia, I have no letter to return to the sender. No contemporary Persian source marks the appearance, on the horizon, of the Sherley brothers at the start of the seventeenth century. Abul Hassan Khan Shirazi's journal of his residence in London in 1809-1810, privately printed in Persia, was not available to his English contemporaries who memorialized him. For the history of the initial contacts in Anglo-Persian relations we are essentially trapped within the monologues of English texts. This constraint should not be regarded as limiting. The texts discussed here—the narrator's own efforts as raconteur, the pamphlets or plays he commissions or inspires—offer the English vision of Persia, but this vision is far from homogeneous. We may study its fluctuations, contradictions, provenance. Of course, and inevitably, the following pages shall portray the Persians, for the most part, as mute figures. If this work, in its own small way, perpetuates that legacy of silence, the author's contribution, it is hoped, is not taken for complicity.

Anglo-Persian contacts have proved fertile ground for scholarship. The scholarship, however, has, for the most part, focused on cultural influences or diplomatic overtures between the two countries. Samuel Chew's magisterial *The Crescent and the Rose* considers England's initial overtures to the Levant and Persia, and traces echoes of the sixteenth and seventeenth-century British traveler's accounts in the literature of the time.\(^4\) Martha Pike Conant investigates, inter alia, Persian themes in her discussion of the Oriental and pseudo-Oriental fiction in eighteenth century British literature.\(^5\) A host of scholarly articles have


sought to extend Conant's study into the nineteenth century, some focusing exclusively on
the influence of Persia on English Orientalism. Biographers and historians, on the other
hand, have ably recounted the adventures of English diplomats in Persia. D. W. Davies's
*Elizabahans Errant* is the most recent biography of the Sherley brothers, although Davies,
paradoxically, ignores the earlier contributions of Chew and, more importantly, E. P.
Shirley, whose own *The Sherley Brothers* has provided this writer, land-locked in America,
with invaluable primary sources, among them many of the Sherleys' intercepted letters.
John William Kaye's hagiographic biography of John Malcolm remains a singularly useful
and readable work. Harford Jones Brydges, Malcolm's rival in Persia and critic at home, has
fared worse, remaining, perhaps in perpetuity, without a booster; and for book-length
treatment of James Morier the curious must hazard the masochistic pleasures of other
dissertations. Both diplomats are, nonetheless, sympathetically presented in Denis Wright's
twin volumes on English and Persian travelers. Of greater importance for the re-

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6 See, for example, Wallace Cable Brown, "The Near East in English Drama, 1775-1825," *Journal of
English and Germanic Philology* 46 (1947): 61-69, and John D. Yohannan, "The Persian Poetry Fad in

7 D. W. Davies, *Elizabahans Errant: The Strange Fortunes of Sir Thomas Sherley and His Three
Franklin, 1848).

1856).

9 Ava Inez Weinberger, "The Middle Eastern Writings of James Morier, Traveler, Novelist and the Writer
U of Michigan, 1962.

10 Denis Wright, *The Persians Amongst the English: Episodes in Anglo-Persian History* (London: Tauris,
1985). *The English Amongst the Persians during the Qajar Period 1787-1921* (London: Heinemann,
1977).
establishment of contacts between Persia and England are the contributions of M. E. Yap
and Edward Ingram.11

Elsewhere in the introduction I summarize the critical scholarship which has, more
broadly, considered European interaction with Asia. For now I shall observe that this
dissertation on Anglo-Persian relations, unlike the works cited above, applies the semiotics
of literary studies to the history of an encounter. As detailed in the introduction or individual
chapters, this essay departs from its predecessors in its insistence on reading diplomacy as
performance and diplomatic endeavor as masquerade. I do not claim, nor do I attempt, to
unearth new facts or new texts hitherto neglected, yet worthy and meritorious. Cited though
they are, these facts are obscure indeed, unknown not only to students of literature, but, one
suspects, to Middle East specialists. If I narrate this history and resurrect the anecdotes,
nonetheless, I do so to analyze them as fictions, interrogating the personas of the British
diplomats and studying the refraction of their eyewitness accounts in the English
imagination—recorded gossip, correspondence, pamphlets, plays, novels. In his immensely
readable The Conquest of America Tzvetan Todorov, whose example I follow, calls such a
presentation a "noveistic" method, one in which "summaries or generalized perspectives ...
alternate with scenes or analyses of detail filled with quotations, and with pauses in which
the author comments on what has just occurred, and of course with frequent ellipses or

11 M. E. Yap, Strategies of British India: Britain, Iran and Afghanistan 1798-1850 (Oxford: Clarendon,
1980). Edward Ingram, Britain’s Persian Connection 1798-1828: Prelude to the Great Game in Asia
omissions."\textsuperscript{12}

Travel literature, Michel Butor has argued, is a series of readings. Travel calls for a series of decipherings or "readings" of other cultures, landscapes, customs. The traveler whose journey is very often inspired by reading, reads during the journey (if not other books, then other signs), inscribes (in a journal, on a landmark) and recreates that very landscape at a later date, going so far as renaming the places visited. These "readings" and subsequent "writings" are analytical and imaginative, and therefore as fundamentally creative as the composition of a novel or a play.\textsuperscript{13} This, in sum, is also the connection between language and conquest which has inspired two of the more recent examinations of travel literature, Todorov’s \textit{The Conquest of America} and Stephen Greenblatt’s \textit{Marvelous Possessions}.\textsuperscript{14} Both Todorov and Greenblatt complicate the idea of travel literature as fiction by analyzing the persona of the traveler. I argue similarly that the British diplomat who produces an account of his Persian travels is himself a text engaged in "self-fashioning."\textsuperscript{15} Busily, fussily the diplomat-traveler-actor may insinuate himself into the narrative of his journey to justify a blunder or to win acclaim. For the traveler, in creating himself in Persia and recreating that experience in England, plays before a bifurcated audience—Persian observers and English readers.


But what does it mean to be English in Persia? Or indeed, what does Persia, for England, mean? The tensions inherent in recreating the Persians for English contemporaries and representing England to Persian spectators results, inevitably, in ambiguous representational practices. To assert British authority in Persia the envoys invariably assume "Persian" habits in dress, behavior, and speech. Such instances of cross-dressing—literal and discursive—are moments of collapse when the traveler becomes Persian. That "going native" is ultimately and self-consciously a theatrical maneuver does not diminish its significance. Ephemeral, traveler and native, English author and the Persian subject merge. Crossing such boundaries had, for the English envoy, ambiguous implications. For Robert Sherley, the seventeenth-century traveler and diplomat, the Persian habit proved disastrous. His act consumed him. For Jones, Malcolm, and Morier, Sherley's successors at the dawn of the Victorian era, the Persian disguise was more easily donned and doffed. What the Persian mask meant to each actor shall concern us for much of the rest of this work.

And why Persia, or indeed, why such a short span of time, fifty years in sum, two centuries apart? The truncation of the historical continuum is inevitably arbitrary, but my parochialism in confining the subject matter to Persia should be understood in light of recent revisionist studies of imperialism such as Sara Suleri's *The Rhetoric of English India*, Timothy Mitchell's *Colonizing Egypt*, and Lisa Lowe's *Critical Terrains*, all of which caution that, although the discourse of imperialism is identifiable, it may not be as homogeneous or unified as previously thought. But there is a second and more important

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reason for restricting the scope of this essay. The history of the discovery and colonization of America, Todorov argues, is of "paradigmatic value" as it is the most unique of encounters in history. The American conquest is exemplary and anomalous. "We do not have the same sense of radical difference in the 'discovery' of other continents and other peoples: Europeans have never been altogether ignorant of the existence of Africa, India, China; some memory of these places was there already—from the beginning" (4). In a study of European colonization of America, such a generalization is understandable. For us, however, the "beginning" is a more problematic matter. What did England know of Persia and how should the limits of such epistemology be defined? In a sense, the omnipresent East, that threatening, exotic elsewhere, was Persia. For even before Europe formed a consciousness of Africa or the Far East, traces of Persia lingered in the European imagination.

Not only did the Persian figure prominently in the West's first historical narrative, Herodotus's History, but it is the Persians who bear witness to Greek triumph in the first extant Attic drama, Aeschylus's The Persians. In the Greek discourse of self-definition the Greek citizen was implicitly or explicitly contrasted with the Persian vassal, the Greek denizen of the city-state being everything that the Persian was not, independent, self-willed, free. Western scholarship, in fact, often regards the Persian Wars in the fifth century B.C. as the beginning of history and the idea of Europe.¹⁷ Persia is thus one of the earliest and

¹⁷For Voltaire, "History only begins with the Persians' operations against the Greeks. Before those great events one finds only a few vague narratives, cloaked in childish stories." For J.S. Mill, "the battle of Marathon, even as an event in English history, is more important than the battle of Hastings. If the issue of the day had been different, the Britons and the Saxons might still have been wandering in the woods." And for Hegel, the Persian Wars, "live immortal not in the historical records of Nations only, but also of Science
most generic of Others— to use that indispensable, somewhat hackneyed term. But Persia, in the English imagination, is also an anomaly. Although the inherited Persian image predates the British encounter and colonization of other countries in the East, British contacts with Persia lagged far behind English incursions into Asia and became a postscript to England's Indian empire. English travelers to Syria predated their successors in Persia by a century. Travel and pilgrimage to Palestine dates back to even earlier times (Chew 55-100).

At the moment of the encounter, then, England's Persia, both known and unfamiliar, is of emblematic interest. A fictive place, it oscillates between the completely familiar and the wholly alien. Narratives of its "rediscovery" may thus be relevant in any reading of the Other. And questions which arise in connection with England's Persia, have larger implications. How is the traveler's foreknowledge affected by experience, for example? How does hypothetical and discursive familiarity complicate representation? And how is the depiction of the Other reformed or redefined in the crisis of remembrance and identification?  

Scholars other than Todorov have commented on the shock experienced by the traveler to the New World when confronted with the inadequacy of the authoritative text,

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and Art—of the Noble and Moral generally. For these are World-Historical victories; they were the salvation of culture and spiritual vigour and they rendered the Asiatic principle powerless.” Quoted in Francois Hartog, *The Mirror of Herodotus: The Representation of the Other in the Writing of History*, trans. Janet Lloyd (Berkeley: U of California P, 1988) xix-xx.

18I do not mean to imply that there was no contact between England and Persia between the diplomatic forays in the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. Jean Chardin, a French Huguenot jeweler who settled eventually in England, Dr. Fryer and other English travelers who sojourned in Paris wrote important descriptions of that country. Their narratives, however, did not resonate in England in quite the same way as those propagated by the Sherleys.
when experience contradicted ancient knowledge.\textsuperscript{19} Something of this same sense of astonishment—but one which I think is of wider application—is operable in England’s Persia.

The English diplomat, schooled in the Classics and the Bible, finds in Persia a land which seems to uphold and negate Authority simultaneously. In his two volume \textit{A Second Journey Through Persia…}, for example, James Morier, some years before the publication of his Hajji Baba novels, offers to his reading public portions of his journals relating to his six-year residence in Persia.\textsuperscript{30} He has, he explains in the preface, edited the work to avoid redundancies. Scenery and events reminiscent of his first journey and related in his original travel narrative published six years earlier in 1812 are omitted in the interest of economy. Only one subject escapes Morier’s editorial zeal, his observations of contemporary customs in Persia which affirm the validity of the Scriptures.

For the manners of the East, amidst all the changes of Government and Religion, are still the same: they are living impressions from an original mould; and at every step, some object, some idiom, some dress, some custom of common life reminds the traveller of antient [sic] times, and confirms, above all, the beauty, the accuracy, and the propriety of the language and the history of the Bible. There is perhaps no part of the East to which these observations might not apply; for whatever differences of creed, of government, or of language may exist between them, there is still no line of separation between any two Eastern nations so strong, as that which is drawn between Europeans and Asiatics (1: viii).

In the rest of the narrative Morier continues to note those differences which contrast the


Oriental and the European; he is less successful in his search for an unceasing East. The mimesis for which Morier is prepared and reconnoitering, those "living impressions from the original mould" though frequent, are not the only acts of impersonation that he finds. For while Morier is engaged in his own role-playing—that of an amateur anthropologist and scholar of the Bible, that of a budding novelist gathering, we may assume, data for his own Persian re-creations in the *Hajji Baba series*—the Persian apparently is involved in mime, eager to impress upon Morier the extent to which the native is willing to appear European. Morier, for instance, notes with characteristic glee Crown Prince Abbas Mirza's efforts, with European officers' help, to introduce European discipline to his troops.

One of the most remarkable facts in the modern history of Asia, is the introduction of European discipline in the armies of Persia. When we have seen such discipline entirely destroyed in one Mahomedan state, in spite of the efforts of the government to maintain it—when the prejudices of the Mahomedan religion are considered, and particularly the doctrine of predestination which it inculcates, it must remain a matter of surprise how it has commenced, maintained, and strengthened itself in Persia. It had not indeed Janissaries to oppose it, as in Turkey, but it was cried down by some of the Princes, and derided by many of the Nobles; and if it had not been for the personal exertions of Abbas Mirza, it must have fallen. Abbas Mirza, in fact, must be looked upon as the origin, the support, and the chief promoter of it, and consequently the benefactor of his country (2:2).

In Morier's perspective such efforts at reform may be doomed, but he cannot quite escape the notion that he is visiting a vital, contradictory place rather than a fixed, immutable environment. Eager to find the monolith of the East, Morier must make distinctions between the Turk and the Persian, and among the Persians themselves. The
Persian vision failing him, Morier shall create his own "Persian," Hajji Baba, a distillation and a caricature of all that the author wishes to find in Persia.

To read of the British in Persia is to enter a hall of mirrors. Persia as a geopolitical entity, rather than a mere landscape (or dreamscape for that matter) trespassed by the tourist, missionary or adventurer, was introduced twice to England. English contact with Persia, diplomatic or civil, was not continuous and permanent as in the case of India. With the death of the Elizabethan traveler Robert Sherley in 1628 the intense British interest in things Persian faded, not to be revived for another one hundred and fifty years. In John Malcolm's account of his mission to Persia in 1800 and the re-establishment of Anglo-Persian diplomatic relations, we hear a brief echo of the Sherlian adventure. The author relates a dispute over the garments to be worn by the British envoy during his audience with the Shah. Malcolm insists that he shall attend the Shah in a military uniform, and "that he could wear no dress except that of his country, and being a soldier, he wore the uniform belonging to his station in the army."21

The Persian courtier

...smiled, and said they were better informed upon such subjects than the Elchee [Malcolm] imagined. He then produced a parcel; and after opening a number of envelopes, he showed several small pictures of ambassadors [sic] who had visited Persia two centuries ago. One, which was called the painting of the English representative, and believed to be Sir Anthony Shirley [sic], was dressed in the full costume of the time of Queen Elizabeth. "This," said the Meerza, "is the pattern which it is hoped you will adopt, as his majesty desires to follow in all points the usages of the Seffavean kings, since they well understood what was due

to the dignity of the throne of Persia (124).

For Malcolm, the episode comically juxtaposes the Persians' static customs against the English diplomat's ever evolving, and it must be assumed, ever improving taste. So far as Malcolm is concerned, Anthony Sherley, a rogue colorfully costumed, is an unfortunate, irrelevant precedent. We need not be so demurring. That British overtures to Persia should occur after such long absences allows us to study "rediscovery" in isolation and in duplicate, for its structural and thematic meaning. Each English mission to Persia produced its castaways, fictional Persians created by the English traveler/diplomats, or corporeal Persian who accompanied the English envoys to Europe and remained behind. What happened to them, how they were received, and how images of them were propagated, say much about England's Persia as they do about how we more generally view the foreigner among us.

But let me return to British diplomats themselves. For while they brought the native home to England, many of the diplomats discussed in these pages "went native" in Persia. Prepared by his readings and prejudices, the English visitor succeeds in finding in Persia a country which accommodates "authority" (as is the case, I shall argue, with the Sherleys, Malcolm, and Jones) or a place which negates pre-vision (Morier). In the face of the (un)familiar the diplomat undertakes a series of translations. Malcolm, Jones, and the Sherleys adjust and uphold what they view as the Persian standard; Morier creates his own. There is, in all cases, labor in such undertaking. This dissertation is about the meaning and manifestation of such work—the theatrical element
in discovery and diplomacy— in Robert Sherley's physical mime, or Morier's discursive recreation of the Persian.

II. Orientalism and Beyond

Modern scholarly criticism has disputed the notion of the Orient as an enchanted place. Edward Said is perhaps the best known critic of Orientalism, but he was not the first to formulate an attack upon romantic Orientalism. Over the last forty years, even as writers such as Bernard Lewis continued to insist on the non-ideological nature of Orientalism, dismissing arguments to the contrary as "false" and "absurd," scholars such as R. W. Southern and Philip Hitti summarized the theological and ideological debates that a hostile and challenging Islam posed for medieval and early modern Europe.22 In a sequence of three books, Norman Daniel sketched the perception of Islam in the Christian imagination, and Henri Baudet analyzed the prevailing images of non-Westerners in the Western consciousness, "images derived not from observation, experience, and perceptible reality, but from a psychological urge."23

Parallel to these historical and psychological analyses were the works A. L. Tibawi, Talal Asad, and Anwar Abdel-Malek which criticized the very ideology of Orientalist scholarship. As early as 1963, the Egyptian scholar Abdel-Malek noted a


"community of interest" between the various schools of Orientalism. The vision espoused by traditional Orientalists—editors and translators of Oriental manuscripts—he argued, were profoundly permeated by postulates, methodological habits and historico-philosophical concepts that were to compromise, often, the results and the scientific value of arduous work and to lead, objectively, a great number of genuine Orientalist scholars to the politico-philosophical positions of the other groups of researchers... business men, military men, missionaries and colonial officials.\textsuperscript{24}

The Orient thus became a mute construct to be analyzed, but rarely addressed or acknowledged.

In many ways the critiques of Orientalist scholarship culminated in Edward Said's \textit{Orientalism}, and it is Said who has become most widely known for the vigor of his attacks on European representational practices. Drawing upon Michel Foucault's \textit{Archaeology of Knowledge} and \textit{Discipline and Punish}, Said argues that representations of the Orient are never neutral depictions; the relationship between Europe and the Orient is one of unequal power. The roots of this relationship are to be found in the Ancient Greek perception of the Persians and in Europe's medieval view of Islam, but for Said Orientalism begins in earnest in the eighteenth century and persists to this day. Said's project of exposing Orientalism as a repressive discourse is comprehensive; he considers Orientalism in the fictional format of the Oriental tale and poem, non-fictional accounts such as travelogues, and even in so-called "truthful texts" of histories and political treatises. As a layered and interactive discourse, Orientalism is at once an imagined

\textsuperscript{24}Anwar Abdel-Malek, "Orientalism in Crisis," \textit{Diogenes} 44 (Winter 1963) 108.
place, a style of thought, a manifesto of domination, and an academic institution. The
scope of Orientalism is thus naturally broad:

It is rather a distribution of geopolitical awareness into aesthetic,
 scholarly, economic, sociological, historical, and philological texts; it is an
elaboration not only of a basic geographical distinction... but also of
a whole series of "interests" which, by such means as scholarly
discovery, philological reconstruction, psychological analysis... not only
creates but also maintains; it is, rather, expresses, a certain will or
intention to understand, in some cases to control, manipulate, even to
incorporate, what is manifestly different...; it is, above all, a discourse
that is by no means in direct, corresponding relationship with political
power in the raw, but rather is produced and exists in an uneven exchange
with various kinds of power...25

Orientalism allows the practitioner to control and neutralize the other. It is this notion
of Orientalism as a repressive discourse that interests Said most, a discourse which draws
a dividing line between the Orient and the Occident, allowing the Occidental to define
himself in opposition to the Oriental and emerge from this juxtaposition as rational,
civilized, temperate, normal. Orientalism thus has less to do with the Orient than it does
with "our" world.

The remarkable resonance of Orientalism has been such that it has effectively
defined the parameters within which the debate about Europe's Oriental Other has
evolved. Much of recent Oriental scholarship has been devoted to reevaluating Saidian
tenets.26 Feminist critics of Orientalism, for example, have extended Said's definition
of the term to argue that Occidental domination is manifested as a gendered discourse


26 In "The Articulation of Orientalism," for instance, Aziz Al-Azmeh takes the "phenomenology" of
95.
wherein the Orient is emasculated. Still other scholars have often explained their projects by either rejecting Said’s work, or by claiming that they are rescuing it from misunderstanding. On the other hand, Said has been generally criticized for creating an essentialist discourse which engages in the very same generalizing tendencies it denounces. Albert Hourani faults Said for too closely identifying Orientalism with Imperialism. And while praising Said’s “methodological suspicion of the reconstitutive procedures of writing about others,” in a thoughtful essay, James Clifford criticizes Said for so limiting his scope as to guarantee the outcome of his analysis, and for vacillations and ambiguities in reasoning which, among other inconsistencies, allow him to speak of the Orient as both a real place and an imagined construct. Said’s conception of Orientalism as a homogeneous, monolithic paradigm, is close to the thinking he attributes to the European practitioners of Orientalism.


28 Billie Melman, for instance, justifies her *Women’s Orients* on the grounds that Said’s Orient is “a man’s place and the empire... a male space” from which gender and class are “written out.” *Women’s Orients: English Women and the Middle East, 1718-1918,* (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1992) 5. In her commentary on the discourses of British India, on the other hand, Sara Suleri argues that the current readings of a gendered Orient “frequently [fail] to register the implications of [Said’s] reading... the common language of imperialism thus perpetuates its own through what seeks to be an opposing methodology” (16). But the debate about Orientalism is not confined to Middle East studies. Dennis Porter, whose *Haunted Journey* is concerned with European travel on the Continent, begins with an evaluation of the Saidian Other. Dennis Porter, *Haunted Journey: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1991) 3-4.


30 In his own reconsiderations of his work, Said has sought to answer such criticism. His challenge to Orientalist scholarship should not be taken to mean that he advocates a “double kind of possessive exclusivism” under which only the aggrieved parties may write and discuss their own experiences.
My concerns here, however, are not to engage Orientalism's macro-historiography. Even a cursory glance through these pages should reveal to the reader the extent to which this work is indebted to Said's power/discourse analysis. But my project departs from Said's in two distinct ways. First, I shall suggest that European approaches to the Middle East should be studied in more specifically identified, localized settings. Second, I will argue that although the encounter with the Other inevitably leads to appropriation and mimesis, we should not assume that the pre-Victorian diplomat occupied the position of self-assured mastery. British envoys to Persia endeavored to mistake the signs of difference as spectacle; in their protracted struggles to impress, they would abide by the rules of the stage. Thus, to assert British authority in Persia, meant, in a sense, to become Persian. The performative nature of British diplomacy in Persia is of note not only because it became the controlling metaphor of British policy towards that country, but, more broadly, because it challenges the notion of Orientalism as a fixed and repressive discourse. Playing to a bifurcated audience--English readers, Persian observers--the Persian mimesis exposes ambiguous practices in which the author duplicates the Orient in a restraining embrace.

III. Geertz and Reading

My reading of Anglo-Persian diplomatic relations is in part derived from the work of Clifford Geertz. In his seminal essay "Thick Description: Toward an

Orientalism, he has argued, may be seen as an analog for other kinds of gender and racial biases. See "Orientalism Reconsidered," *Cultural Critique* 1 (Fall 1985): 89-107. Most recently, in *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Knopf, 1993), Said has extended his interpretations of imperialism to include third world countries outside the Middle East and sought to analyze the indigenous literature of resistance to empire.
Interpretive Theory of Culture," Geertz argues for a semiotic approach to anthropology. Defending the necessity and value of microscopic readings of culture, Geertz suggests that the anthropologist must engage in induction, delving into small events, the forgotten anecdotes of history. A practitioner of such readings faces "a multiplicity of complex conceptual structures, many of them superimposed upon or knotted into one another, which are at once strange, irregular, and inexplicit, and which he must contrive somehow first to grasp then to render." The rendering of such complexities is what Geertz, after Ryle, calls "thick description," the reason and necessity for which Geertz defends by arguing that

It is with the kind of material produced by long-term, mainly (though not exclusively) qualitative, highly participative, and almost obsessively fine-comb field study in confined contexts that the mega-concepts with which contemporary social science is afflicted—legitimacy, modernization, integration, conflict, charisma structure, ... meaning—can be given the sort of sensible actuality that makes it possible to think not only realistically and concretely about them, but, what is more important, creatively and imaginatively with them (23).

Although Said and Geertz are not engaged in a dialogue, we would benefit from such a conversation. "The besetting sin of the interpretive approaches to anything," Geertz admits, "...is that they tend to resist, or to be permitted to resist, conceptual articulation and thus to escape systematic modes of assessment"(24). The "sin" of Said's Orientalism is its entrenchment in the realm of concept and systems. What is needed in an articulation of Orientalism is a "thicker" description of the encounter between the

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narrator and his subject, a description in which the grander claims of the historian are validated by an anthropologist's eye.

This dissertation studies the work of a putative empire at close quarters. British overtures to Persia were contingent upon exigencies very often created or inflamed by neophyte diplomats who willed or defined the reasons which should and did take them to Persia. Our concern, thus, is not only with the (re)discovery of an Elsewhere that has always existed, an inherited mirage made concrete, but with the construction of the Self within such an environment. The reading is of multiple and super-imposed texts which though distinguishable are inseparable. To understand England's "Persia," we have to understand the people who "discovered" and reproduced the landscape of Persia. And to consider Persia's "creators" is to see Persia. What the Persian disguise meant to each of the travelers discussed in these pages is a subject of interest but not import; what does matter is that the Persian representations of the English diplomat (as an author creating a Persian character or as an actor impersonating one) resonated powerfully in England. A testament to the very power of this myth-making is that the Persian performances occurred while there resided in England natives of Persia who could or did dispute the legitimacy of these portrayals.

Let me return to English diplomats in Persia and the reasons which compelled them to theatricality. Rumors of their adventures may have intrigued English spectators, but Empire building—for those who do the building— is seldom the grand narrative of great men. It is indeed difficult to see early British representatives in Persia for
something other than what they were--weakened, harassed men, uncertain of their standing with their superiors, unsure of their reception by the Persians. The Sherleys, Malcolm, and Jones do not fit the mold of the complaisant travelers. Rogues and intriguers in many instances, they are juggling roles, playing and pleasing different audiences. Anthony and Robert Sherley who would (or so they hoped or claimed) alter the balance of power in the Near East, topple the Ottomans and go as representatives before Kings, were a bickering pair who practically fled to Persia. Malcolm and Jones, the Sherleys' nineteenth-century successors, were a quarrelsome set, undermining one another, and unendurably afraid lest the Persian Court, realizing the divisions among the British, make presumptions upon their dignity. For almost all except Malcolm, who would find a sort of apotheosis as governor of Bombay, Persia became a quagmire. All except James Morier, the last English diplomat considered in these pages, would spend the balance of their careers justifying their conduct in Persia. Beset by troubles, pursued by rivals--this is the norm for the English diplomat in Persia, not patriarchy and mastery. Said's argument that the European traveler gropes blindly in the East is a powerful one. It does not, however, adequately explain the reaction of the English in a country such as Persia, teetering on the verge of colonization, but never wholly colonized.

After a brief survey of Elizabethan knowledge about Persia which concludes this chapter, I turn to the particulars of British diplomacy in Persia and the idiosyncrasies of the diplomats who undertook these missions. I begin, in the first chapter with Anthony Sherley, the elder of two brothers responsible for reinvigorating British interest in
Persia. My texts are those that I shall call the Sherlian discourse—the slim pamphlets of Anthony Nixon, Thomas Middleton, and Samuel Purchas, Anthony Sherley's own apologia, and John Day's play, *The Travails of the Three English Brothers*. Paradoxically, however, although Anthony Sherley as the self-styled leader of the English mission was responsible for the "re-discovery" of the Persian referent, the Sherlian discourse tended to obscure rather than illuminate Persia and the Persians. These obfuscations and anachronisms were deliberate and meant to justify the Sherleys' policies. Persia, for the Sherleys, thus became a landscape for the recasting and remaking of the Self.

The second chapter analyzes the consequences of Sherlian vision in the career of Robert Sherley, Anthony's younger brother. My concern here is not with the experience of seeing or reporting of Persia, but the physical act of impersonating the Persian. We are moving then from event to performance, or from the text to the actor. Robert Sherley, I suggest, is both a beneficiary and victim of the Sherlian discourse which defined Persia as a land of facade and artifice. After his long sojourn in Persia, his English audience regarded Robert Sherley as a Persian and therefore a player. His fate, I suggest further, bears comparison with the life and death of the incongruously titled Don Juan of Persia, a Persian companion of Anthony's who abandoning the Persian Mission in Spain, converted to Catholicism and in 1604 wrote a book detailing his experiences. Don Juan's pronouncements may be seen as an articulation of Robert Sherley's career. Both are liminal figures, outcasts on the threshold of two cultures, and
examples of travelers "going native."

In the story of re-establishment of Anglo-Persian diplomatic relations in 1800-1810, we are again privy to the principles outlined in the previous chapter: the English diplomat, far from home and unsure of support, decides to adopt native customs. In Robert Sherley's performance in England we witness the Persian performance before an unknowing audience--the English court. In the cases of Malcolm and Jones we see a far more complex attempt at impersonating the Persian before the Persian Court. Quibbles over minutiae, Malcolm and Jones came to believe, impressed the Persians and the envoys acted accordingly. Of their English audience, however, the two were equally aware, and the chapter offers a reading of the tensions between representing Britain to Persian observers and recreating the Persians for English readers. It was this awareness of their British audience, an awareness of the dangers of going native that separates the Malcolm and Jones from Robert Sherley and Don Juan of Persia.

The fourth chapter turns to the embassy of Mirza Abul Hassan Khan Shirazi to the Court of George III in 1810. Although Abul Hassan resided in Britain for ten months, learned English, and led an active social life the depictions of the Persian ambassador, at first laudatory and sympathetic, at length declined into caricature. Portrayals of him in the popular press coarsened the more the public sought to know of him, and his image, in the public imagination was eventually replaced, not by an actor-diplomat playing a part, but by James Morier's fictional Persian rogue, Hajji Baba. In his travelogues and two novels, *The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan* (1824) and
The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan in England (1828), Morier was engaged in a discursive impersonation which has had a more enduring appeal than any of the previous performances discussed in this essay. For in the character of Hajji Baba Morier created a Persian who, for the English public, came to supersed Abul Hassan in his "Persianness" and survives to this day as a standard of all things Persian.

IV. England's Persia: Images and Impressions, 1350-1600

The English came late to Persia. They were preceded by the Italians and the Portuguese. Pioneers in this traffic were William Rubruck, Marco Polo, Marino Sanuto and Friar Odoric Pardenone. The Mongol subjection of the Moslem world in the thirteenth century reinvigorated European interest in the East, "renting asunder the veil which had for so long shut off Persia and other Islamic countries from the West."32 In the fourteenth century European interests in the East, and more specifically for our purposes, Persia, were threefold: evangelical, diplomatic, and mercantile. Reports (somewhat exaggerated) of the sympathies of the Mongol Il-Khans of Persia towards Christians, resulted, in the first place, in a series of Catholic evangelical missions to Persia. The hope that Moslem nations might be converted and brought into the fold had long been a cherished dream in Europe. The Il-Khan's toleration of the Nestorian church and their employment of Christians in positions of authority motivated fresh overtures. In 1278 the Pope sent a mission to Tabriz in North-Western Persia, charged with

"delivering a statement of faith and an offer of baptism". Missionary activity, in turn, emphasized the need to learn the Oriental languages, and "bore fruit in the decree of the Council of Vienne in 1311 that chairs in Hebrew, Arabic, Greek, and Syriac should be founded in the universities, and also in the Codex Cumanicus, a glossary in Latin, Persian and Cuman, which was produced by a Genoese in 1303 for use by missionaries and merchants in southern Russia and Iran" (86). By 1318 the city of Sultaniah, since 1307 the capital of Mongol Persia, was recognized as a metropolitan see with Francis of Perugi as its first archbishop. The initial success of Catholic initiative in Persia proved tenuous, however, and Christian efforts in Persia were defeated by the revival of Islam (98-101). Contact between Persia and the West, nonetheless, was not to diminish with the demise of evangelical activity.

The Ottoman peril which terrorized Persia, its neighbor to the East, as much as it did European countries bordering on its Western regions, constituted a second incentive for contacts between Europe and Persia. In 1404 after his victory over Bayezed, Timur sent emissaries to Venice, Genoa, London and Paris to propagate the news of his victory over the Ottomans. Both Henry IV and Charles VI replied, but it was Henry III of Castile and Leon who responded by dispatching Ruy Gonzalez de Clavigo to Timur in Samarkand. By the middle of the century Ottomans had sufficiently recovered from their defeat at the hands of Timur to capture Constantinople; this renewed threat, most acutely felt in Venice, added to the already existing desire to find

an ally in Persia, and Venetian envoys brought to Persia plans for "simultaneous attack on the Turks from both the east and the west" (Lockhart 377).

Contact between Europe and Persia in the fifteenth century, though intermittent, was considerable. By rounding the Cape of Good Hope the Portuguese established a permanent presence in the Persian Gulf, thus inaugurating a second route to Persia and furthering contacts. In 1507 a Portuguese fleet commanded by Affonso d'Albuquerque occupied the island of Hormus in the Persian Gulf and became the first European power to conclude treaties with Shah Ismail, the founder of the Safavi dynasty in 1515. In the next year, both Charles V of Spain and King Ludwig II of Hungary sent separate missions to Persia urging an alliance against the Turks. The Shah replied in cordial terms, but his response did not reach Europe until after his death (Lockhart 379-382).

It was only in the second half of the sixteenth century that steps were taken in England which led to the establishment of contacts between England and Persia. We do not know whether the reports and travelogues of the Venetian and Portuguese Renaissance travelers to Persia were read in England, but we do know that images of Persia had reached England for some time. A vision of Persia as a romantic elsewhere had found currency in England in the thirteenth century based on reports of Franciscan and Dominican friars on their way to Cathay. By the middle of the century Sir John Mandeville's book of travels "pictured for the delectation of all escapists an Orient which was at one moment Cathay, at another Persia, a Persia stretched beyond Arabia,
beyond Abyssinia, and even to the 'londe of Inde.'\textsuperscript{34} The romance of Mandeville's Persia may have been tempered by the reports of medieval travelers such as Marco Polo whose narrative was available in French in 1556 and English in 1579. These fragmentary and sporadic reports may themselves have been supplemented by Old Testament accounts of Persia. The Books of Esther and Daniel had spoken kindly of the Persian, describing Cyrus's benevolence in ordering the rebuilding of the Temple of Jerusalem. The Book of Esther had further described the splendors of Persian palaces.\textsuperscript{35}

By the middle of the sixteenth century the invention of the printing press and the wide dissemination of ancient Greek and Latin texts increased knowledge of Persia. With the translations of the *History of Thucidides* (1550), *History of Polybius* (1568), Xenophon's *Cyropeadia* and *Anabasis* (1560) and *The Famous History Of Herodotus* (1584)\textsuperscript{36} England's limited knowledge of Persia was supplemented by images centuries old. Herodotus, for instance, born a Persian subject, and a chronicler of the Persian Wars, described the Persians as a hardy race. The Persians of Herodotus abhorred debt and falsity in equal measure. They were also a conceited race who nevertheless welcomed and incorporated foreign costumes. Although the Persians lost the battles of


\textsuperscript{35}Seymour Philips points out the difficulty of estimating medieval knowledge of the "outer world." Although a number of travelers had described their journeys to the Orient in the Middle Ages, their successors may have been unaware of these narratives. Other medieval travel narratives, now considered of major importance, remained unread at the time. See "Outer World of the European Middle Ages," Stuart B. Schwartz, ed., *Implicit Understandings* (Cambridge UP, 1994) 27.

Marathon, Salamis, and Plataea, for Herodotus the Persian failure was due to deficiencies in their techniques of warfare, not their moral fiber. For Herodotus, ultimately, the Persians were corrupted by such people as the Babylonians whom the Persians had conquered and ruled. Another picture of the Persians would emerge in the works of Xenophon, an Athenian writing at the beginning of the fourth century B.C. Xenophon had gone to Persia with other Greek mercenaries to fight on the side of Cyrus the younger in his dynastic dispute with King Artaxerxes. In later life Xenophon recorded his Persian impressions in two books. *Anabasis* recorded the march of the Greek mercenaries, through Persian territory and under duress, from Babylon to the Black Sea. *Cyropedia* was an idealization of Cyrus the younger and became one of the original manuals for the conduct of princes.\(^{37}\)

From the works of Classical and Latin authority, the Bible, and reports of medieval travelers, the Elizabethans inherited images of Persia that incorporated diverse and at times contradictory elements. Persia was a land of "simplicity and abstinences" and of "luxury, gorgeousness and voluptuousness" (Chew 234-235). It was this latter image, however, that prevailed, being sustained, in part, by the accounts of the recently returned English travelers in the seventeenth century. "To say of any sort of luxury that the Persian might envy it was as much to say that it was unparalleled" (230). Such

\(^{37}\)Beginning in the third century B.C., Persia functioned in the Roman mythology in much the same way that it had for the Greeks. "Rome . . . never had her very existence imperilled by Parthia in the same way that Athens and the rest of Greece had been threatened by Achaemenian Persia," but the Parthian empire in Persia clashed with the Romans. The Romans began to think of the Persians as "rude and unlettered," and though contacts between the two empires remained hostile, Pliny, Strabo, and Ptolemy continued to collect information about Persia. Laurence Lockhart, "Persia As Seen by the West," *The Legacy of Persia*, A.J. Arberry, ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1953) 318-330.
luxuriousness, evidence for which was being corroborated by the English travelers, associated Persia, in the English imagination, with images of idleness. Condemnation of the intrusion of luxury into English life involved condemnation of the Persian manner of living (238).

The recovery and translations of the Classics preceded England's foray into Asia. The English and the Dutch, by the end of the sixteenth century, had broken the Iberian monopoly over sea trade to Asia. It was in the sixteenth century that steps were taken in England which led, by the middle of the century, to the establishment of direct contact between England and Persia. England came late to the game and its interests, at this stage, were decidedly economic. In 1535 Richard Chancellor sailed into the White Sea, landing at Archangel and traveling to Moscow where he was received by Ivan the Terrible. Chancellor's journey bore fruit, almost twenty years later, in the formation of the Muscovy Company for the express purposes of trade with Russia, and later Persia. In 1557 the recently formed Muscovy Company appointed Anthony Jenkinson as the Captain-General of a new fleet. A "merchant-adventurer," Jenkinson's travels in the Levant appear to have convinced him that English trade to the Far East must travel through Moscow rather than Mesopotamia. Jenkinson's destination was Cathay, but, forced to abandon the idea of an overland trade route to Cathay and India, Jenkinson, on his second voyage to Russia in 1561, set out for Persia.

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Armed with letters from "the Queenes most excellent Majesty of England unto the great Sophy," Jenkinson traveled to Persia to "intreat friendship and free passage."\textsuperscript{39} Jenkinson's journey was ill-timed. Persia and the Ottomans had recently settled upon a truce and Persian merchants worried that trade between the two countries might be disturbed by Jenkinson. Courtiers furthermore may have believed that Jenkinson was a Portuguese spy. All these factors appear to have soured the initial perception of the newly arrived English merchant. On the day of his first appearance, "I came to the Court, and in lighting from my horse at the Court gate, before my feet toucht the ground, a paire of the Sophies owne shoes...were put upon my feet, for without the same shoes I might not be suffered to tread upon his holy ground, being a Chris:ian" (29). Jenkinson, separated from his followers and accompanied only by his interpreter, was then allowed to approach the Shah

\begin{quote}
comming before his Majestie with such reverence as I thought meete to be used, I delivered the Queenes Majesties letters with my present, which hee accepting, demaunded of mee of what countrey of Franks I was, and what afaire I had there to doe? Unto whom I answered that I was of the famous Citie of London within the noble Realme of England, and that I was sent thither from the most excellent and gracious soveraigne Lady Elizabeth Queene... He then demaunded me in what language the letter was written, I answered, in Latine, Italian and Hebrew: well said he, we have none within our Realme that understand those tongues (29-30).
\end{quote}

Despite his disappointing reception by the Persian Court, Jenkinson, was allowed other

\textsuperscript{39} On the provenance of the word "Sophy," a derivation and corruption of the Safavi, the dynastic name of the Persian rulers, see Chew 210. For Jenkinson's narrative see Richard Hakluyt, \textit{The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques & Discoveries of the English Nation}, vol. 3 (Glasgow: MacLhose, 1903) 29.
audiences where he seemed to have fared better. Although he did not accomplish a trade pact as he had hoped, Jenkinson was sufficiently impressed by the luxuries of the Persian Court to arrange for further trade missions to Persia. Between 1564 and 1581 the Muscovy Company undertook five more voyages to Persia, but the trade despite occasional profit was at length abandoned. The trade’s success had depended on too many factors—the relations between Turkey and Persia, for instance, and the favorable disposition of the Russians towards English trade with Persia (Chew 205-217). It would be left up to the Sherleys, eighteen years later, to make the next approach to Persia.
The Persian's Death:
Anthony Sherley Reaches Persia, 1599

I. The Arrival

On the first of October 1611, after an interval of several months' residence on British soil, the Ambassador from the Shah of Persia was granted an audience with James I. Intricate if not awkward questions had delayed the meeting at Hampton Court. First, doubts had been voiced about the ambassador's proposals; then there was the matter of his outlandish costume—an oriental gown, and a turban to which was affixed a huge golden cross, a gift from Pope Paul V, who had also created the ambassador a Count of the sacred palace of the Lateran with the additional right of legitimizing bastards. For this indulgence, one contemporary noted sardonically, "many thousands at Goa were suitors to him."40

An assiduous watch had been kept on the ambassador's progress even prior to his landing in England. Reflected in the excited commentaries of British intelligencers abroad was a narrative of the ambassador's itinerary—from Moscow to Cracow, to Prague where Rudolph II had bestowed on him the title of Count Palatine of the Holy Roman Empire, to Rome and finally to Spain where, in an echo of his former life, the ambassador had lived for a time under virtual house arrest (Chew 298-307). More than the reception of the ambassador's proposals, or even the presence at his side of his Circassian wife, what appears to have received the most enthusiastic surveillance was that enigmatic "great turban."41

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40 Samuel Purchas, "A briefe Memoriall of the Travells of the Right Hon. Sir. Rob. Sherly Knight," *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimes*, vol. 2 (Glasgow: MacLehose, 1905-7) 377.

41 The English ambassador in Venice had reported in November 1609 that "His [the ambassador's] habit, and half of his train, and most of his language is merely Persian, except a jewelled crucifix given him by the Pope), which he carrieth in the top of his turban." Logan Pearsall Smith, ed., *The Life and Letters of Sir
It was the turban, too, which became controversial in England. Court etiquette would have required, and reportedly the King insisted on, its being doffed before him. The request was unpalatable to the Ambassador, who protested that he had not been required to bare his head before the King of Spain, and further that such homage might discredit him with his sovereign. Negotiations, moreover, may have been stalled by the identity of the Ambassador. James I regarded him as a renegade, calling him a "humbug," and matters were not helped by the fact that the ambassador was Sir Robert Sherley, nominally Protestant and a British subject to boot (Chew 307-311).

We do not know how Robert Sherley resolved his predicament. With the kind of protraction which might be invoked as evidence of the artlessness of reality, the extant reports of his audiences in England pertain to meetings held thirteen years later in 1624. "Sir Robert Sherley and his lady is come hither again out of the clouds, I think," John Chamberlain wrote on the occasion of the envoy's second homecoming, "for I cannot leame where he hath ben." Surviving a series of misadventures, Robert Sherley had returned to Persia, in fact, and then been dispatched again forthwith (Chew 318-323).

Preparing for his audience in 1624, the ambassador faced the same dilemmas that had plagued him more than a decade earlier. The problem of reconciling his consternation and

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the demands of the court fell on the shoulders of John Finett, assistant to Lewis Lewknor, the
master of ceremonies. To Finett the ambassador confided an intention to lay his turban at
the feet of the King. This confidence may have assuaged James's scruples, and so it is that
on January 27 John Finett arrived at court "with three coaches besides the Kings." Conducted
through the Prince's private chamber, "purposely hung for honour to the Ambassador," we
see Robert Sherley in the King's Bedchamber making

his first two respects of Approach with his Turbant on (his whole habite
being Persain) at the third he took it off and laid it at the kings feet and made
his Speech of Entrance kneeling, till the King willing him to arise and cover,
he did, and presenting his Letters of Credence (written in the Persian
Language, and un-understood for want of an Interpreter no where then to be
found in England:) After this, having gracious words, and countenances from
his Majesty, he returned accompanied as he came to the Prince his Lodgings,
where Master Secretary Conway repairing to him, intreated him an hour
with discourse concerning the Propositions of his Negotiation, (which he had
a little before delivered to him, and the Duke in Writing, and so returned to
Saxham (136).

We have another glimpse of the supplicant ambassador, on the 14th of February at
an audience with the heir to the throne, Henry the Prince of Wales. Brought to the presence
we again note that Robert Sherley has not merely adopted the costume of another country
but, apparently, its customs also. As a result, what lingers in memory and impresses Finett
is more the mode of his dress and behavior than the substance of his proposals:

the Ambassador entered, performing all his reverences with his Turbant on,
bowing himself low at his second reverence, and touching the ground with
his right hand and then his head, when come neere the Prince (who stood
uncovered) he fell on his knee, but instantly raised by his Highness, he fell to
the Complementall part, and from that to the earnest of his errand, which

44 Albert J. Loome, ed., Ceremonies of Charles I, the Notebooks of John Finett (New York: Fordham UP,
1987) 9.
offered to the Prince's consideration in writing, he retyrred as he entered...
(137).

Among these "considerations" divulged by Sherley in a letter to James I was an extraordinary offer. For the defence of the Persian Gulf shipping for which he lacked a navy, the Persian king suggested that "ther may be made and carried Gallies in every Shipp one, reddye to be ioyned together at there arryvall in the Persian Gulfe, at such reasonable rates as they may be afforded by any other State." In return for this disassembled fleet, the Shah would guarantee the "Assistance of 20ty or 25 Thousand Men armed and paid, at his owne proper charge" for the promotion of English policy in the area.45

In the reading of the initial contacts in Anglo-Persian relations, the singular oddity of Robert Sherley is enhanced by the scarcity of other "Persian" representations in his wake. Prior to Robert Sherley's first embassy, only one Persian seems to have been seen in England—a nameless ambassador sent by Ala ud-Din Mohammed to the court of Henry III in 1238 in order to seek help against the Mongols, an ambassador of whose reception, save the obvious failure of his proposals, we know nothing. Following Robert Sherley's second mission, with the exception of a Persian merchant improbably named Ali Babba (Loome 203), no Persian landed in England until the beginning of the nineteenth century, as neither country had a diplomatic presence in the other and the little contact that existed was conducted by factors of the East India Company.46

Between two voids, in the first quarter of the seventeenth century, then, we witness a cultural collision in which an invisible alien becomes flesh. Hitherto encountered in Biblical accounts, the classical texts of antiquity, and perhaps the narratives of Venetian and Portuguese traders, the Persian is suddenly incarnate and ubiquitous. Described by travelers, depicted by playwrights, discussed by pamphleteers, he is produced, simultaneously, in fact and on the stage. He may even be observed pacing the streets of London, or, as we shall see, being buried outside the consecrated grounds of Saint Botolph's Bishopgate. To quote Purchas's quaint phrasing, even "his Majestie" has heard from the "remote Persian" (375).

A lost referent, the Persian, disembodied and mythologized, has always been known; but he has never been readily apprehended, so easily comprehensible. Oddly enough, his physical absence, when filled, is occupied by another kind of absence—a performance by an impersonator. The first Persian of rank to reach English shores is an Englishman who must act the part. Robert Sherley's mimetic performance is a determinant moment. The first corporeal Persian, for the English audience, is an Englishman's phantasm.

II. The Historical Background

Robert Sherley's biography is so intertwined with that of his elder brother Anthony, that though I reserve this chapter for the first British mission to Persia led by Anthony, I shall have occasion to discuss both brothers in this and the next chapter. That strange turban and curious proposals—Robert Sherley's performance is a determining moment and an apt beginning. For in his Persian performance we encounter the most striking example of the sort of mimesis which was undertaken by British diplomats in representing their own country.
to Persia and their Persian experience to their English audience. Far more than Anthony Jenkinson and other employees of the Muscovy Company who traveled to Persia and wrote rather pedestrian accounts of their experiences in Persia, it was the Sherleys who reintroduced Persia to England. In analyzing the British "discovery" of the Persian as a corporeal being rather than a referent known only through textual sources, I have a twofold purpose. First, I shall argue, the facts of this encounter became entangled with the fortunes of the disreputable Sherleys. All contemporary English accounts of Persia, in the first quarter of the seventeenth-century, were promulgated either by the Sherleys themselves, by their admirers, or by writers in their pay. These are obscure narratives and I begin by tracing the provenance of each publication and summarizing its contents. Even as they were celebrated in pamphlets and on the stage, however, the Sherleys were opposed or undermined by the British government or powerful rivals. Prior to the Sherleys' mission to Persia, as was discussed in the introduction, the Elizabethans had the vaguest notions of Persia. The Sherlian accounts of Persia, however, did not make the Persian any more concrete. In fact, Sherlian discourse partook of old myths. Furthermore, to justify their blundering embassies and the dangers they posed to the Levant trade, and to rescue themselves from financial ruin, Persia, for the Sherleys, became a theatrical space where the Self could be remade. By describing Persia as a land of facade and artifice, the Sherlian vision did not reduce the distance between the English Self and the Persian Other, but, essentially, replaced the Other with the Self. It is this outcome of the Sherlian venture, the gradual decline of Persia's inhabitants into unreality, that I am calling the Persian's death. This chapter analyzes this
death and the events that justify and foreshadow it in the Sherlian vision—how the Sherlian vision defines the Persian by negation (as the un-Turk) or in historical anachronism (as the Persian of Classical Antiquity) before consigning him to spectral realms.

A curiosity of history, Robert Sherley the turbaned ambassador was a member of a family of Elizabethan rogues. His father, the elder Sir Thomas, was a versatile profiteer and infrequent soldier in Leicester’s army in the Low Countries who in later life invented the idea of baronets, a marketing of purchasable identity destined to become a family obsession.  

He was in desperate financial straits at the time of his son’s first embassy in 1611, and one of the first items on the agenda of the ambassador had been to petition for a stay against the family estate (Shirley 77). Of Sir Robert’s two brothers, Sir Thomas the younger, ashamed in Thomas Fuller’s phrase to see “his brothers worn like flowers in the breasts and bosoms of foreign princes whilst he himself withered upon the stalk,” had embarked on a buccaneering voyage to the Grecian Archipelago which had ended quickly and ignobly in the mutiny of his men and his own captivity. Ransomed with difficulty from Turkish slavery, he was within the year—in 1607—languishing in an English prison for agitating against the Levant trade. During his brother’s first mission, Sir Thomas managed further to darken the gloom of the family reunion by being where he was so often to be in his checkered career—in jail for debts incurred, ironically enough, in the enforcement of a patent he had received for the collection of duties owed to the crown (Davies 240). In the meantime, Sir Robert’s other

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brother, Sir Anthony, *persona non grata*, was a secret agent in the pay of Spain writing
doeful letters to England in the vain hope of rehabilitation (Davies 178, 236). He had
received for his labors and his offer to expose plots against the English monarchy the curious
permission from James I "to remain beyond the Sea some longer time" (Shirley 46).

A colorfully ineffectual desperado in his own right, Sir Anthony had had his
skirmishes with fame. A protégé of the Earl of Essex whose first cousin he would marry, he
had been a Colonel in the expedition sent to the aid of Henry IV of France in 1591,
eventually winning himself a knighthood in the order of Saint Michaels, a commendation
which, conferred indiscriminately, "had fallen so low in esteem as to be known in France as
'the dog collar to fit all dogs'" (Davies 37). His presumption in accepting a foreign order,
nonetheless, caused him to be recalled and committed to Fleet prison where to successive
examinations as to "what oath he took in receiving of the Order... and the manner thereof,"
he provided ambiguous answers (Shirley 8). The dissatisfaction with him ripened into
"sharp reprehensions" and he was for a time in official correspondence pointedly called Mr.
Sherley (9), until he agreed to a compromise, recanting the Oath of his Office, but retaining
his title (Davies 38).

Surfacing on the Continent with his title if not his reputation intact, the career of the
now Sir Anthony foundered, once more, on his ability for being ill-timed and very often on
the wrong side of history. This peculiar penchant may be best summed up by his presence
at Essex's side, not on the Cadiz expedition, but the subsequent and disastrous "Island
Voyage" from which the reputation of his mentor never recovered. Within two months of the

conclusion of the "Island" venture in 1598, Anthony was sent by Essex on a secret mission
to aid Cesare d'Este in his rebellion against Pope Clement VIII. Essex had hoped that by
interfering in the conflagration in the duchy of Ferrara he would lure Spain into defending
the Papal interest thereby depleting Spanish strength. Anthony, however, arriving in time
and in character to find "the Duke giuen ouer to quieter resolutions, and Ferrara yeelded to
the Pope," turned his attention to the Oriental trade routes and set out for Persia as a self-
styled ambassador, and, if we are to believe a future attendant, as a cousin of James I.  
Anthony's six-month stay in Persia from May to December 1599 proved fruitful. He had
gone to Persia purportedly to break the Perso-Spanish alliance, delivering the blow to Spain
that had eluded him in Ferrara. In Persia he appears to have changed his plans and decided
to promote a Perso-Christian alliance against the Turks (Davies 110).

Whatever his motives for going to Persia, in the apologia that he wrote thirteen years
after his journey Anthony is to be seen counseling the Shah on the wisdom of a second front
in his wars with Turkey, persuading the Persian monarch

of the incapacity of the Turke, his corruptions of government, want of
obedience, sundry rebellions, and distractions from any possibility of being
able to make any potent resistance against his Maiesties proceedings, by his
warres in Hungary, which his Maiesty might assure the continuance of; if it
pleased him to unite the Princes Christian to his amity, which he should offer
upon that condition; by which also, hee should receiue one other worthy
benefite for such excelling parts, as hee was most richely abundant in, not to
conclude the true knowledge of them, in that one corner of the world: but
with making these great Princes knowne vnto himselfe, hee should make his


owne worthinesse, like-wise, knowne unto them (82).

On the strength of these arguments, and as the original "mover and persuader" of the plan, Anthony secured himself a vaguely defined ambassadorial post. With him departed for Europe a Husein Ali Beg and a Dominican friar, Nicolao de Mol. All three men may have had ambassadorial rank, though Anthony would later accuse his fellow travelers of interloping upon his privileges. For Shah Abbas, it appears, ambassadorial status was of little importance, the envoy being "partly a messenger, partly a propaganda agent" (Davies 114-118). Anthony's mission departed for Europe with diverse offers of trade and a pact against Turkey, leaving Robert Sherley behind as pledge of their return (Chew 239-265).

Later in life, and after his attention was diverted by fresher plots, Sir Anthony would claim to have endeavored "to give the King [Shah Abbas] that sent him satisfaction" (Shirley 55). This was a resolution in name only. The relationship between the various participants of the Persian mission deteriorated rapidly. En route to Moscow Anthony quarreled with Melo and took him prisoner; the Persians, with whom Anthony had an equally quarrelsome relations claimed that Anthony owed Melo money. The mission wintered in Moscow and proceeded at a leisurely pace through the capitals of Europe. In April 1601 Husein Ali Beg and Anthony scuffled openly in Rome and were granted separated audiences by the Pope. By this time Anthony's patron, Essex, had been executed and Anthony who was forbidden by Elizabeth to return to England, turned to Spain for help, offering his services and suggesting strategies for an invasion of England. In the next month Anthony left Rome, abandoning the Persian mission, ostensibly on a mission from the Pope to Persia. The
Persians had already accused Anthony of theft, and it is unlikely that Anthony ever intended to return to Persia. Anthony's later life, his wanderings in Europe and increasingly desperate straits do not concern us, except that by leaving the Persian mission Anthony essentially abandoned his brother, Robert (Davies 118-122).

Little factual knowledge remains of Robert Sherley's eight-year sojourn as a guest and hostage in Persia. He seems to have entirely escaped the notice of Persian historians, and much of what we know of his station are supplied by two of his letters to Anthony which were also intercepted by English agents. These letters testify to Robert Sherley's perilous condition in Persia. He wrote first from Tabriz on 22 May 1605:

I am soe besids myself with the travailes and wants I am in, and the little hope I have of yor retorne or of anie man from yow, that I am almost distracted from the thought of anie helpe for my deliury out of this Contrey, I doe not altogether blame yow because I knowe yow have likwyse suffered discomodytie in those parts yow live in, though they cannot be compared unto myne, consythering I live amongst turkes, infidells, and enymes to the Christian name... he [the Shah] giveth me still the same meanes he was wont: but God knowes yt is in such a Scurvie fashion that I cannot possible meynteine myself wth yt... I would long since haue sollicited my frends in England for my deliury, but that I knowe yow haue extold the kings name and my usadge heare, even unto the skies, and my dearest love towards you hath eur ben such, that I would rather chose to die coupped up in my mysteres, then make contrarie a report... (Shirley 56-57).

His second letter, a year later, is more lugubrious and quarrelsome, and he complains that his brother's

promisinge to send presents, artiffisers, and Sigr: Angele, and I knowe not howe many els, hath made me be esteemed a common lyar; brother for Gods sake, eather perfoome, or not promis any thinge, becaus in this fassion you make me diskredit myselfe, by reportinge things wch you care not to effecte;... he [the Shah] knowes not wheare [you] are, nor what you have
dune in his seruis, nor the reason why you retorne not unto him;... deere 
brother pardon me if I be plane wth you, the loosars haue free lyberty to 
speake what they leest, by wch I am autorised, hauinge lostt my tyme, and 
am in hazzarde to loose my selfe also; brother I leue [off] to wright; but neuer 
to loue you as myn owne soule (Shirley 58-59).

The Carmelites who reached Persia in 1607 provide further and independent 
verification of Robert's situation. He is, when they encounter him, out of favor with the 
court, badgered to "turn renegade." The pension "the king had formerly been accustomed to 
give him was coming in with difficulty, and only partially: when he had asked permission 
to depart the Shah had refused it to him, saying that he and his brother haç eaten his (the 
Shah's) bread for so long." In these desperate straits, Robert begs the missionary fathers to 
terce on his behalf with the Shah.51

III. The Literary Background

Perhaps because Robert never made his "contrary report," in England the perception 
of the Persian venture parted markedly from the facts. Wild, hyperbolic accounts chronicled 
the success of the mission to Persia, and subsequently, Robert's escapades as general and 
governor of the Shah. In the first quarter of the seventeenth-century four pamphlets, three 
travelogues, and one play recorded the Sherleys' Persian adventure. These were the sole 
English sources of information about contemporary Persia. One, Anthony's apologia, was 
penned by the member of the family; the rest were promulgated by admirers or attendants of 
the Sherley's, or writers in their pay.

 Appropriately, the first account of the Sherleys' Persian mission was a pirated copy

51 The Chronicle of Carmelites in Persia (London: Eyre, 1939) 120.
published anonymously in September 1600. *A True Report of Sir Anthony Shierlie's Journey... to Casbine in Persia* was printed from the reports of "two gentlemen who have followed him the whole time of his travels and are lately sent by him with letters to England." The pamphlet contained Anthony's oration to the Shah and the privileges of worship and trade the Shah had bestowed upon Christians. A copy of the letter of credence the Shah granted to Sir Anthony, printed verbatim, demonstrated the conviviality with which he had been met and the wide powers with which he was invested:

... all you princes that believe in Jesus Christ, know you that he [Anthony Sherley] hath made friendship between you and me; which desire we had also heretofore granted; but there was none that came to make the way and to remove the veil that was between us and you, but only this gentleman; who as he came of his own free will, so also upon his desire, I have sent him with a chief man of mine. The entertainment which that principal gentleman hath had with me is that daily, whilst he hath been in these parts, we have eaten together of one dish and drunk of one cup, like two brethren. Therefore when this gentleman comes unto your Christian Princes, you shall credit him in whatsoever you shall demand or he shall say, as mine own person... (Ross 95).

Apparently published without license, *A True Report* was suppressed on October 23, but may have gained some currency as it was again suppressed in September of the following year (xv).

In 1601, William Parry who had accompanied Sir Anthony to Isfahan and returned by way of Moscow and Vlieeland, published his own *A New and Large Discourse of the Travels of Sir Anthony Sherley, Knight by Sea and ouer Land to the Persian Empire*, a

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52 The *True Report* and William Parry's *New and Large Discourse* are included in E. Denison Ross, ed. *Sir Anthony Sherley and His Persian Adventure* (London: Routledge, 1933).
travelogue which, Ross believes, may have been the original source of True Report (xv).

"To write of the fashions and dispositions of the Germans and Italians were a matter not worth my pains," Parry had concluded, choosing to concentrate on the portions of his journey which provide "matter more novellous" (101)—the "customs and fashions" of the Turks, for example, and far more extensively, the manner of his party's arrival in Persia, and the reception afforded to them. Setting aside the ambiguities of Anthony's ambassadorial rank and contentious relationship with his companions, Parry faithfully recounts the more colorful of the Sherlian adventures, concentrating on scenes which are especially flattering to Anthony. The English travelers, in Persia, are "furnished with such ornaments as befitted a great state" (115). Sir Anthony is taken to kiss the king's portal three times, and a messenger is dispatched to the Sophy "signifying unto him that there was come a Christian (right well attended) to see him by reason of the fame he had heard of him." The Sophy returns expeditiously with twelve hundred Tartar heads upon pikes, and is met outside the gates of the city by the English appareled for the occasion:

Sir Anthony himself in cloth of gold, the upper coat and under; his brother in cloth of silver, the upper and under; six Gentlemen in their lower coats silk, the upper cloth of silver; four of his Cheifest servants in silk under-coats, the upper crimson velvet; the rest of his servants in a pretty kin of bombast stuff, all the upper coats watchet damask; our whole number being six and twenty, which made a very seemly show, the fashion of our apparel somewhat differing from the Persian (116).

Sir Anthony dismounts to kiss the king's foot, but the Sophy "out of special and unusual favor, put his hand between his mouth and his foot, and would not permit him to do it" (117). All together they ride into the city where, within hours, Sir Anthony, who bears the Turks a
double grudge "for being such a mortal enemy to Christ, and for using them so like mortal enemies being Christians," incites the Sophy against their mutual enemy (118).

In the succeeding weeks the king's bounty towards Sir Anthony increases: "once a day at the least he would send for him to confer, and compliment with him: yea, sometimes he must be sent for to come to his bed-chamber at midnight, accompanied with his brother, for that purpose" (119). As the king dispenses more favors, Anthony continues his expostulations, defeating "councillors... obstinately bent against these determinations" (125). At length Sir Anthony is selected ambassador, and Parry's narrative concludes with the journey to Moscow and Anthony's betrayal at the hands of a friar and a Persian subordinate.

Robert had remained anonymous in True Report, while in Parry's pamphlet he was little more than a supernumerary. In 1607, after a six-year lull in Sherlian literature, Robert Sherley a speaking part in Anthony Nixon's The Three English Brothers. Nixon was a pamphleteer commissioned, most Sherley historians agree, by the younger Sir Thomas Sherley who, bedeviled by creditors, might have wished to revive his own flagging fortunes in the shadow of the newfound glory of his brothers (Chew 174). It is in Nixon's pamphlet that we begin to see an explanation for the failure of Anthony's mission which is blamed upon Persian interference. Lamenting a "fault unpardonable in us the English nation... to burie in obliuion the vertues of those of our contry men, whose noble Deedes Deserue for euer to liue upon the tongues of men,"53 Nixon seeks to write of just such men. After delineating the bucaneeering of Sir Thomas the younger, Nixon recounts how Anthony's anti-

Turkish exhortations in Persia are so persuasive that the Shah, "having now nothing in his conceipt, and phantasie, but plots, droughts, and strategms," (D4) resolves on sending a mission to European sovereigns. With a "great man of Persia" to assist him, Anthony sets off for Moscow. The two are thereafter seen intermittently in Nixon's pages, traveling and quarreling across the Continent, until a final breach develops in Rome, and Nixon, giving reign to his imagination continues the story beyond the denouement of Parry's. In Nixon's version, the Persian companion of Anthony's returns home to cast aspersions on the character of the ambassador, but Robert's calm reason and defense of his brother confounds the traitor. He is condemned to death, Robert made "Generall, and possessed the chiefepest place in the King of Persia his warres against the Turke" (K2). Robert's success in these wars is then related, together with his marriage to a cousin germane of the Sophy. Since this marriage, with which Nixon concludes his narrative, two Christian children have been born to the couple, the Sophy presiding as witness at the baptism of one of them. In the interim Robert preaches to the Persian king and "he [Robert] doubteth not, but by Gods assistance and his good perswasions, he may in time be brought to become a Christian" (K6).

A scant three weeks after Nixon's tract was entered in the Stationer's Register (Chew 505), "The Travails of The Three English Brothers," a play written jointly by John Day, William Rowley, and George Wilkins, was submitted for license. It was subsequently printed and performed by the Queen's Men at the Red Bull or Curtain in 1607 (Neville Davis 94). The play testifies to the cross-generic appeal of the story of the Sherleys, and the manner in which reports of their wonderings must have appealed to the public imagination. Robert
emerges as the most engaging of the three brothers. It is also in this play, as I discuss later, that we begin to notice how the Persian is replaced by an impersonator.

"The English Brothers" recalls many of the conventions of the Elizabethan stage and the chronicle play in particular, that artless, often anonymous historical vehicle of the sixteenth-century which mingled classical and popular allusions in a hodge-podge of comic and serious matter.54 "The English Brothers" was a late entry in the format, but true to form it combines factual embellishments and historical anachronism with overtures to courtly romance, low comedy, and a liberal dose of polemics. The dedicatory letter signed by all three playwrights and addressed to "the intire friends to the familie of the Sherleys" admits that "being unable to present the substances, we haue eptomiz'd their large volume in a compendious abstract."55 The play then begins, hopefully enough, with a dumb show in which the elder Sir Thomas bids farewell to his two sons, Anthony and Robert, then shifts abruptly to the Persian court where, to impress the recent arrivals, the Sophy commands:

Weele show the manner of our Persian warres,
Our musique and our conquests. Deuide yee;
The one halfe are Persian, the rest are Turkes (322).

The Persians perform a mock battle and then execute their Turkish prisoners. At the command of Anthony, then, the English reenact a battle of their own but show mercy to the vanquished. This magnanimity impresses the Sophy; his courtiers are discomfited. The Shah praises Anthony: "We do adore thee: your warres are royall" (324). Anthony offers a

54 Felix E. Schelling, Elizabethan Playwrights: A Short History of the English Drama from Mediaeval Times to the Closing of the Theaters in 1642 (New York: Blom, 1952) 111.

patriotic hymn in return, describing his homeland: "An Iland, but a handfull to the world,/
Yet fruitfull as the meedes of paradise;/ Defenc'd with streames such as from Eden runne"
(326). After another exchange of pleasanntries the Shah wonders, "what's the difference twixt
us and you?" (327). Anthony's response mixes diplomatic prudence with missionary zeal:

We live and die, suffer calamities,
Are underlings to sickness, fire, famine, sword;
We all are punisht by the same hand and rod;
Our sinnes are all aike; why not our God? (328)

Before the Sophy can contemplate metaphysics, news arrives of a Turkish deployment,
Anthony is elected "general against the turke," and all set out to fight the common enemy.
During the battle, Robert, guarding a prisoner, quarrels with a Persian courtier,
foreshadowing future troubles. The Shah, in the meantime, bombards Anthony with more
praise, and Anthony proposes a league with Christendom. The courtiers object, but Anthony
cleverly forestalls them and is dully selected by the Shah to represent him to Christendom,
and as his second he is proffered a "Duke Hallibeck," who vows revenge for this slight. A
romantic interlude introduces the audience to the Sophy's niece. She prefers Robert to a
Persian suitor, and, the canvas proving too small for the dramatists, a hapless chorus is
introduced:

Our Storie then so large we cannot giue
All things in acts, we should intreat them live
By apprehension in your judging eyes (348).

These temporal constraints require that Anthony, in Russia, be disgraced and resurrected in
a single scene, and we are next in Rome where the bickering ambassadors are granted an
audience and chided by the Pope. The chorus now transports us to the shores of Turkey,
where Sir Thomas the younger, something of a poor relation for the playwrights, is shipwrecked and taken prisoner off-stage. The outcome of his story, conveniently, provides for the denouement of the plot. For, the scene shifting again, we are on the Persian frontier where the victorious Robert offers to exchange Turkish prisoners for Sir Thomas. Back in Venice, Anthony inexplicably sheds his Persian double and is embroiled in a financial dispute with a Shylockian Jew, Zarith. The play now stalls for comic relief, while William Kemp informs Anthony about the latest theatrical news out of London, including the hoax of "England’s Joy," a play in name only which had been used to lure an audience to the Swan, the advertiser then decamping with the profits.56 Anthony asks Kemp to help in the revelries planned for the evening. The actor, accepting the office, engages a Harlequin for the night’s proceedings, jesting at his expense, and making him appear confused about real versus fictional relationships.

*Kemp.* Now, Signior, how many are you in companie?
*Harlequin.* None but my wife and my selfe, sir.
*Kemp.* Your wife! Why, heare you, will your wife do tricks in publique?
*Har.* My wife can play.
*Kemp.* The honest woman, I make no question; but how if we cast a whores part or courstian?
*Har.* Oh my wife is excellent at that; she’s practised it euer since I married her, ’tis her only practice.
*Kemp.* But, by your leave, and she were my wife, I had rather keepe her out of practise a greate deale (370-371).

Kemp’s play is never staged. At the banquet, Zarith instigates Anthony’s arrest. In Persia

again, we see the Sophy upbraiding Robert for his presumption in offering to exchange
prisoners and making advances to his niece. We are then in Constantinople where Thomas
is shown on the rack, and, returning to Persia for the final time, find a married Robert
restored to favor. The Sophy permits a church to be built and presides over the christening
of Robert's son. Fame replaces the chorus now, admonishing the people of London to
prepare to welcome the Sherleys, and the play ends with perhaps its most marvelous moment.
In a tripartite stage arrangement, the three brothers (Thomas and Anthony having
miraculously escaped from their respective prisons) espy one another from different countries
with the aid of fame's "prospective glasse" and "seme to see one another and offer to
embrace" (404).

The subject of the Sherleys' entertainment by foreign potentates was not, evidently,
exhausted by the efforts of the three playwrights, and neither, it seems, were the
machinations of the Sherleys. In 1609, on the basis, he would claim, of information provided
to him by a Master Moore, an agent in "ordinary Persian garb" dispatched by Robert, who
was then in Poland, no less a writer than Thomas Middleton would publish a pamphlet
whose tone and content may be gleaned from its title:

Sir Robert Sherley, sent Ambassadour in the Name of the King of Persia, to Sigismond
the third, King of Poland and Swecia, and to other Princes of Europe.
His Royal entertainment into Cracovia, the chiefe Citie of Poland, with his pretended
Comming into England.
Also, the Honourable praises of the same Sir Robert Sherley, given unto him in that
Kingdome, are here likewise inserted.57

Behind this work too lurks the specter of the younger Sir Thomas Sherley, as Middleton's

tract exists in two versions, the first bearing an unattributed dedicatory epistle to the elder Sir Thomas, and the second, signed and dedicated to the younger whose exploits are expressly linked to Robert's. This change has led Chew to surmise that "the most likely explanation... is that Middleton dedicated the pamphlet to the father but that the son, who was probably behind its publication, insisted upon the substitution of a dedication to himself" (304). The younger Sir Thomas, who had had a weighty part in Nixon, and a secondary but important role in "The English Brothers," must settle in Middleton for perfunctory acknowledgment. Anthony has disappeared completely from the scene and Middleton's is thus the first work to focus entirely on Robert Sherley.

It is his happy office, Middleton claims in the second signed version of Sir Robert Sherley, to welcome Sir Robert home as the world did the return of Sir Thomas. Praise of one is commendation of the other, and "you well may be own brothers in birth, that are so near kin to one another in actions of fame and honor." Briefly summarizing the merits of travel and traveling Englishmen, the author settles on the subject of the piece "this worthy gentleman Sir Robert Sherley, of whose adventures, dangers, and various fortunes, both good and bad, to draw a true picture in the right and lively colors, would as easily feed men's eyes with gazing admiration as the large pictured tables of others have filled them with wonders" (306). Next, Middleton summarizes the honors bestowed upon Robert in Persia by the Sophy who, "confessing and worshipping Christ," seeks Christian aid "against so barbarous, so ambitious, and so general an enemy" (307). Hence, Robert's progress to Poland.

The precise nature of Robert's negotiations in Poland are withheld from the reader
as not being "fit that very common and popular ear should stand listening to the private business of princes," (307) but of the magnificence of Robert's reception we are given ample evidence. Middleton provides an anagram on the name of Robert Sherley, and then depicts Mercurius resigning his office to Robert so that "hell shall be conquered and that hell hound brood of Mahomet be utterly confounded" (309). The anagram, then, is partly deciphered, the Polish court with one voice sings a panegyric to Robert, and England complains to "Persia for her Sherley" (311-313). The manners and customs of the Persians are then described, beginning with the Persian's religion and his monarchy, which is as stable as it is severe:

the golden line of them is drawn out of one family, that custom amongst the Persians never as yet suffered change or alteration; and so severe their laws are in effect, to the punishing of all rebellious treasurable and disobedient people, that whosoever be he that is found repugnant in the least demeanor to the will and affection of the king, he is presently seized upon by the tormentors, his head and arms chopped off, and with his detested body thrown into some common field, without either grave or covering (316-317).

The Persian is shown to "detest sterility" so acutely as to approve the practice of polygamy for the strict purpose of "the fruitful propagation of the empire," the kings going so far in their encouragement of this practice as to reward couples who bear children yearly. The Persian child-rearing tactics are rigorous: "From five years old to four and twenty the male children practice to ride great horses, to throw the vulnerable and inevitable dart, to shoot in arbalists or long steel bows, and all such manly exercises which shames many other Christian countries, and many justly upbraid them of effeminacy and laziness." His victuals and sartorial habits are then presented to be just as Spartan, and then a sonnet in Latin "composed
by a scholar worthily reputed in that country, one Andreas Loeaechius" brings matters to a
close (316-317).

"Greater tales are likely hereafter (and that very shortly)," Middleton had predicted.
Two years after the publication of Sir Robert Sherley, in 1611, the Persian ambassador's
arrival in England coincided with the fortuitous printing of John Cartwright's The Preachers
Travels, whose title page promised, inter alia, "a true relation of Sir Anthonie Sherleys,
entertainment there [in Persia]: and the estate that his Brother M. Robert Sherley liued in
after his departure for Christendome." More virulently anti-Turkish, but a somewhat more
sober presentation of the Sherleys, Cartwright's travelogue may not have been the sort of
report Middleton had in mind. The Anglican parson, traveling probably for pleasure, had left
Scanderoon in 1599 and crossed overland into Persia, which he traversed more thoroughly
than most of his predecessors. The publication of Cartwright's narrative more than a decade
after the fact, Chew argues, may have been timed deliberately to benefit the Sherleys, whose
adventures and aims the author admired (50). Cartwright's narrative is the only
contemporary publication which alludes to the eclipse of Robert's fortune after his brother's
departure, noting, in however diluted form, the difficulties the ambassador had experienced
in Persia:

All these [Robert and his companions] at first were very kindly intreated by
the King, and received large allowances; but after two yeares were fully
expired, and no newes of that great and important Embassie; and the King
perceiued that Mahomet the great Turke beganne now to haue him in
jealousie, and that the whole warre was to lie vpon his owne necke, without
any helpe from the Christians, he began to frowne on the English... (70).

Soon, however, Robert reemerges in the Shah's favor, managing to obtain "of the King freedome of conscience for all Christians throughout his Dominions: allowing also his house, to be the onely harbour and receite for all poore Christians that trauaile into those parts" (70). That the Shah, "professed enemie to the name of our blessed Saviour," would serve as godfather to Robert's child "is more fitte for a stage, for the common people to wonder at then for any mans priute studies," but the reverend must vouchsafe for the contributions of the Sherley brothers,

the Embassies of Sir Anthony Sherley, and also of M. Robert his brother are of great importance, & that a combination of so great forces together would soone haue deliered many poore Christians of their miseries, the world of ignominy, & mankind of that monster of Turkish tyranny, that hath too long raigned and laid the earth desolate (71).

In the promotion of the family name, Robert Sherley was more than an unwitting beneficiary of his brothers' largess. Having provided Middleton with information (if not an actual Master Moor) in the modern equivalent of advance publicity, Robert also brought with him from Madrid to England on his first mission in 1611 a copy of Anthony's apologia, *Sir Anthony Sherley His Relation of his Travels into Persia* which was published two years later. We may speculate, in passing, whether it was fraternal duty that motivated Robert to aid in the publication of his brother's manuscript. The two past and present Persian ambassadors, meeting after a lapse of a decade in Madrid, had had a vexatious reunion; their interests, at this time, were inimical. Robert had given shelter to Anthony, who was by then an impecunious pensioner portrayed in the dispatches of Francis Cottington, the English envoy in Spain, as "extreme poor both in purse and reputation" (Shirley 77). It was inevitable that
the two should have a rupture. Anthony had severed his connections with England, while Robert, having familiar troubles—the Spanish government temporizing while the king had "no great opinion of his wisdom for coming with a turban upon his head" (72)—was eager to preserve his ties to his native country and frequently tested the waters with Cottingham. It was to Cottingham that a distressed Robert turned with the now familiar pattern of another intercepted letter of Sir Anthony's. Cottingham would inform Lord Salisbury on 10 April 1611 that he found the ambassador,

much perplexed, and troubled and in such sort as he was hardly able to speak to me, at length said these words, Oh Mr. Cottingham, I am betrayed where I am most trusted, whereupon desiring him to explain himself, he gave me a letter out of his bosom, directed unto his brother Anthony, wiling me to open it, which I did, and found it was from Secretary Prada, (whose hand I am well acquainted withall,) and to this effect,—'I have given an account to his Majesty of your Plot, by which the Ambassador your brother may be secured from proceeding with his intention of going into England... The Ambassador fears they will find some means to poison him... (75-76).

Sir Anthony's treachery notwithstanding, Robert safely reached England where the discomforts of home must have persuaded him that the consolation prize for evading his brother's clutches might be reincarnation in his prose. As he is assigned to Anthony's supporting cast in His Relation, Robert seems to have caused to be appended to the narrative a curious preface which, among other disagreements with the text proper, assigns the leadership of the mission to Persia to both brothers. Curiosity about the mission to Persia and the Shah's favorable treatment of Robert Sherley even after the failure of his brother's embassy "for want of due correspondence in instrument," the anonymous author of the preface avers, has compelled a "gentleman of some understanding" to converse with the
Persian ambassador recently arrived from his grand tour:

Wherein, al-be-it hee [the gentleman] receiued good satisfaction in diuers particularities; yet, because the questions, occasioning such discourse, were but incidently moued; and (by many occasions that happened) their conferences were often interrupted: On the entreaty of the said Gentleman, for the better satisfying of himself, and such others of his friends, as might bee desirous, out of their curiosity, to understand the whole progresse, dependance, and prosecution of the said voyage into Persia, hee obtained of the Persian Embassadour, a copy of this discourse, penned by his Brother Sir Anthony Sherley (as it seemeth) since his returne out of Persia...

Robert promises a narration of his own affairs; in the meantime, in perhaps the sole instance of its kind, the preface proffers the book at hand, in the anticipation of another yet to be written by its conveyor:

To these labours his Brother, Sir Robert Sherley himself as time and opportunity shall give him leave, hath promised some addition of his owne endeavours: which being not yet in such readiness, as his friends haue wished and desired; This discourse being but the former part...

In his own words, then, Anthony relates how, casting for an alternative in Italy after his Ferrara disappointment, at the urgings of the Earl of Essex whom he had chosen as "the pattern of my civil life" he embarked for Persia. At various stages of the journey, thereafter, Anthony ponders God's designs or the burden of leadership, escaping from his enemies under mysterious if not mystical circumstances. It is not, however, Anthony's intention to relate the commonplace of everyday travel, or to skip along the surface of things:

I did not behold with the eies of a common Pilgrime, or Merchant; which passing onely by goodly Citties and Territories, make their judgement vpon the superficiall appearance of what they see: but as a Gentleman bred vp in such experience, which hath made me somewhat capable to penetrae into the perfection and imperfection of the forme of the Sate, and into the good and ill Orders by which it is governed (10).
These "penetrations" into the invisible realms, unfortunately, administer the coup de grace to the work. The narrative of the journey is interspersed with platitudes, elaborately phrased and in italics, on such matters as the conduct of princes, the function of ambassadors, the relation of nations. More than half the work is devoted to a plodding history of the reign of Shah Abbas. The informant appears to be the Sophy himself, for whom Sir Anthony seems to have felt a special affinity.

Robert Sherley's thirteen-year absence from England, during which time he sailed to Persia and, returning, lingered hopelessly in Spain, elicited little by way of fame for the envoy or his brothers. Staving personal disasters, Robert Sherley's elder brothers were too busy to court publicity or to bother with pamphleteering. The younger Sir Thomas sought futilely to protect the family estate from creditors. Sir Anthony, poor, unemployed, obstreperous, and scheming against his younger brother, is memorably preserved in a dispatch of Cottington's: "The poor man [Anthony Sherley] comes sometimes to my house, and is as full of vanity as ever he was, making himself believe that he shall one day be a great Prince, when for the present he wants shoes to wear, the two brothers are much fallen out, and both by word and writing do all the harm they can, in defaming each other..." (Shirley 87). In 1616, nevertheless, there would be published a small book comprising the letters of Thomas Coryat. A wit and professional fool who had described his earlier pedestrian feats of travel in Coryats Crudities, Hastily gobled up in five Moneths Travels and two pamphlets, Coryat had set out for the East in 1612. A year later, somewhere on the Persian frontier, he crossed paths with Robert Sherley,
Robert Sherley is traveling in state. Out of India he has brought with him as presents for the Sophy two elephants and eight antelopes. After a night's entertainment the travelers part ways with Coryat, hoping for emolument from the Sophy, as he is "a iocond Prince, that he will not be meanlie delighted with diuers of my facetious hieroglyphicks" (17).

The dearth of favorable news and the years of disappointment in Spain were grandiloquently atoned for during Robert Sherley's second and last mission to England in 1624. Samuel Purchas was compiling his Hakhuytus Posthumus when he met the ambassador; genuinely impressed, Purchas so enthusiastically endorsed Robert Sherley that in the view of one commentator the compiler may be chiefly responsible for the persistence of the "Sherley Myth." In the final tribute to be published in Robert Sherley's lifetime Purchas writes of how, failing to procure an autobiographical account from the envoy, "having late acquaintance and hee much weightie businesse, which hee hath been forced to attend farre from the Cittie, I rather thought fit to insert what by his humanitarian and conference, I learnt onely at one dinner" (374). His unbought compliments are as laudatory as Middleton's

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Amongst our English Travellers, I know not whether any have merited more respect than the Honorable, I had almost said Heroike Gentlemen, Sir Anthony & Sir Robert Sherleys. And if the Argonauts of old, and Graecian Worthies, were worthily reputed Heroicall for Europaean exploits in Asia: what may wee thinke of the Sherley-Brethern, which not from neerer Graecian shoares, but from beyond the European World... have not coasted a little way (as did those) but pierced the very bowells of the Asian Seas and Lands, unto the Persian Centre... (374).

With discorsenting frankness, and perhaps some latitude, Purchas describes Robert Sherley's policy as "kindle[ing] a fire betwixt the two most puissant of both Asian and Mahumetan Princes... whereby Mahumetans have killed each others, whiles Christendome might have gotten the Golden Fleece, the usual fruit of peace" (374-375). Of Robert's credentials Purchas wonders, "who ever since the beginning of things and men, hath beene so often by Royall Employment sent Embassdour to so many Princes, so distant in place, so different in rites" (375)? A list of sovereigns with whom Robert has confabulated is followed, then, by the continents he has traversed; his endeavors likened to "a noble attempt to goe meet the Sunne" (375-376). Returning to the Turkish issue, Purchas informs the reader of how the Persian, taught the use of artillery, "so that they which at hand with the sword were before dreadfull to the Turkes, now also in remoter blowes and sulfurian Arts are growne terrible" (376). In a "renowned battle," of one hundred and sixty thousand Turkish soldiers only two thousand survived to flee, a battle in which "our Noble Countryman received three wounds, as a triple testimony of his love and service to Christendome" (376). In Robert's twenty-year careers all "Turkie hath groaned, in which she hath lost two millions of her unhallowed children" (374-375), Robert Sherley confirming this fantastic figure in a marginal annotation. In conclusion, of the numerous recommendations by "Princes Real and Royall," many of
which, including one from the Pope Purchas has personally examined, he chooses to offer
a copy of the grant by Emperor Rudolph as, "the imperiall Grant (to me of more respect and
validity) I have here delivered verbatim, translated out of the Originall Latine, that his noble
and great worth might by noblest and greatest testimony bee acknowledged" (377-378).

IV. Persians, Turks, and the Sherleys

What is noteworthy about the British "rediscovery" of Persia is that the facts of this
encounter became entangled with the fate of a single family. As we have seen, purported
eyewitness accounts of Persia were conjured and promulgated either by the Sherleys, who
took a conscious part in the perpetuation of their own mythology, by their attendants and
admirers, or by writers in their pay. The Sherleys presumed to represent the British
government; it regarded them as a disreputable lot. Thus even while the Sherleys'
accomplishments were being publicly celebrated, their aims were actively undermined by the
crown or by subsidiary but powerful groups. These objections, proffered with varying
degrees of earnestness, would haunt the brothers throughout their careers. Typical of the
English government's view of Anthony Sherley, for instance, is a letter Sir Robert Cecil
wrote to Lello on 17 October 1600, apprising him of the facts of Anthony's departure from
England and his activities since:

First, you must know, that he went out of this Countrey, without any manner
of allowance from her Maty, nether was she ever, since his departure,
consenting to any purpose or proiet of his, onely upon his arrywall in Persia,
he wrott many lies to his fathr and freends what wonders were done by him
there, insinuating that that Princes amity might be of great use to the Queen,
and that himself was of so great credytt with him, as he could undertake to
settle great security and commodity to our merchants; Her Maty considering
first the state of those Contries, and the way for traffiq, wch is propounded,
to passe through Moscovy, dyd not onely thinck the matter in it self altogether inconvenient, but dyd also forsee how dangerous it might have ben to her Merchants trade with the Grand Sigr yf any such fond practise, should have ben sett on fote. And therefore she dyd presently cause all his freends here to reproove him for his folly and vanity, notwithstanding, before such would could come unto him he hath taken upon him to be an Ambassadr to all the Princes of Europe, to unite themselfs in League with the Persian, for wch purpose he cam thorough Muscovy... and take the audacity to write to he Queene for leave to come to her, assuring her that after he had ben with the Emperr he would bring her from the Persian, a Grant of all Previledges and Immunities for her subjects yf they would trade there, and to that ende desired liberty to come unto her. Hereupon her Maty hath increased her former displeasure towards him so far, in respect of this presumption, as by no meanes she will suffer him to come into the Kingdome... (Shirley 30-31).

Robert rarely suffered such violent rebukes; both James I and Charles I looked upon his schemes with sympathy, and may have sought in them income for the crown (Stevens 119). On "the business of Persia," from Newmarket in 1624 the king would write to the East India Company that "Our pleasure is that you take into your serious consideration and care both the furtherance and manner of settleing of it, as may bee best for the weale of our Kingdome" (Ferrier 82). The royal magnanimity is best evinced in a curious refraction of fiction in life; it would be Henry the Prince of Wales (not the Sophy of Nixon's apocrypha) who would stand as godfather to the only son born to Robert Sherley and his Circassian wife, Teresa (Chew 314). But the impracticality of Robert's proposals could not be satisfactorily addressed. Nor would he ever manage to countermand the Levant traders or the fledgling East India Company whose very existence he endangered, and whose lasting enmity he managed to incite. Arguing in 1612 that "the goods brought for Persia by the Persian Gulf will cost a half part more than it will by the way of Turky," the directors of the East India Company peremptorily dismissed his proposals in 1624 as "not a new proiecte, but ould
warre put into another mould." They further called into question the legitimacy of his representations "wether Ambassador or not, it concerns not the Company who have noe need of Sir Robert Sherley's helpe, neither desire to have anythinge to doe with him" (Ferrier 79,83). Reflecting common sentiment, eleven years after Cecil's communication with Lello, John Chamberlain doubted the feasibility of the project with less rancor but equal sobriety, "Master Robert Sherley as ambassador from Persia hath had divers audiences, but I doubt his projects are to little purpose, for the way is long and dangerous, the trade uncertain, and must quite cut of our trafficke with the Turke" (McCline 313).

The project of representation of the Other is but a small leap from a dream of possession, Greenblatt suggests (Possessions 121). Much the same dynamic is at work in Sherlian Persia. The political exigencies which defined and controlled the British rediscovery of Persia resulted in a discourse which obscured the Persian subject. Persia is illuminated, yet it shall lose dimension. Plucked from the obscurity of ancient texts, the Persian subject is momentarily re-animated to be hollowed and effaced. For even if we set aside for the moment the representational practices of Anthony and Robert Sherley, to read the Shelian authors Cartwright, Parry, Day, Midleton, Nixon, or Purchas on Persia is to enter a spatial-temporal fog where the Persian is an analog for the Englishman or an antonym for the Turk. These tensions and contradictions are subsumed in convoluted narratives where Sherlian deception (deliberate obfuscation and anachronism) is not clearly distinguishable from self-deception, where private enterprise may be introduced as national accomplishment, and mercantile sentiment is conflated with religious motivation. Wavering
between narration and polemics about Persia and admiration and detestation of the Persian, the result is not so much revelation as an obliteration of the Persian.

In part because even the Sherleys and their supporters could never fully justify the temerity of blundering embassies or the dangers they posed to the Levant trade, they would choose instead to attack the very legitimacy of that trade. Most of the writers memorializing the Sherleys, for instance, note with opprobrium the rapacity of the Turk, especially the devastating consequence for Christendom of Turkish control over Christian peoples. The Persia of the Sherleys, on the other hand, is defined, chiefly, in juxtaposition to Turkey. Thus, in the early narratives of Sherlian Persia, the Persian is described not positively, for what he is, but negatively, for what he is not.

The opposition between Turkey and Persia is so explicit in Anthony Nixon's *The English Brothers* as to be typographically maintained. Nixon whose pamphlet was probably commissioned by the Sherleys traces the travails and adventures of each brother, pausing mid-narrative to deliver twin orations on the manners and fashions of the Persians and the Turks.

Of the Turks he avers:

The naturall Turke hath his originall in Scithia, not farre from the Caspian Seas, and they are, haue ben euer the most inhumane of all other Barbarians. Their manner of liuing is for the most part unciuill, and vitiuous. For their vices, they are all Pagans, and Infidels, Sodomites, and Liars. They are a very scornefull people, and their pride is so great as it is not possible to be described. Next that, followeth their crueltie, in which their Kings exceed, Nero, Calliggula, or any other Tyrant whatsoever. They take pleasure in bloody delights, and to see men put to death... (D4).

Six years earlier for William Parry the attendant of Anthony Sherley's who had returned to England and published *A New and Large Discourse*... (1601), the behavior of the Turk, "in
point of civility (besides that they are damned infidels and sodomitical Mahomets [Muhammadans]) do answer the hate we Christians do justly hold them" (107). The Turkish menace haunts Christendom in Samuel Purchas's *Haklyytus Posthumus* (1624) (376). Cartwright, the peripatetic reverend who would eventually Robert Sherley on the Persian frontier, finds in Hungary,

> nothing but triumphs ouer Christ, & skorners of his religion: insolencies and violences against the professors: extorctions and oppressions vpon their goods: rapines and murderings vpon the very soules of their children, a case to be wailed with teares of bloud by all Christian harts that know it: hearing the oneley anchor & stay of their soules (our blessed Sauior) daily derided & blasphemed by the pride of the Turks (75).

Turkish violence and brutality is aimed at Christian society, threatening its survival, as every year Christians are required to

> pay a tribute also of soules to wicked Mahomet, to haue their dearest children both sonnes and daughters snatcht out of their parents bosornes, to be brought vp in his impious abominations, & to be employed (after they are so brought vp) in murdering their fathers and mothers that begat them... (76).

In its anti-Turkish sentiments the Sherleian diplomacy could rely on a measure of public sympathy and a centuries' old corpus of crusading literature.\(^6^1\) To supplant the established routes and markets of the Levant for the uncertain traffic of Persia required more than a cataloguing of Turkish sins, however. Alarmist though they are, the call in the Sherlian texts is for arms, not isolationism. The palliating factor is testimony to the general decay in Turkish society, and the precariousness of its hold upon the Holy Land and its other

Christian dominions. Corrupted and corrupting, Turkey is an inviting target.

In Anthony Sherley's own *Relation* (1613), the Turkish dissolution Anthony summarizes for the Sophy in their numerous conferences is observed in full on his journey to Persia. Government authority is diminished. The fortunate are weighed down by the burden of their wealth, "buying their authority of the Prince, like Merchants, must make their profite of the people vnder their charge" (13). The Janissaries terrorize the countryside, and in the meantime martial discipline suffers (14-15). The Turkish yoke upon Christian Cyprus, though oppressive and barbarous, is maintained so precariously that the liberator, with little effort, would win immediate profit as well as eternal salvation:

Notwithstanding, the present power (I meane resident in that Iland, which is the instrument of that great tyranny) is so small, that if the little remnant of people, which is left there had courage; or if they haue courage, had also armes; or if the Princes Christian had but a compassionate eye turned vpon the miserable calamity of a place so neere them, rent from the Church of God, by the vsurpation of Gods and the worlds great enemy: and maintained more by the terrour, which his name hath stroke into some truely; into others no more... I do not see, in that small judgement which my experience hath giuen mee, but the redemption of that place and people were most facile (being but foure thousand Turkes in the whole Iland) and the glory would bee immortall to the Actor... (6-7).

Weakened also is the Turkish grip on the Holy Land, which has Parry calling for intervention:

...we passed from Aleppo through the heart of the Turk's country, the strength whereof is very small, whereof the Christian Princes are ignorant, as it seems, for if they knew it, as we do, that with all circumspection observed it, doubtless they would with no great difficulty utterly suppress him, or so extremely distress him that they would constrain him to embrace the Christian faith, and rest at their devotion, or at least remove his seat from the Holy Land and parts adjacent (Ross 109).
Nixon, in explaining the reason for Anthony's forlorn years of exile, writes of the erstwhile ambassador's desire to "restore Religion to those unhappy conquered Kingdomes by the Turkes, where now the holy churches and sanctified Temples of our Saviour are changed to be idolatrous places of the blasphemous synagogue of Mohamet." Providing his own estimation of Turkish deployment, Nixon, who could have benefited from the personal testimonial of the younger Sir Thomas, chooses instead to paraphrase Parry. This reliance upon precursory textual evidence is an example of the cross-generic appeal (i.e., from travelogue to pamphlet, to play) of a vision which gradually attains the weight of a tautology.

They that haue passed through the heart of the Turks Countrey, report the strength thereof to be very small, and that if the Christian Princes knew as much as they do, that in their Trauels with all circumspection observed it, doubtlesse they would with no great difficultie utterly suppress he him, or so at the least, put him to the worse, that they would constraine him to embrace the Christian faith, and rest at their devotion: or else remoue his feate from the holy land, and partes adjacent (J).

The Turkish predatory instincts may strike in any direction. The Persian frontier testifies to the Ottoman's indiscriminate barbarity. Farther the traveler discovers in Persia a land of plenty, but his first glimpse of Persia is of a nation suffering in much the same way as the Christian states. "That common enemy of Christ and Christians (the Turk)," Thomas Middleton testifies in Sir Robert Sherely (1609), "lift[s] up his sword continually (for the most part) not only against the Polaek, the Hungarian, Bohemian, and other princes of Christendom, but also [thirsts] after the rich Empire of Persia" (306-307). Reaching Tabriz, once the capital of Persia, Cartwright recites the atrocities committed in that city by a succession of Turkish invaders—the deceit of Selymus in 1514, the free rampage Solyman
granted his soldiers in 1535, and Amurat his minions in 1585 for which "a man had need of a very learned & eloquent pen, to set forth" (45).

Polemical though he is, and fulsome in his condemnation of Christian enslavement, Cartwright is also, interestingly enough, the one traveler most likely to travel with at least one eye on the shop. Once he leaves the Turkis'h frontier, the ambulatory reverend finds a land of abundance, its opportunity untapped. Of the Caspian sea region he observes:

a very profitable trade might be planted, being seauen daies sayling from Astracan to Gheilan: the gains of which passage is as I have credibly heard say both of Persians and Armenians fifty in hundred. ... I know the voyage will be chargeable, yet the benefit will quite the charge, were the passage safe and secure down the river, and had we barks of our building but of fifty or three score tuns, which might by reason of the great store of timber in those parts be easily builded (54-55).

He continues to prescribe the goods that might be beneficially traded:

The commodities to be found at Gheilan & Casbin are silks of all sorts of colors, both raw & wrought, and that in such quantity, that a merchant may bestow thirty or forty thousand pounds yearly, as also all manner spices & drugs, pearls diamonds, and rubies, likewise carpet of divers sorts... . In exchange of which commodities, we are to carry thither tin & copper and brassel, as also catsies for the common people, broade cloathes for the merchants, & better sort of people, blacke cloathes for womens garments; good chamlets & veluets died in graine... (55).

But the incongruous conflation of missionary zeal and mercantile reconnaissance are not Cartright's province alone. In Anthony Sherley's apologia the foremost reasons for his travels to Persia as expounded to him by the Earl of Essex are:

First, the glory of God; to which, his excellent religious mind was euermore devote. Then, if God would not please to choose me as a worthy instrument to that great end; yet by making a profitable experience of my seeing those Countries, limiting upon the King of Spaines vniail parts, and answering to her Maisties Merchants trades in Turky, and Moscouy; and besides, being
not unlikely but some parts might have been found fit for the Indian Navigation, then principiated in Holland, and muttered of in England; it might prove a subject to extract great and good matter out of, for the honor of her Majestie, and the particular good of our Country (4-5).

Foreshadowing this tempering of a crusader's narrative with a merchant's idiom, the very act of crossing the boundaries of Turkey into Persia is generally equated with the attainment of peace and the subsidence of fear. Anthony, leaving Turkish territory, frail and sick, experiences "continuall terrouer during those thirty daies in which we wandered with that company of blind Pilgrimes through the Desert" (27). Persia, when reached, is "better inhabited, better governed, and in better obedience, and affection" than Turkey (36). Cartwright finds the Persian frontier "ruinated " but tranquil with "euery man at his labour, & neighbour with neighbour going from one towne to another, which bred much contentment, and made vs wonder at the great peace & tranquilitie, which the commons of Persia liue in aboue the commons of Turkie" (47). As soon as Parry enters Persia "we thought we had been imparadised, finding our entertainment to be so good and the manner of ther people to be so kind and courteous far differing from the Turks" (Ross 115). The dichotomy between Persia and Turkey, the Persian and the Turk, are elaborated bluntly by Nixon.

Sir Anthony after his long and wearie journeis, at last entered the King of Persia his Countrey, hauing his brother Robert Sherly in his company, who still continued with him in all his travels, a kind and naturall partaker of all his fortunes. He found his entertainment good, the climate healthfull, the soyle fruitfull; and full of pleasure; the people civill, and very gentle; farre differing from the nature of the Turkes, whose Countrey hee had already passed: Insomuch that hee wondred with himselfe, that being so little difference (as there is) betweene them in climate, there should be so great diuersitie in condition (C4).
Despite their repeated attempts to depict the Persian as the non-Turk and therefore an acceptable partner, a dilemma perplexes the Sherlian witness almost immediately after the euphoria of arrival in Persia. The Persian, like the demonized Turk, is a Moslem who may even oppress his Christian compatriots. As he ponders the relative advantages of the Persian commoner over his Turkish counterpart, Cartwright's idyll is spoiled by his discovery of "the ruins of many faire Christin Churches..., which Cosroe King of Persia destroyed, who being in a battell discomfited, fought betweene him and Heraclius the Emperour, reaked his teene and malice on the Christian Chruches throughout his dominions" (47). Of all the authors, nevertheless, Cartwright is the sole witness to correctly predicate the sectarian differences between Shia Persia and Sunni Turkey on the contentious issue of the right of succession to the Prophet (52). The other authors approach the question of religion more tentatively, de-emphasizing or avoiding it altogether. Anthony, whose Persia is in many ways the biography of the Sophy, speculates that the Shia sect is, for the King, a political pretext rather than an article of faith (74). Nixon, in his condemnation of Turkish nefariousness manages with gusto to merge anti-Moslem prejudice with anti-semitism ("the blasphemous synagogue of Mohamet"), but must acknowledge grudgingly that the Persian reveres this same "Mohamet." He decides, sensibly enough, "to leave their [the Persian's] religion to themselves." John Day and Thomas Middleton, on the other hand, avoid a discussion of Islam by taking refuge in anachronisms and false historicity. In Day's play "The English Brothers" (1607), the Persian's religion indecipherably combines polytheism and a form of Zoroastianism simplified to the level of sun worship. When the Persian courtiers object to
Anthony's proposals to the Sophy, Anthony's pedagogy teaches them to worship God rather than His creations.

_Hallibecck._ What can this English Christian say that they receive
Of gift, of comfort, riches or of life
Vnto the deity that he adores,
That we enjoy not from that glorious Lampe?
_Sir Anthony._ Enough to make a Pagan, if a man
Of ynderstanding soule, turne Christian.
_Hall._ Our God giues vs this light by which we See.
_Sir Ant._ And our God made that light by which
You See:
Then who can this deny, if not a Turke,
The maker is Still better than his worke (337)?

In the same vein, in Middleton's _Sir Robert Sherley_, where Mercury hopes that "hell shall be conquered and that hell hound brood of Mahomet be utterly confounded" (309), the author informs the reader that the Persian's religion "which they have obserued of old, doing worship and reverence in their upright zeal to the sun, moon, Venus, fire, earth, water, and winds, erecting neither altars nor statues, but in open fields offering their sacrifices, which sacrifices were superstitious, and full of idle ceremonies..." (315-316). The problem of Islam reaches a climax of sorts with Middleton. The Persian monarch, "confessing and worshipping Christ," dispatches Robert Sherley to Poland in the hope of "Christian confederacy against Mahomet and his adherents" (307, 315).

The alignment, the spiritual kinship between the Persian and the Turk for which the witness is ill-prepared, invariably results in contradictory reassessments of the Persian. More benignly than most, Nixon, taking his cue from Parry, concedes that despite odd lapses, a change has come over the Persian: "they are a people for the most part unlearned, ignorant
in all kind of liberall Science, yet they are good warriours, politicke and valiant, obseruing
order, and discipline, they haue heretofore beene held a people fierce and uncuiull, little better
than the Turkes; But of late they are grown very courteous, and respectiue onto strangers, by
whole conversacion they have much bttred their manners and conditions" (D3). Others are
less sanguine. Anthony detects in his favorable reception in Tabriz, not hospitality, but a hint
of the Persian's sycophancy, "... wee were well vsed, more by the opinion, which they had,
that the King would take satisfaction by vs, then by their owne humors; being all ill people
in themselues; and onely good by the example of their King, and their exceeding obedience
vnto him" (28-29). Parry himself must accept that to satisfy his lust, the Persian may buy
female slaves, and should one "prove false to him, he may by their law kill her, as he may
a dog in England" (122). Cartwright who frequently invokes an image of the Persian as the
non-Turk, cannot ignore his misgivings about the Persian, nor perhaps forget that initial
shock of the ruined churches. For although the Persian has created "a sect or superstition"
different than the Turk, he shares with the Turk the same Prophet "in whom was no truth"
(52). Thus, in addition to his neighborly and valorous attributes, the Persian is "arrogant,
seditious, deceitfull, and very vnquiet" (63).

The contradictory impulses in Cartwright's depiction of the Persian may be
epitomized in his vacillation between condemnation and commendation of the Sophy
himself, an enigmatic, "unreadable" creature with "his beard cut close to his chinne,

62 Of the Sophy's cavalry he says "they are for the most part very valorous and noble, which being
compared with the Turkish people (who for the most part are very rascal, or vile race) are by good right
very highly to be esteemed" (72).
expressing his martial disposition, and exorable nature, that at first a man would thinke to have nothing in him, but mischief and crueltie. And yet he is of nature courteous, and affable, easie to be seen and spoken withall... " (65). A parricide who qualifies for that designation by slaying his father as well as a brother, "the most resplendent and bright shining lamp in Persia," the Sophy is, nonetheless, in the execution of matters of law indiscriminate and egalitarian. "I haue seene him many times alight from his horse, onely to doe justice to a poore bodie" (67). The certainty of his justice and severity of his punishment would be salubrious "in some parts of Christendome" (67).

V. Persia and Time

That the Persian, without risk of contradiction, could be concurrently depicted as a lackadaisical Moslem, a pagan worshipper of the sun, or some combination of the two, attests to the "open" syncretism of the Sherleian vision of Persia. The revival of English interest in Persia occurred at one remove. Persia was prefigured for the witness. With the notable exception of William Parry and Anthony Sherley, the traveler or stay-at-home's evocation of Persia relied heavily on the testimony of immediate predecessors or the accounts of the Ancients. As we have seen, rather than a monolithic voice, the founding colonial moment in Persia, resulted in dialogical utterances, a multiplicity of discrete images, a myriad of inconsistent impressions. Crucial to this cacophony is the notion of a temporal difference between the self and the Other which the witness perceives and perpetuates, what

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63 As a locus of the imagination, Edward Said suggests, the Orient, "is less a place than a topos, a set of references, a congeries of characteristics, that seems to have its origin in a quotation, or a fragment of a text, or a citation from someone's work on the Orient, or some bit of previous imagining, or an amalgam of all these..." Orientalism (New York: Random, 1978) 177.
Johannes Fabian in his study of modern anthropology calls a "denial of coevalness" or, "a persistent and systematic tendency to place the referent(s) of anthropology in a Time other than the present of the producer of anthropological discourse."\(^{64}\)

It is significant, in this regard, that the one writer whose meditation on Persia most closely resembles the delirium of dreams is Middleton, who pays the least heed to the contemporary accounts of that country. It is in Middleton's *Sir Robert Sherley* (1609), that we see most clearly how the Sherlian discourse deliberately misconstrues facts or resorts to anachronisms to define the Persian. Middleton used two sources for his pamphlet. For the main body of *Sir Robert Sherley* Middleton is indebted to *Encomia Nominis and Negocii D. Roberti Sherlaei*. This work is a contemporary account of Robert Sherley's reception by the Polish court published in Cracow in 1609 by Andreas Loaeceheus, the same scholar whom Middleton credits only with the concluding poem of his tract.\(^{65}\) A comparison of the two versions proves that "not only the concluding poem but all the speeches are the work of Loaeceheus and that those speeches are an English prose version" of the Latin original (Kryzanowski 521). G. B. Shand has demonstrated that Middleton's source for his description of Persian manners and customs is the fifteenth book of Strabo's *Geography*.\(^{66}\) Middleton's task in *Sir Robert Sherley*, Shand argues, consisted of fusing his disparate sources and excising or embellishing the available information to make the Persian, and the

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Persian overtures proposed by the Sherleys, more pleasing to the English audience (Shand 258-260).

Middleton's alterations to his texts are at times as simple as translating "an unmarked reference such as Loeaecheus's 'Mahumetigenum'" as the "hell hound brood of Mahomet," or deleting much of Strabo's description of Zoroastrianism that might offend puritanical sensibilities (260-261). Middleton would also take from Strabo the diet of military cadets and present it as the fare of the whole country, while he would delete Strabo's description of concubinage, and justify Persian polygamy as a patriotic duty. In Shand's reading, Middleton's use of his sources to construct a country of strict discipline and firm rule reflects both the political atmosphere of an England which had weathered the Essex and Gunpowder rebellions, as well as a desire to make of the Persian an acceptable trading partner. Indeed Middleton's rehabilitation of the Sophy as a Christian convert demonstrates the scholar Samuel Chew's observation that the desire to humanize the Persian led some English factors in Persia "to take note of any characteristics of Shi'a Mohammedanism that appeared to link it with Christianity and separate it from the orthodox Sunni Mohammedanism of the Turks" (223).

Middleton's Sir Robert Sherley is an amalgamation of representations, one of which, in Middleton's day, was sixteen centuries out of date. Edward Said's analysis of Orientalism identifies any reading of the region as a re-reading; what is interesting about Sir Robert Sherley is that the canonical original is substituted as an eyewitness account. But more significant than what it says about the English reader, or the representational practices at the
dawn of Empire, is how Sir Robert Sherley depicts the Persian subject. Middleton's Persia is unalterable, with neither a past (as nothing has changed) nor a future (as nothing may change). The present is eternity. The Persians' religion "they have observed of old" (315). The rigidity in the rules of its succession is a custom "never as yet suffered change or alteration" (316). Palaces are built according to a rule which have "ever been continued custom amongst them" (316). Where a custom, on the other hand, is not explicitly sanctioned by antiquity, it has gained ascendancy by the universality of its application. Persian youths, from five to twenty four years of age, are reared in military training. The Persian victual "for the most part by which the common people are fed and live, are acorns and hedge pears, their bread coarse and hard, their drink the running springs" (316-317). The wealthy apparel themselves in robes; in the "summer for the most part they walk in purple, the winter refuses no color" (317).

Fixed in time, and placed outside of time, Middleton's Persian Other functions as both a double and a mutant of the Self. In his discipline, his simplicity, his austerity, the Persian is an exemplar, an Other to be emulated; yet with his pagan superstitions, in his unreason, he is an inferior imitation of a discarded Self. On the very cusp of timelessness, the Persian is tamed, rendered safe for the gaze whose subject and object he is.

Middleton's eternal past, in Cartwright's The Preachers Travel (1611), lives alongside the present in uneasy abeyance. For Cartwright the labor of travel is as much a physical as a discursive act. Displaced geographically, Cartwright eagerly situates himself within texts, canonical descriptions of Persia which have awakened his interest in the country and haunt
the experience. Invariably, for example, Cartwright begins his observations with a historical preamble: "At Soltania we safely arrived. This Citie is called by Ptolomi, Heraclea; but by other Tigranocerta, because of the wonderfull ruine of the huge buildings..." (48). Or, "... and so entred into the territories of Casbin, a Citie very: wealthy, by reason of the Kings Pallace, & the great concourse of merchants which resort thither. It was in ancient time called Arsacia as in Strabo; but now termed Casbin...". (49).

The past is never completely left behind; Cartwright peers at history fixedly, hearing its echoes everywhere. A law banning vagrancy and indolence wins his approval "resembling the Egyptian law which Diodorus mentioneth" (59). The inhabitants of the Persian capital, Isfahan, "do much resemble the ancient Parthians in divers things, but specially in their continual riding" (63). The city of "Ardouil" is "of great importance, where Alexander the great did keepe his Court, when he inuaded Persia" (51).

The representational modalities which equip Cartwright for his travels, authorize his observations, and authenticate his text, allow the author to experience the pre-text. For this reason Cartwright refuses to credit the native with the ability to name or to contradict ancient testimony.

Sundry names are giuen vnto it by the Barbarians; some call it Girgi or Corca, from certaine Citie which stood in the same: others Straua from a part of this Kingdome: others Massandra, as Minadoi: Mercator calls it Diargument: and in ancient time Hircanis, so much spoken of by the Poets for the huge woods... (53). The other place neere to Casbin remarkable is the countrey of Gilan, in the Prouince of Hircania very famous in antique time.

And on those rare occasions where, in light of empirical evidence, Cartwright cannot sustain authority nor reexperience the pre-text, the author's primary concern, before transcribing his
observations, is to rewrite his precursors.\textsuperscript{67}

This Province in antique writers is much renowned: Nigro doth call it Corassan and would have the metropolitical city to be Charras, under which he would comprehend the Zagathean Tartars, but herein he is much deceived, for Corassan and the Zagathean Tartars is very nigh two months travel from Hispana (57).

The past anchors the Persian present; like an anchor too it stabilizes and immobilizes the Persian. Proof of the Persian's irresolution, which Cartwright inveighs against, may also be gathered from the ancients. In Cartwright's eyes, the past, as much as the present, conspires to undermine the Persian character:

Last of all they are full of crafty stratagems, and are breakers of their promise (a vice that is very inbred in all Barbarian.) Not content with anyman's government long: and loosers of novelties. For testimonie whereof we may auouch those ancient poysonings of & wicked treacheries which were plotted not onely by subjectes against their soueraignes, but also by children against their natural parents, for the name of father were in so small estimation with those fiftie sons of Artaxerxes, that with one consent, they all conspired to murder him. The which monstrous impietie euer since hath beene practised in this nation, sometimes the father with the children sometimes the children with the father, and sometimes the children with one another. For instance whereof we may take Abbas that now reigneth... (63-64).

But if the present is foretold by a past which prescribes it, the future has already occurred. It is at this juncture in Cartwright's narrative that author and subject appear briefly to coalesce. For both Cartwright's mediated vision of Persian history and the Persian's parodic repetition of his history are mimetic phenomena. In his description of the Sophy's justice,

\footnote{My reading here is indebted to Ali Behdad who argues that the narrative of an Orientalist's voyage is "either a rewriting of the precursor's text-- from which he derives his authority-- or the reexperience of a phantasmatic text." \textit{Belated Travelers: Orientalism in the Age of Colonial Dissolution} (Durham: Duke UP, 1994) 26.}
for instance, Cartwright recalls a tale by Herodotus, establishing a filial relationship whereby, while he invokes the Father of History, his subject (the Sophy) imitates the subject of Herodotus, or his own forefather.

To be briefe in the execution of justice he is very seuer, as well to the greatest as to the meanest, not sparing (as might be shewed) to hang vp his chiefe Cuddi or Judges, when he shal perceiue how that vspon bribes & saueour they delay the suits of his subiects, agains the cleere & manifest truth: imitating herein Cambises who commanded Sisannes skin for giuing an vnjust sentence, to be flead off, and couered the judgement seat therewith, appointing also his son to judge in his place, to the end that by sight thereof, all other iudges might be warned, to just and vpright (66-67).

Although the paradigm of the Father appears to enable Cartwright and the Sophy equally, a fundamental difference separates their respective imitative practices. For Cartwright the pre-text is memory. His informed discursive mimesis constitutes a conscious act of erudition, the anamnesiac's escape from the limits of the historical present into the veracity of the past. For the Sophy, on the other hand, even a superior attribute degenerates into a form of atavism. An inexplicable involuntary call of the unconscious might just as easily compel the Sophy to civility as barbarity, confining him to the labyrinth of repetition and lost time.

The historical echoes which so readily resound in Cartwright's travelogue are nowhere to be heard in Anthony Sherley's own Relation (1613). For Cartwright Persian history is a cyclical curse. For Anthony Sherley there is no historical continuity, neither a past, nor a future. Contemplating the present ceaselessly, when he looks for evidence of the past he often does not find it. In Cyprus there is "nothing to answere the famous relations giuen by ancient Histories of the excellency of the Island, but the name onely (the
barbarousnesse of the Turke and time having defaced all the Monuments of Antiquity" (6). In fact, as he writes about his first few weeks in Persia, Anthony literally enters the present tense: "and now that I am in Persia, & speak of the kings absence" (29). His subsequent conversations with the Sophy favor matters of diplomacy and warfare over "apparell, building, beauty of our woemen, or such vanities" (66). Bound by his vow of ethnographic silence, even space is immaterial and tangential to the narrative, and except for an occasional nod of disapproval, the Persian manners and customs which engage Middleton and Cartwright are also passed over mutely.

Persia, for Anthony, begins and ends with the Sophy. His Persian subjects are "so vile in themselues, that they are no more, nor longer good, then they are by a strong and wisely-tempered hand made so: the Countrey not being inhabited by those nobly-disposed Persians, of which there are but a few, and those few are as they euer were: But being mightily wasted..." (51). The Sophy is transcendent and substantial, Persian and universal, tied at once to the specificities of his time and space (quelling rebellions here, administering justice there) and a utopian King whose temperament and judgment may serve as a model for all princes, a king "whom wee call barbarous, though from his example wee may learne many great and good things" (70). More expansively Anthony observes elsewhere,

...the iustice, wisdome, temperance, liberalitie, valour, mercifullnesse, and generality of all excellent vertues in a Prince esteemed by vs barbarous, and yet inded fit to be patterne and mirrour to some of ours, who haue Christ in our mouthes, and nothe least of his Saints in our hearts. Besides the varietie of his fortuens disposition, bridled and brought to a good inclination by force of his wisedome and goodness... which I had rather speake of, to point out by them the happinesse of his state, then to see a farre off the miseries of some of ours swimming in bloud, full of cruell commandement, continuall
accusations, false friendships, the ruine of innocents, implacable factions, and pernicious ends of things: contrarie to that which ought to be with vs of a better profession, and is with those which we despise (109).

The Sophy's character is such that even an enemy, the Turkish ambassador, gasps at his munificence and "saw before his eyes, his maisters ruine: being imposiblle that such fortune and vertue, as the King was accompanied with, could receiue any obstacle" (72).

A textbook for the conduct of princes, Relation is also an enactment of that counsel. The Sophy and Anthony are both to be seen acting in a princely fashion. The union of author and subject which fleets across Cartwright's pages is thus prominent in Relation. Anthony's self-presentation casts him in the twin roles of trusted courtier and the Sophy's double, one who excels at precisely the kinds of stratagems the Sophy instinctively performs. Quoting the sovereign he intends to please, Anthony insists that the "dayes of Visions and such apparrant Miracles are finished" (17), and yet mysterious rescues from adversity link the Sophy and the ambassador. A professed enemy of Anthony with an "ill mind" and "great purse" is intent upon coming to Aleppo doubtless to ruin Anthony: "yet euer the first proudance, which saued me before, determined so well also for me then, that foure miles from Aleppo he dyed" (18). Later, after a futile month in Baghdad, help arrives again from an unsuspected corner. Anthony thinks a Florentine merchant a spy until he proves himself, proffesee his sinceritie and,

beseeched mee, not to couer my selfe longer from him, who did truely wish me well, not so much for my person (which hee could know little) but because his coniect was, that I would not haue hazarded my selfe in such a journey, but for some great end, which he did beleue well of; and besides, in charity to a Christian, and so many Christians with me... he brought mee to a Vittorin, of whom he had already hired Horses, Camels, and Moils for
me, and I found a Tent pitched by his servaunts; and then opening his gowne, 
hee deliuered me a bag of Chakins, with these very words: The god of hauen 
blesse you, and your whole company, and your enterprise which I will no 
further desire to know, then in my hope, which persuadeth mee that it is 
good... (23-24).

The Sophy inhabits a similar world, fraught with the same dangers and teeming with parallel 
conspiracies. These plots are prevented from fruition by coincidences so fortuitous as to be 
contrivances of Providence. When the Sophy's father suspects that his twelve-year-old son 
has designs on the crown and secretly resolves to have him murdered, the news is "brought 
to Abbas speedily by the meanes of secret friends" (32).

Linked in being the recipient of information timely delivered, the Sophy and Anthony 
are alike also in their guile, in correctly sounding their environment, in the swiftness of 
response in moments of stress, their resolution in times of confusion. The adversities the 
Sophy defeats on his way to seizing the throne are, essentially, reenactments on a larger scale 
of the vicissitudes that befall, occasionally impede, and are eventually overcome by Anthony. 
Prudence and deliberation, the two essential attributes of a statesman that Anthony counsels 
generally and which the Sophy manifests instinctively, are amply demonstrated by the 
avor's own behavior. The Sophy's great "dexterity, celerity, and fortune" (53) might as well 
be a description of Anthony's. The English traveler's circumspection in not initially 
divulging the real reason of his journey to Persia and instead taking the time "to make my 
selxe learned in the purpose of his actions, by his nature and inclination" (73), for instance, 
foreshadows the Sophy's dissimulation with the Turkish ambassador (104-105) or his 
stratagems in temporizing with a governor who might betray him (33).
Perhaps because each feels he has met a kindred spirit, the rapport between the king and the traveler is immediate and profound. Anthony's soliloquies on the virtues of the Sophy are reciprocated by the Sophy's commendation of Anthony in words and gifts. For, apparently, it cannot escape the Sophy that he has met his reflection. Both men experience the solitude of power--Anthony as he worries for the welfare of his company, the king as he rules a nation. Both endure and enunciate the inconstancy, the waywardness of the multitude. The Sophy, facing a treacherous crowd which is at his mercy admits, "his true feeling of humane frailty, made him well understand how easie mens mindes are to be abused by others artifice, and their owne corruption" (41). Following directly upon the Sophy's epiphany, the author concurs that the crowd is "easily inclined to hope more then they should, and to suffer lesse then is fit" (42).

Indeed authorial identity in Relation is split, for behind Anthony as the author of his book lurks the figure of the Sophy as the real raconteur, the two voices merging. During the journey to the Persian capital, the Sophy "called me vnto him, my Brother and my Interpreter; and (after some few discourses) hee began to tell vs the whole history of those his fortunes which I have discoursed..." (75). For the history of the initial years of the Sophy's reign, we are led to believe, Anthony is merely relaying information supplied by the monarch. Tellingly, Anthony succeeds in swaying the Shah to his propositions because, as one courtier tells him, "in this court there was not a Gentleman but the King: the rest were shadowes which moued with his body" (79). The simile is redefined by Anthony in a gesture of self-effacement which allows him literally to blend into the Sophy. Assuring the monarch of his
abiding love, Anthony declares "I was onely a shadow, which, by the vrging of my owne
nature, and delight, should follow the body of his victories, rather then haue, or hope, for any
other particular interest in them myselfe..." (81).

In the dreamscape of Persia the traveler holds the mirror to the world and discovers
chimeras—a ceaseless past, a vacuous present, himself outside of time. He deals in
substitutes (Strabo, Herodotus) or phantoms (Anthony’s Sophy). Between the hybrid text
of Thomas Middleton’s *Sir Robert Sherley*, constructed at the intersection of dissonant parts,
and the hybrid persona of Anthony Sherley’s *Relation*, composed of the interjection of the
Self within the Other, what remains constant is not a stable definable epistemology, but the
process of replication which consistently assigns the Persian not so much to another place,
as another time. Such mediated discourses are by their very nature mimetic, differing only
to the extent the author concedes the inspiration of his performance—i.e., Cartwright’s
valorization or Middleton’s elisions of authority. But the nature of this mimesis has another,
more far-reaching effect. What begins as a denial of covalence is transformed into a denial
of corporeality.

The death of the Persian, that Other so minutely described, so eagerly anticipated, is
preordained. For the mediation of the pre-text bedevils the experience and renders it
wanting. Armed with referential ideals, the traveler compares Persia’s present and past
nostalgically, evaluates what he has not seen, an absence, at the expense of what he does see
but feigns to dismiss as an absence. Cartwright, for instance, in the dedication to his
*Preachers Travels*, ruefully insists that "I might haue added many worthy collections, as well
out of sacred as prophane writers, that haue written of the most stately and magnificent Empire of the Medes and Persians in times past; and to haue compared it, with the moderne and present estate thereof; which hath scarce a shadow of the antique Gouernment, wherewith it was then ruled and gouerned." The immortality that Middleton imposes on the Persian, on the other hand, is manichean. It permits and presupposes stasis. If little differentiates one Persian from another, or the Persian present from the Persian past, there might be even less to distinguish between the living and the dead. For Anthony it is miscegenation which has compromised the Persian, eradicating him as a race:

The Countrey not being inhabited by those nobly-disposed Persians, of which there are but a few, and those few are as they euer were: But being mightily wasted by the inondation of Tamberlaine, and Ismael... forced to re-people his Countrey to give himselfe strenght of men against so potent an Aduersary, calling in Tartars, Turcomans, Courdines, and of all scum of Nations; which though they now liue in a better countrey, yet haue not changed their bad natures... (51).

In this country without depth, beyond time, how is one to be understood by the Other? How does one interpret the Other? John Day's play *The English Brothers* provides an astute commentary on the intial moment of the encounter. The Sophy's decision to "show the manner of our Persian warres" and Anthony's counter-proposal, "Ille shadow forth my countries hardiment" (322-323), are acts of self explication, instances where contact with the Other prompts mutual and idealized self projections. These reenactments of reenactments are understood differently by the Persian participants and the English spectators. The Persian interprets illusion naively. Abstraction escapes him. Unable to disengage himself from the concrete, for the Persian even an illusory battle must end with real bloodshed. He punctuates
victory by hoisting the heads of his prisoners on pikes, an exercise which the English spectators (in the galleries, but not on the stage) are expected to assume to be real, although as experienced theater-goers they know it is not. Upon the stage, meanwhile, actors and spectators change roles, and while the Persians stand by, the English, in a performance of an English battle, instruct the Persian, so to speak, on the decorum of illusion.

Within these rehearsals there is a crisis of recognition, that flicker of time in which the self's self-regarding gaze finds itself replicated in the Other. In response to the Sophy's query about their differences, Anthony seems to insist on similarities.

All that make vp this earthly Edifice  
By which we are cald men is all alike;  
Each may be the others Anatomie;

Our Nerves, our Arteries, our pipes of life,  
The motius of our senses all doe mooue  
As of one Axeltree (327).

Dalibra, the bawdy maid to the Sophy's niece, conversing with her mistress on the virtues of the two English brothers, further diminishes the distance between the Other and the Self

Strangers? I see no stragonesse in them:  
they speake as well or rather, better then our own counrymen; and I make no question can do as well  
if it came once to execution (342).

Behind the Persian's bluster, however, is the awareness of his own hollowness. Awestruck by the English battle, the Sophy confirms the Persian's porous and permeable nature:

What powers do wrap mee in amazement thus?  
Mee thinks this Christian's more then mortall  
Sure he conceales himsefl: within my thoughts  
Neuer was man so deeply registred.  
But God or Christian, or what ere he bee,
I wish to be no other but as hee (324).

For the British witness, then, the problem of the encounter may not be simply the means of communication. For how does one communicate with another who is, and may be conscious of himself as, a dissolving form?

Facing, in Finet’s apt phrase, the "un-understood," shadows in the fading light of history, the traveler registers the signs of difference as spectacle. Much like the dramatists’, the Persia of the traveler is a land of facade and artifice, of actors unaware of the illusions which occupy them. In this theatrical space, observation of the other inevitably becomes a rehearsal of him, self-presentation blurring into impersonation. Anthony’s extended summary of the Sophy’s rise to power in Relation may serve as an example. For Anthony, what separates the Sophy from his rivals is his ability to combine a sovereign’s resolve with an actor’s dissimulations. After news of his father’s plot to have him murdered is delivered to the Sophy, for instance, he flees persecution to "Corasan, a Countrey of the Tartars" (32). In the meantime, the Sophy’s father dies of old age. The crown prince, proclaimed king, begins a propitious reign but is "vilely slaine by his Barber, retiringe halfe drunke from a banquet, to which he was provoked by the conspirators" who are supported in their anarchic plans by the Turks (33-34). Abbas, the future Sophy, being now by right a King, but without men or arms, is thrown back on his own devices. Fearing that the governor may betray him to the conspirators, the Sophy forewarns his protector against partaking in this "rebellion of natural subjects" (35). Halfheartedly, his protector equips the Sophy with an army of three thousand to reclaim the crown (36). The rebels, however, are informed and defeat the Sophy
in a battle. Taking to the mountains, the Sophy lives "amongst the Heardes-men for three months, vnknowne, changing continually, from place to place" (37). At length he abandons this chameleon's existence to return to a region of supporters, "determined to shew himselfe in that Prouince; and proue what effect the Maiesty of his person, the iustice of his cause, and former obligation would worke in them" (37).

As is to be expected, the populace flocks to the Sophy "armed and appointed for the wars" (38), none of whom are more welcome than "Ferrat Can," a rebel chieftain. After a skirmish, the Sophy finds himself in possession of Qazvin, but assailed from all sides. Various local potentates, succored by the Turks, are arrayed against him, "so that the King was likely to be so inclosed with all these Armies" (38). His resolve in this moment of danger is to "helpe, with Art, that which he was too weake to accomplish by strength" (38). He marches out of his stronghold while "Ferrat Can," according to a deliberate plan, "shewed himselfe altered from the Kings part... and offereth [to the rebels] not onely to ioyne that strength which hee had with them, but to mutine the Kings army" (39). The rebels, seduced by these assurances, attend a banquet "Ferrat Can" throws in their honor, whereupon the Sophy was receiued into the house with three hundred men, where without any vroare, he slew all those which were inuited, to the number of three score and ten, the seruants and Pages being so suddenly taken hold of, and with such dexterity, that without any mowing of other rumors, the same fashion of feast of singing and of dancing, continued all the night; and in that space all the rest of those people, which the King had with him, were appointed, in the breaking of the day, to make the greatest shew and the gretest noise that they could vnder the foote of the Mountaine, as though all the Army had been there (40).
The next day the heads of the rebels are strung upon the terrace where the Sophy appears to address the assembled crowds. The townspeople, confronted by the evidence of the Sophy's success, and believing themselves threatened by a large army amassed in the mountains, falls into "dead amazement," while the Sophy dissembles for one last time. He prevaricates, "as though he a while advised with himselfe what he would both say and do; at last, after a good pause, seeming that his royall mercy had preuailed against his iust indignation" (40-41) before granting a universal amnesty.

Anthony Sherley's theatrically inflected historiography, with its emphasis on role-playing and *mis-en-scene*, reproduces Persia as a stage. Only the Sophy, as author and actor upon this stage, is fully cognizant of the superficiality, of the artifice in which his fellow Persians are gullible believers. The sole exception to this rule is Anthony. It is Anthony who invests the Sophy's ambulations with meaning, endows his ceremonies with significance.

A transcription of the ephemeral becomes, though his agency, a symbolic artifact and a proscriptive tale--on the divine right of kings, the rebellion of "naturally born subjects." But Anthony straddles two spaces. He is the Self's proxy and the Other's double. He is the spectator who enters the fray, a second actor mounting the stage to trade, with a knowing wink, lines with the Sophy. Drawn into the phantasmagoria of the referent, Anthony's self-presentation is a burlesque which blends ostentatious self-presentation with expert imitation of the other. Chary of details though he is, Anthony's entry into Qazvin, for instance, is a dramatized event so ambiguously motivated as to define or fulfill the other's expectations. The munificence of his savior, the Florentine merchant, "was not onely sufficient to giue vs
aboundant means for that time, but to cloth vs all in rich apparell, fit to present our selues before the presence of any Prince, and to spend extraordinarily in giftes, by which wee insinuated farre into the fauour of those, which had the authority of that Prouince, during our abode" (28). In the art of providing oneself for the other's gaze, Anthony suspects, the Sophy is his willful accomplice. Of the Sophy's grandiose entrance into Qazvin, he surmises, "in truth, I thinke that hee did it most to declare the greatnesse of it to vs that were strangers" (63).

The Sherlian discourse excludes the Persian from his own story, thereby affirming British centrality. The English spectator (Anthony in Persia and his audience in England) is both a participant in and voyeur of Persia. For if Anthony's association with the Sophy privileges him, the Sophy's alliance with Anthony Anglicizes him. The Sophy is aware of the facade that is Persia because he is a Persian stripped of the vestiges of his nationality, a Persian rarified, a Persian who is not Persian at all. For Cartwright, Parry, and Nixon, on the other hand, the Sophy is merely a refined Persian. Thus Anthony's marginally contextualized Persia in which at least one actor appears to distinguish reality from illusion is, in the hands of the Other authors, a deracinated masquerade in which only the English traveler is aware of the facade. Nixon, for instance, relates how Anthony, nearing Qazvin and being in "his trauelling apparell, (his carriage yet behinde) and unfurnished with shewe, stolc by night at unawares into the citie" (C4). The King having been sent for, the English visitors dress for the occasion, "their apparell being rich, and differing from the Presians, made a faire and delightfull shewe: Sir Anthony himselfe in cloath of gold, and his brother Robert in cloth of
siver, both their upper and under coates: some Gentlemen of his traine, hauing their upper coats of cloth of diluer, their nether coates of silke..." (D).

Even before Robert Sherley's appearance in London dressed in his Persian garb, we witness in the Sherlian discourse veritable saturnalias of the Self. In a sense, as the next chapter argues, the Persian dying in the Sherlian discourse, is re-animated in the resplendent figure of Robert Sherley.
The Persian Resurrected:  
Robert Sherley Represents Persia, 1613-1624

By depopulating the landscape, I argued in the previous chapter, Sherlian discourse redefined and recreated the English traveler in Persia. In this chapter I return to Robert Sherley's performance before the Court of James I and investigate the Persian ambassador's costume and actions--his turban, his cross, his proposals. Anthony Sherley's Persia, as we have seen, is a blank page upon which the errant would-be statesman, whose very knighthood is the subject of controversy, is seen confabulating with Princes, altering world affairs. This superimposition, in Robert Sherley's case, is even less mediated and abstracted. The Self for Robert Sherley is the text. From the elder to the younger Sherley, we move from inscription to self-inscription, from discursive to substantive reincarnation. Anthony, in retrospect, re-invents himself amongst the Persians; Robert embodies one.

But there is a secondary matter which shall engage us here. The Sherleys, as we have seen, were celebrated on the English stage and denigrated by the British government. Neither of the brothers could ever completely escape the charge of disloyalty to the Crown. In Anthony's case, however, doubts raised about his various missions questioned his political loyalties only. In the Sherlian discourse Anthony remains, at all times, an Englishman. He may play a Persian's part, but his actions are clearly delineated as a "performance." In Robert's instance his loyalty and play were viewed more skeptically. Anthony, in his book, is removed from the events he describes. He writes as an Englishman to Englishmen. Robert, however, appears among his countrymen dressed in the habits and garb of a Persian.
Vainly he protests that he is merely "acting." The very discourse that had trumpeted Robert Sherley's Persian adventure thus victimized him by associating him too closely with Persia, a land it had depicted as a theatrical space. Reexamining the portrayal of Robert Sherley in John Day's *The English Brothers* (1607), I shall suggest that in the Sherlian vision Robert Sherley experiences death and resurrection. He is reborn in Persia as a confidante of the Sophy. Yet he becomes a Persian by association and is therefore treated and viewed as a lifeless construct of the stage.

My reading of Robert Sherley's fate contradicts most historical discussions of him. Most historians addressing the vexing issue of Robert Sherley's bona fides have suggested that his mission failed because of the arrival of a rival Persian ambassador, Nagd Ali Beg, an impostor who managed to discredit Robert Sherley before the English court. I shall argue, on the other hand, that the Sherlian vision, having at first defined Persia as a land of artifice and then shown Robert Sherley as being reborn there, had already discredited Robert Sherley by assigning him a Persian, i.e., a dissimulator's role. Finally, I will consider the upshot of the Sherlian vision. *The English Brothers* had promised a new Persian, Anglicized and Christianized. Such a hypothetical being existed in the figure of the incongruously titled Don Juan of Persia, a Persian companion of Anthony Sherley during his return journey to Europe in 1600. Don Juan remained behind in Spain after his compatriot returned to Persia, converted to Catholicism and wrote a book detailing his life and conversion. His narrative may be seen as an articulation not only of Robert Sherley's plight, but of the experience of all liminal figures who are regarded as truants for having "gone native."
I. Robert Sherley in the Sherlian Vision

Let me return briefly to Robert Sherley's depiction in The Travails of the English Brothers. At the insterstice of counterfeit reportage and spurious art, the task of representing Persia falls into the hands of a family of knaves and emerges as a cross between a trompe l'oeil and a tableau vivant. What follows is a clash of competing illusions. At the margins of a legend, Sir Thomas Sherley, between ignominies, commissions a pamphlet which inspires a play. That very stage on which he may witness his own apotheosis, and for which he is, indirectly, a patron, loudly advertises itself as a theatrical space. The English Brothers testifies to the varied bewilderment, the mystification, the very nature of illusion. In its references to a non-existent play, preparations for a play which is never performed, staging of the brothers' reunion, and, as we have seen, in its pitting of the reenactment of a battle (the Perso-Turkish wars) against the performance of a mock-battle (Anthony's demonstration of the British manner of fighting), the self-referential dramaturgy of The English Brothers is a confidence trick in which playwright and audience are alike complicit. Only the Persian remains unaware of the fictive conventions being invoked.

Persia in "The English Brothers" is a theatrical project. Day and his colleagues, in fact, invite onlookers to join in the labor of recreating Persia. The prologue "attired like fame," admits that to present fully the adventures of the Sherleys' "five daies would breake the limmits of our Sceanes/ But to express the Shadowes," (319); consequently, the playwrights beg the audience's indulgence, "your asists/ to helpe the entrance of our history" and in animating the dumb show of the departure:
First see a father parting with his sones;
Then, in a moment, on the full sailes of thought
We will dyeide them many hundred leagues:
Our Scene lies speechlese, actiuie but yet dumbe,
Till your expressing thoughts gie it a tongue (320).

The observer is then called upon to conceive the journey and the achievement of its goal:

Imagine now the gentle breath of heauen
Hath on the liquid high-way of the waues
Conuaid him many thousand leagues from vs:
Think[e] you haue seene him sail by many lands,
And now at last arriu'd in Persia (320).

The audience's fancy is taxed frequently thereafter. For Anthony's peregrinations towards Christendom, the Chorus commands that time and space be contracted in the imagination of the spectator.

Time that vpon his wrestlesse wings Conueies
Howers, daies and yeares; we must intreat you think
By this hath borne our worthy Trauailor
Toward Christendom as far as Russia (348).

The spectacle of Persia, in Anthony Sherley's Relation, proceeds at its own pace before Persians who cannot parse its message. The English observer's presence is necessary insofar as he decipher[s] the spectacle, renders it meaningful. With or without him, the facade exists. In The English Brothers, however, it is Persia itself that needs to be imagined, articulated, given "tongue".⁶⁸ Space, and not merely the spectacle, is invested with meaning;

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⁶⁸Modern scholars have often emphasized the tenuousness of place and locale on the Elizabethan and early Jacobean stage. Gerald Endes Bentley argues that drama at the Globe "was of persons, not places" that "the actor not the setting was paramount ...the audience [being] expected to concentrate wholly on words and actions and to ignore the place where the action may have taken place." Shakespeare and his Theater (Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1964) 57. Alan C. Dessen insists similarly that the Elizabethan stage was a flexible construct, that a walk across it could signify temporal as well as spatial displacement. The stage is a neutral location unless indicated otherwise, by a line of dialogue or the movement of stage properties. Elizabethan Stage Conventions and Modern Interpreters (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984) 85-86. My
outside the spectator's field of vision, it ceases. The mediation of Anthony removed from
the equation, Persia becomes an act of will. If Anthony Sherley in his apologia Relation
(1613) converts Persia into his private realm, The English Brothers licenses Persia to the
domain of public imagination. And whereas Relation extracts ideology from Persia, The
English Brothers encodes Persia. Thus, the spectacle which in Relation was performed with
varying success for the benefit of the English and Persian onlookers is, in The English
Brothers, purely for the gratification of the Self, and as such, it may be stopped for the quips
and feints of Will Kemp.

The English Brothers, H. Neville-Davies reminds us, may have as much to do with
the politics of London theaters as it does with the diplomacy of the Sherley brothers. Neville-
Davies argues that the play responds to Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice in a
"remarkably direct way" (94). In its appropriation of real and fictional characters—the
startling impersonation of the recently deceased Kemp where "an actor acts the role of a
known actor who creates humour by confusing stage roles with actual reality in a
performance of a performance that masquerades as a rehearsal" and the reincarnation of
Shylock in the person of Zariph—the play gives voice to a host of questions about the
theatrical companies of Jacobean London. "Could Zariph's sabotage of Kemp's play have
been seen by experienced theatre-goers as Shylock's revenge upon Kemp's Lancelot Gobbo?
What sort of rivalries were there between the King's Men and the Queen's Men; and where
did Kemp's loyalties lie in the last years of his career when he had withdrawn from the

point here, however, is that the space of Persia is far more nebulous a prospect. The audience is not
signaled a change of scenery: he is expressly commanded to envision the space.
Globe" (95-96)? The pervasive metaphor of the theater which had reduced Persia to a stage and then marginalized the Persian upon it, now banishes him from the scene. For while *The English Brothers* begins with the Persian's failure to comprehend the art of illusion, it draws to a close with references to and quotations from contemporary London theater, a degree of theatrical consciousness which the playwright and the audience share on the level of a private joke and from which the Persian is excluded.

This exile of the Persian from the text which I earlier equated with his death has a peculiar resonance in *The English Brothers*. The Persian, like Persian space, blurs into unreality, even as it strives to exist. Trapped in a false religion, the Persian's life, as Anthony assures the disputatious courtiers, is a sustained form of mortality. "Then all your liues are but to meete a death e/ That keepes you dying and yet neuer dead" (338). From this torpor, the purgatory of a fraudulent life, the Persian is rescued by Robert Sherley. The audience was earlier called upon to animate Persia; it is now Robert who resuscitates the Persian. Robert's thaumaturgical powers are attested to when his magnanimity in sparing Turkish captives corresponds with "giving life to thirty prisoners" (378). Subsequently, he is involved in eugenics. In his response to a hermit who entreats him to promote the cause of Christianity in Persia, Robert fuses, in the image of fatherhood, spiritual and sexual regeneration.

This present day I haue an Infant borne
Who, tho descended from the Emperors Neece,
A Pagan, ile baptise in Christian faith;
Confute their Ignorance, heauen assisting me,
That mine one soule this comfort may pertake,
Sherley in Persia did the first Christian make (397-398).
A later request which the Sophy grants casts the net still wider:

I would by your permission raise a house
Where Christian Children from their cradles
Should know no other Education,
Manners, language nor Religion,
Then what by Christians is deliuer'd them (402-403).

The crisis of recognition which assails Anthony at the beginning of the play is now admirably resolved. The Self as progenitor in whom spiritual and physical powers reside inhabits the Other's body, abolishing him. Estranged from his environment, divided against himself, an authorized version of the Other is born and bred, not so much to resemble or imitate the Self, but to merge with it.69

With "a mind so noble in thy actions/ and a body fortunate in his desseignes" (396), Robert's animation of Persia coincides with his emergence as the protagonist of the play. While his two elder brothers shuttle between prisons, Robert Sherley, the prime mover of the play, leads armies, takes and trades prisoners, marries the Sophy's niece, christens his child, and wins extraordinary concessions from the Sophy. The playwrights, settling belatedly and almost imperceptibly on Robert Sherley as their protagonist, are lavish in their adulation. The Robert Sherley whom the Sophy encloses "in the best embrace of our endeared loue" (403), and whom his niece woos, is a buccaneer whose attributes signal both his individual and national vigor.

Methinkes your Country should grow great with pride

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69Nixon's inevitably blunter gloss upon this episode may explain my reading more clearly. Nixon notes that Robert has obtained "of the king a number of young infants of that country to be brought up in a house appointed for that purpose, that altogether estranged, and kept from hearing or speaking their owne Language, may in time learne our English Speech, and come at length to Christian knowledge, being brought up and educated among Christians."
To see such branches spring out of her sides;
Your aged Father should grow young againe
To heare his sonnes liue in the friendly penn
Of kinde Antiquity; all Persia sings
The English Brothers are Coe-mates of Kinges (345).

In the dialectic between the illusory and the real worlds of *The English Brothers* the portraiture of Robert Sherley belongs to the latter category. In the scenes featuring Robert Sherley, scant use is made of the irony so prevalent in the Kemp episodes. Yet the playwrights cannot wholly suppress the notion that they have set in motion a mechanism beyond their control. If the *theatrum mundi* metaphor is to coexist with the realism of the biographical vehicle, the realistic depiction of Robert too must admit its contradiction; that is, if Persia is a topos of the imagination and a real place, the character of Robert Sherley himself must be partially illusory.

The Robert Sherley of *The English Brothers* shudders between prolepsis and *post mortem*. The preface to the play, signed by the three playwrights, elucidates the theatrical project as an abstraction, "a custom amongst friends (and sure a friendly custome) if the obstacles of Fortune, the impediments of Nature, the barre of time, the distance of place do hinder, nay if death itselwe doth make that long seperation amongst friends, the shadow or picture of a friend is kept as a deuoted ceremonie" (318). After the pantomime of the christening, the playwrights submit again to the circumscription of illusion, the limits of knowledge, the intrusions of the real upon fancy.

This is the vtmost of intelligence:
If we should prosecute beyond our knowledge,
Some that fill vp this round circumference
(And happelie better knowe their states then wee)
Might justly call the authors travellers,
And giue the actors too the souldiers spite (404).

Bracketed by the normative and the real--real distance, real absence, death--the play offers
a glimpse into the mysteries of parturition. Not only is the Persian sired and rejuvenated by
Robert Sherley, but Robert Sherley himself is reborn in Persia. The Sophy's niece in
romantic dialogue with the traveler assures him:

The glorious Sunne of Persia shall enfuse
His strength of heate into thy generous veines
And make thee like himselfe (344).

Later, a misinformed and enraged Sophy asks:

Dares that proud Shirly whom our powerfull heate
Drew from the Earth, refund and made vp great
Dares he presume to contradict our Will
And saue a man whom we command him kill (378)?

Still later, confronting his English general the Sophy wonders:

Haue we breth'd life into thy sickly fortunes,
And like the lowe and meane bred Saraber,
Hauing aloud thee seat-roome at our foote,
Darst thou presume to clime vp to our Crowne (382)?

Robert Sherley's rebirth, then, occurs in Persia, an illusion, and not in the frame of the The
English Brothers, but in the main text, which is an illusion of another sort--an interlude of
play and playing in the imagining of which the audience cooperates, and for the duration of
which belief in temporality may be suspended. Prior to the christening, in the final speech
by any of the characters, the Sophy professes eternal devotion to Robert Sherley. The speech
is meant to reassure the English spectator and to seal Robert's good fortune.
In the best embrace of our endeared loue
We do inclose thee: Sherley shall approve
Our fauours are no cowards, to glue back,
They shal abide til death; thou shalt not lack
Our loues plenitude, our dearest nephew (403).

Such expostulations by the mercurial Sophy may not be trustworthy. He is, as the playwrights depict him, inconsistent in all things. Their assurances about Robert Sherley’s future are necessary because the drama ends while their protagonist, it is hoped, lives. The playwrights have reached the “vtmost of intelligence” beyond which knowledge tapers into silence. The frame thus negates the picture; the preface and postscript speak of the bounds of conjecture, of memory, while the play itself presents a “realistic depiction.” Playwright and play-goer must admit, in other words, that they have evoked a wraith. This wraith, within four years of the performance of the play at Red Bull or Curtain, shall cavort among the audience.

II. Robert Sherley in England

With its stock of stereotypical characters and situations, the budding romance, the jealousies, the intrigue, The English Brothers is an inferior fit in the mold of the great Jacobean plays. The context, rather than the text itself, astonishes. The material realization of Robert Sherley from Persia, that compound of myth and history, is the spectacular incarnation of a shadow into flesh. He returns from the margins, not so much of a nascent empire, as from the frontiers of the real, a phantom of the stage and of Persia, which is a stage. One has obscured him enough for the other to engender him a "coe-mate of kings."

And the rules of illusion, the governing motif of theatrical production, which have invented
and sustained him, seem to pursue and define him still. Impersonated, he is in person an impersonator, an impostor in Persian dress. Moreover, with his exhaustive (and to his handlers irritating) Orientalism, his painstaking verisimilitude, his act never ends. He carries the stage with him.

Jacobean England was familiar with the spectacle of the alien. Natives of America and Africa had been brought to England throughout the sixteenth century for the purposes of display and edification. The Eskimo family Frobisher had captured during his voyage to Terra Incognita in 1577 could be seen in their felt-covered boat, hunting ducks on the Thames. In 1609, two courtly marriages had been celebrated by amateur companies dressed in the feathered costumes of Virginian natives; four years later James I would receive at Whitehall the daughter of a chief Powhatan who had married an Englishman. In a society that collected and exhibited foreign objects, customs, and persons, the foreigner as captive or convert was both a real, and in the cases of Bajazet and Trincolo, a fictional construct, often maintained, as Steven Mullaney demonstrates, in the margins of society. Yet Sherley is neither exclusively, to use Mullaney's term, a "cultural token," nor merely a fictional representation; and if he is not invested with the prestige of a European ambassador, he has a greater claim than a representative of a subject or defeated race.

Beyond categories of cultural definition, the castaway whose twisted fate marks him as an intermediary is, like an actor, an anomaly. He pretends; he imitates. But whereas the

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actor must alter his costume to initiate a new part, Robert Sherley's act is a repertoire of simultaneous roles. At that moment of his presentation at Hampton Court, he is, by the evidence of his turban, his commission, his long exile, a Persian. The emblem of the cross proclaims him a Christian. By birthright, in his voluble protestations, he is a loyal subject of the English king. Making discrete inquiries of Cottington in Madrid in 1610, Robert Sherley had himself alluded to his quandary, wondering apprehensively whether his "Majesty would not hold it fit to give him that kind of entertainment (being born his subject,) which from other princes he had received, and peradventure was fitting the person he represented, yet were he not attended with Persians, (whose relation at home might peradventure breed him no small disgrace,) he would expect no more ceremony than was due unto the person of Robert Sherley" (Shirley 74). This is a telling argument. Vague on delicate issues, aiming to placate and to please, it may be the sole instance in which the ambassador deliberates on his own theatricalism.\textsuperscript{72} Voluntarily he discards the mask. Underneath breathes the true self, the "person" Robert Sherley, content and self-deprecating, without claims or expectations. Deference is due to the visage he has perfected, the role he performs in the service of the monarch he represents alongside treacherous companions. The King must lend it his imprimatur, for the performance to be credible; he must play along, play a role. By royal licence Robert Sherley may embalm himself in the body of a Persian. The actor lives outside his role in this moment of collusion, unbeknownst to Persian attendants and potential

\textsuperscript{72} Whether Cottington is paraphrasing Robert Sherley or reporting him verbatim is unclear. The language is consistently ambiguous. "Home" is a repository of opposing antecedents. Is the speaker, or the writer, referring to Robert Sherley's home, the Persians', or both? The Sophy, untitled and unnamed, is neurally cited and appears on par with the "person" Robert Sherley, rather than the princes with whom he wishes to establish relations.
spies who, like their fictional counterparts in *The English Brothers*, are ill-versed in the art of illusion. When the mask falls, the real, that is the English Robert Sherley, preens, an Englishman before the English King.

The transmutation that Robert Sherley privately seeks and publicly disavows, a cunning substitution of role for identity, is doomed to failure. On the compromised ground where two cultures collide, he occupies an indeterminate spot. Thinly spread, his loyalties are questionable, his roles multifarious and contradictory. Balance may be impossible to keep. Oscillating between the Self and the Other, he is an anecdote and an artifact of an encounter. He is a witness of another world, and a stand-in for that world; he represents "us" and "them." A liminal figure perched on thresholds: this is the verdict of the age, in approbation or censure, by his Persian as well as his English audiences. Recommending him to King James in a letter which Robert Sherley brought with him to England in 1611, Shah Abbas marks him for special favor by noting his mixed allegiances.

> And wee had thought to haue sent one of or owne subjects to aunsweare the Christian Princes, But the Worthie gentleman Robert Shirley to us more deere and beloued, whoe is an Englishman, and hath beene many yeeres in or srvine, in whom wee have great confidence, And bycause he is both yors and ors, Therefore wee send him to yor Matie... he hath served us many yeares with great loyaltie, And for testimony of the satisfacon wee haue of his person wee give him this confidence and credytt, praying your Matie that yow wilbe pleased to doe whatsoeuer he shall propound unto yow, What can wee saie more of his greater auctority? your Matie will be moreover pleased to honor and favour him for our namesake... (Shirley 60-61).

We find the same impression, more grimly voiced, in Thomas Fuller's precis of Robert Sherley. What the Shah appreciates, the biographer records with a note of skepticism: "He much affected to appear in foreign vests, and as if his clothes were his limbs, accounted
himself never ready till he had something of the Persian habit about him."\textsuperscript{73}

Robert Sherley's Persian "habit" is his legacy and achievement, an act of self-aestheticizing and preciosity, an appropriation of exteriors, of what the panoramic eye has registered as the Other. His English audience may call him a player, may even suspect his motivation, but for the elements of his performance it is prepared. Robert Sherley's insistent Orientalism, his exaggerated gestures, his formalism, draw from a repertoire of images with which the English observer is familiar. Without qualification, for instance, Purchas may use a Persian metaphor in describing the Sophy's magnanimity towards his ambassador because Persian hyperbole is a truism, another manifestation of his extravagance: "this Mans Bread is Baked for Sixtie Yeeres, being the formall words of his Royall Charter to him (which he that understandeth the Easterne phrase of daily bread in his pater noster, knows how to interpret)" (377). But vainly would Robert Sherley declare that his Persian robes should remain, for his English spectators, a superficial appurtenance.

To Robert Sherley Persia is a blur of signs without signification—a loose gown, a turban to be pinched and fitted for the occasion, or surmounted by a cross precisely because what is exiguous in meaning may contain its contradiction. Transplanted to an elsewhere where it is "un-understood," stripped of socio-economic indicators (color, fabric, cut, etc.), the costume is meant to convey the ineffable, to be generically exotic. It masks, in fact, a vast emptiness. The costume means nothing to Robert Sherley. He is willing, and expresses the willingness, to dispose of it. This is the source of his difficulty and puzzlement, his

central paradox; an exercise in meaninglessness is to restore him to meaning, to make of him a gentleman promised by King James that he should have "no thinge at all to do with the merchants, but should bee dispatched in all thinges immediatlie from himselfe, as being sent Ambr from a kinge to a kinge" (Shirley 92). For Robert Sherley the Persian habit is a means of exchange, an envelope of the soul, of the "person" Robert Sherley. To his English interpreters, it is the thing itself, a portent of and what makes the Persian, occluding signs, in other words. The turban distracts attention, silences him, speaks for him. It proceeds him into view and tarries after him. Beneath it he disappears. He has become the appendage to his robes. His turban wears him like a parasite.

It is characteristic of his ironic plight that Robert Sherley should be the first casualty of his illusions. Suspected on two continents, a doomed merchant with wild schemes and an aim to be a gentleman masquerades as a Persian. His mimesis condemns him to metonymy. Projected into a lineage of which he is perhaps the most accessible specimen, he is prey to its rules. Robert Sherley falls victim to the motifs which he has helped define and circulate—first on the symbolic plane, in the hands of his supporters, and a second time in the sphere of realpolitik, at the instigation of his enemies.

Robert Sherley's vestmental pretensions are the final advance of the Sherlian venture. The distortions of Sherlian enterprise solidify in him; he is their objectification. As early as Thomas Middleton's effusive pamphlet Sir Robert Sherley (1609), we may detect an unintended nuance that the protagonist may be an invention of the author. Prefacing his remarks with an extended analogy, Middleton begins his tract by mixing personal gain and
patriotic fervor. "Reader, this Persian robe so richly woven with the praises only of Sir Robert Sherley (thy countryman), comes to thee at a low price, though it cost him dear that wears it to purchase so much fame as hath made it so excellent. It is now his for ever, thine so long as it is his; for every good man (as I hope thou art) doth participate in the renown of those that are good, and virtuous" (304).

Through his purchase, the reader may participate in the Persian adventure, or more precisely, in the donning of Persia. But the pleasure is strangely ambivalent. Persia functions doubly in Sir Robert Sherley; it is the robe that Robert wears and the tract that Middleton weaves. As the protagonist, Robert Sherley himself appears to be either inscribing the text or being inscribed in it. This confusion between the person and text of Robert Sherley only deepens in the rest of the narrative. "Look upon him truly," Middleton says, "and thou shalt find a large general chronicle of time writ in a little volume" (304) and "(being before anagrammatised) he may apparently be deciphered" (310).

The depersonalization of Robert Sherley is more glaring in Purchas's testament of the Ambassador (1624), the last panegyric to be published during Robert Sherley's lifetime. If, at the start of the Sherleian venture, in the travelogues of Parry (1601) and Cartwright (1611), Robert Sherley is without a speaking part; at the end he is beyond speaking, a figure of speech. Dining at the table of the great, he is effaced, consigned to the margins of the page. Purchas enumerates Sherley's audiences. Two Emperors, two Popes, the King of Poland, and the Czar of Russia have received him. The places visited testify to his worth: "These have seene him, and he hath seene them with Eyes more then of a Traveller, more then his owne,
Himselfe being the Eyes of a mightie Monarch, which in his person visited so many Countries, Cities, and Courts" (376). Merging the boundaries of the Self and the Other, he both inherits from and bequeaths to the Other. Such porosity of character, we have seen elsewhere in the Sherlian discourse. More and less than a "person," Robert Sherley, like the Persian, has become rhetoric. The "Sherlian working" has been felt as far away as "remoter India" and Africa. The "mightie Ottoman, terror of the Christian World, quaketh of a Sherley-Fever, & gives hopes of approching fates" (376). Having learned "Sherlian arts of war," the prevailing Persian King, gratified by the assistance, has been magnanimous. The subject, of "whom so much hath before been occasionally recited" and from whom "I much desired to have obtained some Relation" (373) is now an object of wonder. We read him at a triple remove—not through his own words, bothered as he is with weighty business, nor even through the prism of Purchas's rereading, but in the imperial grant of Rudolph the Second. Delivered verbatim, the imperial voice overwhelms and replaces "A briefe Memorials." As an exercise in authority and as an authorial intrusion, the emperor's decree imparts to Purchas's Robert Sherley the claim of "real" discourse. Robert Sherley is thus legitimized, not by what he says or claims, but by words. His person, a text inscribed by his heroics and rendered into a geographical lecture by Purchas, is now, with the emperor's edict, a palimpsest.

III. Robert Sherley Betrayed

Sherlian narratives, I have argued, eliminated the corporeality of Robert Sherley. Much like the Persians he claimed to represent, Robert Sherley became a fictional construct.
But Robert Sherley, as we have seen, played before and sought to please two audiences—his English observers and Persian informants. Let us consider this second audience of Robert Sherley's: what did the Persians think of him? We have two options in analyzing the Persian perception—what other Persian visitors to London said of Robert Sherley, and how Shah Abbas reacted to him once Robert Sherley returned to Persia for the final time. I shall consider Shah Abba's view later. For now I will turn to Nagd Ali Beg, a Persian Ambassador who denounced Robert Sherley in London. For the Nagd Ali Beg episode we are indebted, as we are for much of the history of the Sherleys, to non-Persian sources—the testimony of Finett, the Assistant to the Master of Ceremonies in the Courts of James I and Charles I. Finett's account of the reaction of a rival Persian ambassador to Robert Sherley is interpretive, and, like any interpretation, biased. My point here, however, is to try to reconstruct the Persian attitude to Robert Sherley through Nagd Ali Beg's actions as observed by Finett—a tortuous method, but an inevitable one since Finett's is the only description of this episode.

Robert Sherley, we should remember, had frequently been denounced by Persian rival envoys. His departure from Spain in 1610 had been prompted by the arrival of a new Persian embassy, led by two ambassadors, one an Augustinian friar, the other a Persian courtier reputed to be a merchant. The pair, reaching Lisbon quarreling over matters of precedence, soon set about disgracing Robert Sherley as an impostor (Davies 233). This same scenario was repeated during Robert Sherley's second mission to England. With the death of James I, the Persian ambassador had already lost his chief and most enthusiastic sponsor. The
newly crowned Charles I was well disposed to the ambassador, though far less enamored of a monopoly of the silk trade. It was at this time, after Robert Sherley's first and felicitous audience with the new King, that there disembarked at Portsmouth a Persian, Nagd Ali Beg, who claimed to represent the Shah and disputed Robert Sherley's credentials (Davies 266).

A rival ambassador was a boon to the interests of the East India Company, and it ministered to Nagd Ali Beg with alacrity. Arrangements were made to defray his expenses. The King's coach was procured, and the sevices of the Earl of Warwick, the Master of Ceremonies, enlisted to transport the ambassador to London. Robert Sherley naturally viewed these developments with suspicion and alarm. He retrieved his letters of appointment from the court and, accompanied by the Earl of Cleveland, paid a courtesy call on Nagd Ali Beg on the morning of the day designated for Nagd Ali Beg's audience with the King (Ferrier 84-85). Sir John Finett, who was in Sherley's company, has left a vivid account of the proceedings.

Entering the Hall, (where he then was sitting in a chair on his legs double under him, after the Persian Posture) and affording no motion of respect to any of us, Sir Robert Sherley gave him a salutation, and sate downe on a stolle neer him, while my Lord of Cleaveland by an Interpreter signified, in three words, the cause of the Ambassador Sherleys and his and our comming to him, but with little returne of regard from him, till I informing the Interpreter (of the new Ambassador) what my Lords quality was, he let fall his Trust-up-leggs from his chaire, and made a kinde of respect to his Lordship. This done, Sir Robert Sherley, unfouling his Letters, and (as the Persian use is in reverence to their King) first touching his eyes with them, next holding them over his head, and after kissing them, he presented them to the Ambassador, that he receiving them, might performe the like observance, when he suddenly rising out of his chaire, stept to Sir Robert Sherley, snatcht his Letters from him, toare them, and gave him a blow on the face with his Fist, and while my Lord of Cleaveland stepping between kept off the offer of a further violence; the Persians Son next at hand flew upon Sir
Robert Sherley, and with two or three blows more, overthrew him, when Master Maxwell of the Bedchamber, and my Lord of the Bedchamber, and my Lord of Cleaveland neareste to him, pulling him back while we of the company laid hands on our Swords (but not drawing them, because not any one Sword or Dagger was drawn by the Persians) (174).

The combatants separated, the Earl of Cleveland remonstrated with Nagd Ali Beg, saying that, had the English visitors not respected the Shah, "neither he [Nagd Ali Beg], nor those about him, that had committed that insolency should have gone alive out of the place" (175). The ambassador, subdued by the warning, explains his behavior by voicing his suspicions of Robert Sherley:

he was sorrow he had offended his Lordship, and us by his Act which he had performed (transported with extreme rage against a Person that had dared to counterfeit the King his Masters hand (which was alwayes (he said) set on the top of his Letters) when these Letters he had shewed had it on the back-side) and to heare (as he had done) that so meane a fellow, and an Imposter, should presume to say, he had married the King his Masters Neece (174-175).

Robert Sherley who has taken shelter behind his companions, "amazed and confounded with his blow and treatment," responds to Nagd Ali Beg's charges, justifying the manner of the seal, and denying ever exaggerating his royal connections. Nagd Ali Beg scoffs at these clarification. The English party withdraws, "with little or no respects to him" (175).

Finett, we note in passing, appears to "know" Persian habits--the posture that he may assume upon a chair or towards a royal decree. This knowledge is based, we may safely assume, upon Finett's observations of Robert Sherley. Although Robert Sherley's Persian mannerisms appear to reinforce his credibility in Finett, Sherlian discourse, I have suggested, had already discredited Robert Sherley by reducing him to words. He is a Persian, not just because of the formalism of his manner, but because of the letters that he provides. Nagd Ali
Beg appears to share a similar view of the importance of discourse in legitimizing Robert Sherley. It is the word that Nagd Ali Beg attacks. Even before delivering a blow to the person Robert Sherley, Nag Ali Beg tears up the letters which legitimize him. The literary practice that we have witnessed in the fiction of the Sherlian discourse is repeated and re-echoed in the temporal world of real politic. In both these worlds—the realm of fiction and fact—the real person is erased by the paper, the texts which represent him. To attack the text, then, is to undo Robert Sherley.

But let us return to Robert Sherley and Nagd Ali Beg. The scuffle cost the participants dearly. Perturbed by the incident, the King suspended his appointment with Nagd Ali Beg, and when he consented to a meeting at the intercession of the East India Company, Nagd Ali Beg was received as a private gentleman. The melee had more serious repercussions for Robert Sherley. He had behaved badly. His explanations had lacked conviction and the fervor of the innocent. Even in Finett's sympathetic eyes, the "greatest blot, and fault of this adow, was cast upon Sir Robert Sherley for his default in his resolution, not to return with blows (or words at least) the affront done him" (175). Recovering his wits, he would write to Charles I, with characteristic extravagance beseeching to be sent to Persia "with his two letters tyed about his neck for tryall whether they were true or false" (175). His belated passion earned him a private audience a day after Nagd Ali Beg's, at which time the King announced his intention to have both envoys return to Persia to have their quarrel heard and settled by the Shah. As his own ambassador the King chose and knighted Sir Dodmore Cotton. He was given the limited instruction to alert the Persian of "so strange an accident
upon ye arrivall here of a second Ambr. from Persia ye Ld. Nagdi Beg as makes us dobtfull how to proceed in any treaty of settlement of those things yt were propounded" and to "informe your selves of ye quality & authority of both ye Ambassages & procure from ye King a declaration of his pleasure concerning them."\textsuperscript{74} After a series of delays, and exasperations between Nagd Ali Beg and Khaja Shawsuar, a merchant in his suite, arrangements were completed to transport the three ambassadors in a fleet of six vessels bound for the East. Appropriate safeguards were erected to prevent Nagd Ali Beg from carrying off with him "that lewde strumpeitt which he hath so long kept in his house" (Ferrier 91). At the insistence of Lady Theresa Sherley, who petitioned the Privy Council to seek reassurances against that "Barbarous Heathen" (Shirley 95), the Company gave "special direction to its commanders to be very careful that sir Robert Sherley and the Persian Ambassador be not suffered at the Cape or elsewher to go ashore together lest some disaster happen between them."\textsuperscript{75} The fleet set sail in March 1627.

The failure of the first official English mission to Persia was dismal. Nagd Ali Beg died en route in Swally Road; Thomas Herbert, the chief narrator of the mission, suspected the Persian ambassador of "hauing poysoned himselfe willfully in foure dayes feeding only vpon opium."\textsuperscript{76} Cotton obtained an audience with Shah Abbas at Ashraf on the shores of the Caspian, and put to him specific queries about Robert Sherley (Stevens 116). The Shah was evasive.

\textsuperscript{75} W. Noel Sainsbury, ed., \textit{Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series, East Indies, China and Persia, 1625-1629} vol. 6 (Vaduz: Kraus, 1964) 335.
\textsuperscript{76} Thomas Herbert, \textit{A Relation of Some Yeares Travaille into Afrique, Asia, Indies} (New York: Da Capo, 1971) 28.
Concerning Sir Robert Sherley, he had been long of his acquaintance, and expressed as many considerable favours towards him (though a stranger and Christain) as to any of his born subjects. That if Nogdi-beg had asperesed him unjustly, he should have satisfaciton; it argued indeed Nogdi-beg was guilty, in that he chose rather to destroy himself by the way than adventure a purgation. In some sort he presaged my rigour; for had he come, and been found faulty, by my head (an oath of no small force) he should have been cut in as many pieces as there are days in the year, and burnt in the open market with dogs'-turds (Foster 156-157).

In his short narrative of the mission, Dr. Henry Gooch, the chaplain to the embassy, has recorded similar divagations. To Cotton's account of the dilemma in which Charles I found himself after the quarrel between the two ambassadors, Shah Abbas's answers in a brusque and equivocal manner.

Concerning Nogte Beg he interrupted my Lord [Cotton] in speech telling him the man now was dead, and therfore exempt from his jurisdiction. Unto the rest he replied nothing. My Lord Shirley he neither disavowed, nor approved Noghte Beg.

Cotton was led to believe that following the court to Qazvin, he might obtain a more satisfactory answer. This he did, although adequate provisions were not made for the mission. "Good care was taken" in the words of Gooch, "that neither pleasure should mollify us, nor plenty cause us to surfeit" (Stodart 27). In Qazvin, "unsaluted of all, not heeded by any" (29). Cotton renewed his investigation, but his access to the king was barred by the Chief Minster and court favorite, Mohammad Ali Beg. The minister demanded Robert Sherley's letters of credence, but after examining them, to Gooch's surprise, he appeared indifferent.

My Lord [Cotton] sheweth him the letters and propositions. Mahomet, without once kissing the letters, nor moving the same unto his eyes and head, (which ceremony all Persians religiously observer, wh ensever any letters of
their King are delivered unto them) wistly vieweth the seal, denieth the same to be the King's; sheweth it unto others, who with as little reverence look upon it. Next, he peruseth the articles, and insisting in the first (as I take it) which concerned galleys, "I am sure (saith he) the King my master never gave him commission to propound any such article" (*Stodart* 29).

The minister subsequently claimed that the letters were indeed counterfeit and that the Shah had destroyed them in a rage. Doubting the minister and beginning to suspect Robert Sherley, Cotton sent Gooch to question the ailing ambassador. Robert Sherley was by then terminally ill and his explanations, Gooch claims, were incoherent.

I demonstrate unto him [Robert Sherley], how nearly it concerned his honour to justify himself, and vindicate his letters. I put him in remembrance of what himself was wont often, upon occasion, to tell me, that the copies of all such letters, etc., were kept among the records of the kingdom, and advise him to cause due search to be made for the same. But, whether the violence of his sickness, which daily increased more upon him, took away, at that time, the wonted sense of his honour, as commonly it doth the care of all things else; or whether it be the nature of small injuries to speak of extreme to stand amazed, I know not; he replieth nothing, but falleth off into other discourse, especially into bitter invectives against the English Agent [of the East India Company] and per adventure not without just cause (*Stodart* 31-32).

This is our last vision of Robert Sherley. Unable to clear his name, he died on the thirteenth of July 1628, Cotton following him to the grave eleven days later. The leadership of the mission now devolved upon Gooch. In his final interview with Mohammad Ali Beg, Gooch pressed the Shah's favorite on the matter of Robert Sherley. Mohammad Ali Beg proved, once more, intractable.

I ask him [Mohammad Ali Beg] what further answer I should return to his Majesty from the King of Persia, concerning the Lord Shirley and his overtures: whereunto, as formerly, he replieth, That the King altogether disavowed my Lord Shirley; and addeth, "Had he been his Ambassador, would the King my master, trow you, have suffered him to have ended his
days in so great misery, neglect and want?" The business touching the
galleys he slighteth: unto the other articles he proudly answereth, They
concerned only trade, a thing proper unto merchants, inferior unto the
thoughts of Princes" (Stodart 32-33).

With little to show for the losses and aggravations it had suffered, the English mission
journeyed homeward, landing at Gravesand in January 1630. Lady Theresa Sherley, left
behind, eventually made her way to Rome. She resided near the Church of Santa Maria
della Scala in Travestera where she also arranged for the interment of the bones of Robert
Sherley (Davies 278). Her passage out of Persia had been difficult. After her husband's
death, while she herself was sick with dysentery, a Dutch painter conspiring with the Chief
minister seized from her "what was valuable or vendible." Among these purloined items
were the vests, a dagger, and the turbans of the deceased (Herbert 125).

IV. Robert Sherley and History

A silent specter waves to us from the other shore. We track him in literary and public
texts, in allusions and puns, reports of intelligencers and the jibes of letter writers. An
adventurous speller even by the standards of his idiosyncratic age, the semi-literate Robert
Sherley never delivered the promised memoir to Purchas. Had he done so, he would have
fared even worse than his brother, Anthony, whose insipid narrative adds a streak of pedantry
to his general reputation as a charlatan. Without an apologia, however, the ambassador is
to us what he was to his contemporaries, a costume haggling tiresomely over minutiae.

We grasp him through his beholders, a task made more difficult as throughout his life
Robert Sherley seems to have undergone a series of physical and spiritual metamorphoses.
He is turbaned in Britain and nose-ringed in Persia. Raised a Protestant, he converts to
Catholicism and in Europe must contend with Spanish gossip that he "had lived a Moor in Persia, with other infamies." No doubt, among the few scholars interested in a crevice of history, this is the reason for the continuation of the Sherleian myth, ambiguity being a necessary ingredient of transmogrification. There is an absence at the core of the man, a quixotic touch of the ridiculous which may be diversely manipulated to serve as the butt of jokes or the stuff of myth. The fraud Nixon conjures, Day perpetuates, and Purchas recommends, survives in the imagination of the Victorian colonists in India who claimed the Sherleys as progenitors and found in them the fruits and hazards of contact with the Other.

The question of Robert Sherley's bona fides, and the legitimacy of his representations in England, even among twentieth-century scholars, has excited little controversy. The traditional doctrine espoused by Chew, Ross, Penrose, and Foster has held that Robert Sherley's years of long and faithful service in Persia convinced the Shah to send him as his emissary to Europe. That Nagd Ali Beg was a pawn of the East India Company, dispatched through its machinations, has been accepted without question. His death in India was seen

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78 For the anonymous author of the Calcutta Review "at the present day when we are enabled to look with justifiable pride and satisfaction upon a magnificent Eastern empire, and on an array of more than 200,000 oriental troops, armed and disciplined on the European model by British officers and enlisted under the banner of England, it may not be uninteresting to cast a retrospective glance at the earliest efforts made by our countrymen, two and a half centuries ago to establish a military and political footing in the East, and to discipline the Persian troops with the view of enabling them to cope with the great enemy of Western Europe in that day..." In the writer's judgment, "he seems to have imbied many of the ideas and prejudices of his adopted country, which were not at that period understood in Europe." See, "The Sherleys," Calcutta Review 26.51 (March 1856): 285. More censoriously, James Hutton remarks that Robert Sherley "was fortunate in obtaining an opportunity for displaying the soldierly qualities of his race through a revival of the war with Turkey," but in time "became enervated and demoralized by his long residence in Persia, and took to wearing the Persian costume even in England." "The Shirley Brothers," Asiatic Quarterly Review 4 (July-October 1887): 138.
as Robert Sherley's vindication. In this reading of events Chew and others relied chiefly on the embittered arguments of Gooch and the more famous travelogue of Thomas Herbert.

On the eve of his departure for England from Gombaroon, reflecting upon his final interview with Mohammad Ali Beg, Gooch thought that he had caught Mohammad Ali Beg in a contradiction. When Gooch persisted in questioning the favorite about Robert Sherley, Mohammad Ali Beg appeared to admit that the letters may have been written by the Shah to facilitate Robert Sherley's return to England. Gooch seized upon this statement to absolve Sherley.

I humbly beseech your Lordship to observe this passage. Mahomet first denied the letters; now he acknowledgeth the same; Mahomet denieth that the King of Persia gave unto the Lord Shirley authority to treat of any business; and yet the King himself affirmeth that he gave him (Stodart 33).

Robert Sherley's credentials were legitimate, Gooch concludes, his proposals credible. What defeated him was the covetousness of an aging king who, realizing that he would not live to enjoy the success of the proposals, chose to spurn Sherley rather than acknowledge his service and be duty-bound to reward him (Stodart 33-38).

The chaplain was not present at the audience in Ashraf. His conjectures about the Shah's motivations were based on two meetings with Mohammad Ali Beg. For an account of the Shah's conduct during the reception commentators have had to rely on the sole eye-witness account, Herbert's narrative. Herbert's scruples, however, are debatable. His Travels were reprinted three times in his lifetime, embroidered and embellished with each retelling. In the early edition of the work, he demurely leads the readers to believe that he had visited cities beyond his actual itinerary; in later editions he more boldly would declare to have
"travelled through most parts of the Greater Asia, as also several parts of Afrique and Europe."79 Similar doubts may be raised about Herbert's characterization of the Shah's response to Cotton. In the first edition of his travelogue, writing of Nagd Ali Beg's death, Herbert argues, "the truth is, he dared not to see his Master, nor plead his defence against his Aduersary Sir Robert Sherley, in our Company and thitherward, to purge his honour. I can witnesse that at my being at the King of Persias Court (as I shall discourse of in the sequell) the King said, it was well he poysoned himselfe, for had he come to Court, his bodie should have been cut in three hundred sixtie fiue pieces, and burnt in the open Mydan, or market place with Dogges turds (Herbert 28)." This passage is often quoted in defense of Robert Sherley. It has escaped the notice of most commentators, however, that in the 1638 edition of Relation the promised "sequell" to this passage never materializes. Rather, when Cotton, at Ashraf, finishes his oration to Shah Abbas, Herbert records the King's behavior rather than his respose.

The King gaue him [Cotton] a very gracious reply, and whereas he thinkes it honour enoug to let the great Turkes Ambassadour kisse the hern of his Coat, and sometimes his Foot, he very nobly gaue our Ambassadour his Hand, and with it puld him downe and seated him neect to him crosse- legged, and calling for a cup off wine drunke to his Master our famous King, at which he put of his Hat, and the King seeing it, put off his turbant, and the drunke the cup off, which our Ambassadour pledged thankfully. And the people thought it a strange thing to see their King so complementall, for tis a shame with them to be bare-headed (Herbert 97).

The pleasantries over, Herbert moves on to describe, with prurient interest, incidents of the Shah's arbitrary application of justice. Herbert did include the Shah's ambiguous responses

to Cotton in the 1677 edition of *Relation*, but even this passage is far from the categorical
censure of Nagd Ali Beg which he promises in 1638.

More recently scholars have been less reluctant to question the legitimacy of Robert Sherley's claims. In his appraisal of the debacle of the two ambassadors, Roger Stevens concludes that although the East India Company supported Nagd Ali Beg in London, it could not have possibly intrigued in Persia to have him sent to England. Nagd Ali Beg's embassy left in conjunction with Musa Beg, the ambassador to Holland. This dual embassy, Stevens argues, "was a concerted move initiated by Shah Abbas. It seems likely that the Shah wanted to be better-informed of the intentions of both the English (who would soon develop cold feet) and Dutch (who set up shop in late 1623) as regards Persian trade; that he thought it appropriate to deal with similarly and simultaneously; and that, even though he knew Sherley was in England, he did not regard him by this time as a responsible envoy" (121). Sherley, Ferrier notes, had been absent from Persia for over ten years by the time of Nagd Ali Beg's appointment. The recent Turkish campaign against Baghdad, as well as a desire to sustain British mercantile interest in Persia, may be the more likely explanation for the dispatch of another ambassador to England. "Little is known of the exact circumstances in which Nagd Ali Beg was appointed," Ferrier concludes, "but the suggestion that the Company was responsible is extremely unlikely, for their whole policy was directed towards minimizing their charges not augmenting them" (84).

The chronicles of the Carmelites which lay dormant in the Vatican archives until they were collected and translated anonymously in 1939 shed further light on Robert Sherley's
status as plenipotentiary. In 1608, when the first Carmelites reached Persia and met Robert Sherley in Qazvin, the English hostage was out of favor with the court. In time the missionaries would befriend and convert him, but in those early days they studied him warily, "knowing the harm that he could do to us if he were opposed to us" (119). Father Paul Simon, the leader of the mission, feared that Robert Sherley might impede his negotiations with the Shah. "It appeared to us that it was expedient to dissemble for the time being until the Englishman had quitted Persia, in order not to spoil the business: because otherwise he would not go away and, if he were to remain, he would be against His Holiness and ourselves" (126). Trying to get him out of the way, Father Simon would inform a minister of the Shah that the Pope had specifically requested that Robert Sherley be dispatched to him.

We begged him to help in obtaining sanction from the Shah for the Englishman (who was present) to be allowed to return to his country, which we asked of his Majesty in the name of His Holiness. The wazir executed the commission with the Shah and obtained the permission and, I think, also requested that the Shah would dispatch him (R. Sherley) as his ambassador to your Holiness and to the Christian princes in response to our mission, because in the reply which the Shah gave me in writing to the points, which I discussed with him in the name of Your Holiness, sealed with his private seal, he says: "I wanted to send one of my own people with Fr. Paul Simon, but, since you have requested me to send Don Robert Sherley, I am dispatching him" (126).

The anonymous compiler of the Chronicle concludes, "the impression derived from all points of this account is that Robert Sherley did not go in 1608 to Europe as a valued plenipotentiary: that he himself was disheartened, much out of favor, and wanted an opportunity to get back to Europe (being still more or less a hostage for his brother): that Abbas I had no use for him in Persia, or as his agent in Europe, and by preference would
have let one of the Carmelites act as companion, interpreter and foil to his Persian emissary: Sherley was only sent because the Carmelites asked that he should be the companion" (126). That the Shah consented to the adjurations of the Carmelites, Davies points out, is further substantiated by the Shah's letter to the Pope in which he claimed to be "sending Robert Sherley as his emissary, because the Emperor and the Pope had asked that he should do so; otherwise he would have sent one of his own subjects" (171-172).

The conditions surrounding Robert Sherley's second embassy to England are even more beclouded. Although he would claim to be armed with a Persian letter from the Shah addressed to James I, no translation of the royal farman has survived, and the original, as Roger Stevens observes, seems to have been torn up twice by malefactors--once in London and again in Persia (117). Robert Sherley's startling proposals for the transportation of disassembled galleys to Persia, moreover, appear to have been a scheme whose folly was superseded only by its superfluity. If the Persian king had ever contemplated such a project, the need for it had disappeared by the time that Robert Sherley reached England. With the ejection of the Portuguese from the island of Hormuz, the stranglehold upon shipping in the Persian Gulf had been lifted. Furthermore agents of the East India Company reported to their superiors the availability in the Persian Gulf of "twenty sound frigates and galiots lying idle" (119). Summarizing the events that had transpired between the time Robert Sherley left Persia and reached England, Roger Stevens argues:

The most charitable explanation of his extraordinary, sensationnally plausible yet basically absurd proposals is that they drew on some recollection of things that Shah Abbas or members of the Court had said to him—or perhaps suggestions that he had made to them and to which they had demurred—in
1615, which he retained and embroidered and put together into an attractive-looking package when need--his need--arose. They could not have been based on any recent instruction emanating from Isfahan, because, if they had been, their content would have been quite different; and they certainly were not specifically embodied in any letters of credence or instruction that he had been given at the time of his departure from Isfahan (120).

V. The Castaway

Robert Sherley, I have suggested, is a doubly fictionalized. His audience of English and Persian alike see him as a construct, but Robert Sherley himself was involved in remaking and refashioning his persona. Robert Sherley remakes himself in his person (his costume, his behavior) and through his texts (the letter he brings and probably forges). Attacked in his body and in his text, Robert Sherley becomes a castaway. This fate ties him with the Persian he had helped create in the Sherlian discourse.

Both Anthony Nixon in The Three English Brothers and John Day The Travails of The English Brothers in 1607 had heralded the birth of a new Persian, one schooled in the ways of the British and Christianized. For the Sherlian discourse such Persians are proof of the benefits of the British overtures to Persia. Although these reports were greatly exaggerated, Europeanized Persians did appear in Western Europe as a consequence of the Sherley missions to and from Persia.

Each English mission to Persia produced its castaways--captives brought like trophies to London, converts, defectors. Anthony Jenkinson, an agent of the Muscovy Company and the first Englishman to explore the Caspian Sea and present himself to the Sophy in 1576, came into possession of a Tartar girl in Astrakhan. The girl afterwards was taken to England and tendered to the Queen. What became of her is not known. In her will,
Anne Sherley, the elder Sir Thomas' wife and the mother of his three sons, left an annuity of forty pounds to Robert's son, Henry, and a bequest to "William Nazarbegg (Nazer-beg,) the Persian boy." E. P. Shirley speculates that the child had accompanied Robert Sherley to England and remained behind as playmate of Henry. Two other Persians, Rustam and Elias, flit across the pages of the Court Minutes of the East India Company. They were servants of Nagd Ali Beg's who refused to return to Persia with the ambassador. Both were employed at Blackwall at laborer's wages (Calendar, vol. 6 343). Rustam had a change of heart and petitioned the Company for suitable attire "to carry him unto his owne country by the way of Muscovia" (438). An ingenious fellow, he may have found employment as an interpreter with the Olearius's Holstein Mission (Ferrier 92). The last we hear of Elias is in the company's decision to compensate him with "ten shillings out of the poor box" (498).

It was in Spain, however, that the hypothetical Persian of Day and Nixon, estranged from his language and name, achieved its fullest dramaturgical form. In 1604 there would be published in Valladolid a small book suggestively titled Don Juan of Persia. Divided into three sections, the first book, to "conform to the canon of good custom," described the government of Persia together with its ancient and medieval history; the second treated contemporary events and the Turkish wars; and the last dealt with the recent peregrinations of a Persian embassy. The author was a Persian Moslem attached to Anthony Sherley's mission to European sovereigns as first Secretary to Hussain Ali Beg, or the Halibeck of Day's The English Brothers. In Spain he had abjured his faith and, becoming a Roman Catholic, had taken the name Don Juan of Persia. His life, Le Strange suggests, reads like
a romance. His adopted name, it might be added, has the indecent ring of a publisher's ploy, except that it was an earnest appellation.

He may have been called Uluch or Uruch Beg in his native country, the correct pronunciation being now indecipherable in the inexact Spanish transliteration (1, 309). Of his background we know only that his father was slain in combat, and that Don Juan was middle-aged, married, and a parent at the time of the joint embassy, with a record of military service (3). The mission itself, as we have seen, was ill-fated, fractious from the start. It left Isfahan in 1599, crossing the Caspian Sea into the territories of Tzar Boris Godunoff. Wintering in Moscow, the ambassadors were hospitably received, but their relationship soured. The Persians took the side of a Portuguese friar who had travelled with the mission and may have had pretensions to ambassadorial rank. He had accused Sir Anthony of theft; Sir Anthony had threatened him with violence. Their differences patched over, the embassy trekked northward to Archangel after a five months' stay, and then embarked on a perilous forty-day voyage to Embeden. The circumlocutious journey south was leisurely, yet racked by petty enmities. In Rome the ambassadors quarreled again over matters of precedence and finance. Separately they complained to the Pope, and Sir Anthony, in righteous anger, or more probably feigned disgust, abandoned the embassy (231-286). He undertook a commission on behalf of the Pope, an engagement which, like so many others, he would not see to its conclusion (Davies 139).

The remainder of the embassy, its numbers depleted by the defection of three Persians, continued on to Spain where it presented its credentials—a letter more than a yard
in length and written in gold and colored ink—to Philip III in Valladolid. For the next two months the Persians were amply entertained by the sights and festivals of the city. Nothing of any practical value was ever accomplished. Truisms on the amity between princes were dispensed, and the nephew of the ambassador who had begun by dressing in Spanish costume out of amusement, then in appreciation, took shelter with the Fathers of the Society of Jesus to be instructed and baptized. Another mishap befell the embassy. Dismissed by the Spanish King with gifts and salutations for the Shah, the Persians had reached Merida on their way to Lisbon when one of their members, a cleric, was stabbed to death. Don Juan was entrusted with the task of demanding redress from the Spanish government. He met the ambassador’s nephew, returning to Valladolid, and was seized by a desire to emulate him: “... no sooner had I begun to talk with him, and to hold converse with the Fathers of the Society of Jesus—religious men as discrete as they are learned—when it became manifest how God Almighty willed that a miracle should be worked in me. For I began immediately to feel an inordinate longing in my heart to seek and find his Divine Grace... and while I was yet a prey to this confusion and, unable to declare clearly my desire, the Divine Will loosed my tongue... (299).” Don Juan persuaded a third Persian to renounce Islam; the triple baptism was a minor sensation. "Thoroughly instructed," the catechumens were dressed in costumes of white satin and taken by coach to an audience. The king and queen, similarly in white, conducted them to the chapel where the ceremonies were held and the Persians received their Christian names. The royal couple embraced them, amidst the throngs, having acted as the Persians’ baptismal sponsors (302).
Relaciones echoes with the bitter testimony of another witness. Like Robert Sherley, the theatrical alien, Don Juan as the literal Persian exists on a ritual terrain. He is the agent who brings the Other to the Self, to be measured and sampled in familiar confines. "The novelty of my Persian dress," Don Juan writes of his initial entrance into Valladolid, "caused such astonishment, that quite a multitude followed us through the streets" (289). The Persian rides to his appointment, silent in the din of crowds. His dress lures a horde. Their appreciative glances transform him into an object of wonder. But even when the "real" Persian speaks, or subsequently writes, he serves less to promote comprehension of difference, than to establish the supremacy of the Self. What Don Juan provides in the flesh, and enunciates in his text, is the pleasure of the strange, a spectacle of the Other, without the hardships or uncertainties of travel. Upon the tabula rasa of his body, washed clean of memory in the unguent waters of his baptism, the Persian is defined and demolished. Both Robert Sherley and Don Juan contribute to this process of erasure that Robert Sherley and Don Juan contribute. Robert Sherley demonstrates the permeability of the Persian character; Don Juan shows that shapelessness contained, recast and reformed. Underneath his robes and turbans, Robert Sherley believed, was the true self. Don Juan's attestation resounds more powerfully. The self lurks in the Persian. It must be merely entreated to emerge.

Knowledge and experience are Don Juan's marketable qualifications. His voyage matches those of Marco Polo and Henry the Navigator, in breadth and scope (37). His travels have taken him "through most remote lands and by diverse seas." He has been privy to "strange matters" (35). Of these routes and phenomena he may speak authoritatively. "as
an eye-witness" (36) and he is at pains to be factually accurate. His autopic authority is buttressed by vows of sincerity and truthfulness as he calls on, "God to witness- who as I well know, shall never be invoked for any untrue statement... that we only now describe what we have actually ourselves seen in the course of our travels, without adding thereto for the sake of pleasing, or diminishing therefrom for the sake of displeasing" (36). The pride in the journey is followed by a review of Persian history. The pretense at encyclopedic knowledge is breath-taking. Don Juan moves swiftly from geography to ethnography to history, from the mode of government to the Shah's state umbrella. For Don Juan these summations are a prelude. His intention, stated in the first chapter of the first book, and again, with greater urgency, in the third book of his Relaciones, is to demonstrate the glory of

God Almighty—who in past times had opened a path, with His right hand, through the waters of the Red Sea, whereby dry-shod the Children of Israel had gone over, and with His other hand had closed again the waters to cover and drown the satraps and all the Princes of Egypt—was now intent that in Spain he should be proclaimed again as God Almighty. For from the remotest parts of Asia He would bring, to the opposite limit of Europe, men with hard rebellious hearts, these to become softened anon, and like wax to melt in the enjoyment of the warm glow of Evangelical doctrine (292).

Don Juan is proof of the certainty of grace. The whole of Persian history which prefaces his travels is a prologue to a spiritual crisis. He specifically defines his journey in terms of a pilgrimage from ignorance to wisdom "an understanding of things which experience gives to a prudent man," or "[how] to me was granted this sweet savour of the mode of life of Christian folk" (34). Sagacious from his travels and a novice in his newfound faith, Don Juan may assert omniscience and purblindness. What he preaches he may barely understand. For many months after his arrival in Spain Don Juan had been unable to write in Spanish.
He "constrained" his hand to translate and record instructions he took on Christian ordinances in Persian (11, 299). At the time of the composition of Relaciones, he strives "faithfully to believe those dogmas which, though yet to believe those dogmas which, they may not be fully understood by me, are indeed necessary to orthodox belief" (34). A fitting image: the recent convert being the most dogmatic of partisans, his faith stems from beyond the wisdom of true understanding. Then again what Don Juan does possess, his learning, is dispensable knowledge. It is knowledge of falsity, of the darkness of the infidel. It is meant for amusement and entertainment, not interpretation. Imparted, it may be safely forgotten. The struggle in Relaciones is over cognitive precedence. Don Juan's triumph, at the end of his narrative, is to achieve the oblivion of providential mercy. He forgets the past, eradicating himself. He may thus earnestly confess, "before the Divine Majesty of God, how content I am to be a Christian and I have at last lost all memory of the natural pain I once felt at finding myself cut off for ever from my wife, my son, my country and all I there possessed" (308).

The cultural hybrid looks back at the native soil he has fled, and which is receding from him. He gazes upon an adopted country in which he shall disappear. It is his burden and contradiction that his testimony is born at the point of his vanishing, between the deliberate suppression of memory and a persistent evocation of it, the need to eradicate, and the necessity to remember. As a convert, Don Juan must forget and renounce; as an exemplar he must continually recall.

For my parents and fore-bears [sic] were all unbelievers, and I myself grew up in this same state of disbelief, being of the false sect of Mahomed, and
living in the country and under the rule of an infidel Prince, a country situate far distant, more that three thousand leagues from Spain, where I now write this Book in the city of Valladolid. But God indeed showed very singular mercy towards me, using me with all favour, in than I was chosen to be one of the Secretaries of the Embassy sent by the King of Persia to this Kingdom of Spain, thus to make manifest in me the truth of the Gospel... (34).

Don Juan's testimony to God's mysteries is effective only in so far as he relives his conversion. Representation is a form of repetition, and Don Juan's vocation is to rehearse himself. Of prurient and evangelical import are events leading to his apostasy. What happens to him after his baptism is immaterial. Afterwards, he is one of "us." He may relinquish the text, which he does, and disappear from the historical record.

Sherleian Persia finds in the nameless Tartar girl, or the renamed boy, the final capitulation of its subject. Even Don Juan is a construct which confirms the validity of the gaze. For Don Juan's voice is not his own. He is, like that which he represents, spoken for.

Don Juan had kept notes of his journey to Spain. During the months following his conversion, despairing of his plan to return to Persia in search of his wife and son, he began compiling his Relaciones. He had a cursory grasp of Castilian, and he was aided in the writing of his memories by Alfonso Remon, who in the introduction to Relaciones praises Don Juan's knowledge of Persia and claims to have faithfully translated Don Juan's diaries, page by page. Le Strange, basing his supposition on the "astonishing" spelling of names and places in Relaciones, depicts the cooperation of Don Juan and Remon in this way:

... [place] names during the composition of the Relaciones had to be read out aloud by Don Juan from his draft Diary to Remon, who, listening to Don Juan's utterances, proceeded to dictate what he heard to an amanuensis, who wrote it all down in accordance with Castilian orthography. For it is evident from many mistakes that are of the ear, not of the eye, that the book before
us was transcribed by one who set down what was dictated. This is clear both from his version of the strange names pronounced by Don Juan, and from what Remon was reading aloud from the authorities (Italian and Spanish) he was consulting in the compilation of the historical parts of his work. Then followed the lack of proof correcting... Remon indeed had no easy task, and to fill in historical blanks and to guide him in the account of the journey through Russia and Germany, two countries with whose geography he must have been but imperfectly acquainted, he now kept open before him the excellent contemporary geographical compendium written in Italian by Giovanni Botero (11-12).

Le Strange argues that in the first two books of Relaciones, Remon's influence is even more acute. The first chapter which sets forth Don Juan's satisfaction at becoming a Christian is probably Remon's, and the second chapter which deals with the various provinces of Persia appears to be a "rearrangement of what Remon found in Botero." The account of the history of the Persia is gleaned from Classical authors and Byzantine history, while the whole of Book II may be regarded as a "condensed and rearranged translation of [Giovanni Thomaso] Minadoi" with occasional emendations by Don Juan (12-19).

The liminal persona has his hour on the stage, strutting and fretting. Without place or status, he is consigned to the margins of society and the page. His chief attribute may be his silence. His most successful testimony is his appearance. He is better seen than heard. When he dies the cast is broken. In the grave, as in the womb, he is the other. "Wanting a fitter place of Burial," immediately after his death, Robert Sherley "was put into the earth at the doore of his owne House in Cazbeen" (Herbert 124). In 1605, while he was still in Valladolid, Don Juan was involved in a scuffle in the course of which he was slain. "To spare embarrassing questions his body was then and there flung into a desolate gulley near the capital, where, as reported, it was eaten by the town dogs" (Le Strange 10).
VI. The Burial

After the death of Robert Sherley in 1626 diplomatic relations between England and Persia ceased. For almost two centuries contact between the two countries was conducted by private travelers or agents of the East India Company. In the last quarter of the eighteenth century, just prior to the renewal of diplomatic relations, England witnessed a flowering of interest in Oriental scholarship. John Malcolm, Harford Jones, and James Morier, nineteenth-century diplomats, considered themselves scholars as well as travelers. But at the start of the eighteenth century, in a final Sherlian echo, we may already witness a change of perception. Robert Sherley's turbaned appearance in London, I have argued, is an apt beginning for any discussion of Anglo-Persian relations as it heralded the death and reincarnation of the Persian in the Sherlian discourse. In the story of the death of Khaja Shawsavar outlined below we witness the death of the Sherlian vision.

With Nagd Ali Beg had come to England a merchant, Khaja Shahsuwar. Relations between the ambassador and the merchant were never cordial, and while the ambassador vituperated against Robert Sherley, the merchant hurled obloquies at Nagd Ali Beg. He had been authorized by the Shah, Khaja Shahsuwar informed the directors of East India Company, to buy "certain commodities and toys." To this end he requested that the company buy the silk he had brought with him from Persia. Nagd Ali Beg laid claims to the same merchandise, and demanded from Khaja Shahsuwar remittance for his upkeep. The disputants lodged scurrilous petitions with the East India Company, enlisting its support. In August 1626, still combating the ambassador, Khaja Shahsuwar died. Sir Dodmore Cotton
and Robert Sherley, who converged on the merchant's house, sent a messenger to the East India Company to inquire about burial arrangements and were told that the directors, "will neither meddle, nor make in the business, but wished the messenger to attend the Persian ambassador and from him receive directions" (Calendar vol. 6 232). The next day, mourned by his son, the ambassador, and other Persian attendants, Khaja Shahsuwar was buried outside the walls of the lower churchyard of St. Botolph's Bishopgate. The epitaph on his tomb, commissioned and erected by his son, read in part:

This Grave is made for
HODGES SHAUGHWARE,
the chiefest Servant to the King of Persia,
For the space of twenty Years (Ferrier 90).

The Persians' funereal observances were recorded in Anthony Munday's expanded edition of John Stow's Survey of London and, more fully, in John Strype's edition of the same work. Strype provides a sketch of the tomb, a translation of the epitaph as "Englished" by an interpreter, and then describes the burial:

... the Ambassador himself, young Shawsware his Son, and many other Persians, (with many Expressions of their infinite Love and Sorrow) following him to the Ground between eight and nine of the clock in the Morning. The Rites and Ceremonies that (with them) are due to the dead, were chiefly performed by his Son, who sitting cross-legged at the North End of the Grave, (for his Tomb stands North and South) did one while read, another while sing; his reading and singing intermixed with sighing and weeping. And this, with other things that were done in the Grave in private (to prevent with the sight the relation) continued about half an hour. But this was but this Days' Business; for, as tho' this had not been enough to perform to their Friend departed, to this place and to this end (that is Prayer, and other Funeral Devotions) some of them came every Morning and Evening at six and six for the space of a Month together. And had come (as it was then imagined) the whole time of their abode here in England, had not the
Rudeness of our People disturbed and prevented their purpose.\textsuperscript{80}

"To prevent with the sight the relation"--Strype's legitimate gaze is as distant from the prying of the merry Londoners as it is distinct from the vision of the Sherleian authors. Unencumbered by the necessity or the compulsion to invoke the canon, Strype's credibility, the privilege of his sight, derives from his authorial voice, detached and inquisitive. He is a man of science, equipped with an ethnographer's alibi. While the Persian mourner is engaged in the grave, Strype lingers at the margins. It is not for him to conjecture, or to give rein to his fancy. With a clinical exactitude fortified by a pedant's mild irony, he observes the position of the grave. He records the mode of lamentation. He registers the hour of the burial, the frequency of the devotions. The change in the role of the observer and the image of the observed is noteworthy. What for the Sherleian authors was a hollow facade, for Strype, writing a century later, is a subject of disengaged inquiry.

In his introduction to his novel of the crusades, *The Talisman* (1832), Sir Walter Scott confesses that by the time he began writing of the East, the region was so thoroughly depicted, in both factual and fictional accounts, that he feared he might suffer derision.

*Every member of the Travelers' Club, who could pretend to have thrown his shoe over Edom, was, by having done so, constituted my lawful critic and correct. It occurred, therefore, that, where the author of *Anastasius*, as well as he of *Hadji Baba* [sic], had described the manners and vices of the Eastern nations, not only with fidelity, but with the humor of Le Sage and the ludicrous power of Fielding himself, one who was a perfect stranger to the subject must necessarily produce an unfavorable contrast...In a word, the Eastern themes had been already so successfully handled by those who were acknowledged to be masters of their craft, that I was diffident of making the attempt.*

The two novelists with whom Scott fears comparison, Thomas Hope, author of *Anastasius* (1819), and James Morier whose *Hadji Baba* novels (1824; 1828) will concern us in the next chapter, were popularly acknowledged masters of Eastern mores. The vogue of the East, however, even as More and Morier made their initial contributions to it, was at least half a century old. The Regency, which had produced numerous plays with Eastern settings, had insisted on "fidelity to authentic sources...in the creation of costume, scenery and setting." ("Near East in English Drama" 63). Improvements in set and costume design had made the demand for realism possible, "the new 'box-set,' the 'built-up set,' and the more colorful costumes increas[ing] the possibilities for spectacular romantic effects" (63). The demands

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for authenticity were themselves a result of the increasing traffic with the East. Renaissance England had known of the Orient through the writing of travelers who were most often not conversant in the native languages. The Enlightenment had learned of Asia through French translations of Oriental and quasi-Oriental tales ("Poetry Fad" 137). It was in the latter quarter of the Eighteenth century that increasing travel to the region reigned interest in the East (Conant 155-156).

Persia which had, in the seventeenth century, appealed to England as both a trading route and trading post, became, in the eighteenth, a matter for scholars and a destination for English diplomats. By the end of the century, "the earlier antiquarian attitude towards the Orient had changed...to one of lively and current interest" (138). This confluence of the interests of academia, politics, and commerce assured the future of the study of the Persian language in England. The language was hurriedly cultivated by Englishmen both at home and in India, where in 1781 Sir Charles Wilken had devised fonts for printing the manuscript Persian characters. From the presses at both centers of activity there issued a considerable number of linguistic books as well as editions and translations of the Persian classics... All this cultural stirring promoted by the interest in trade and empire, produced considerable curiosity about Persian poetry... (Yohannan 138-139).

Oriental and pseudo-Oriental tales translated from the French which had entertained English readers for much of the eighteenth century, thus gradually gave way to translations of genuine Oriental prose and poetry into English. Despite the renewed interest in the language and culture of Persia, however, it was English diplomacy which reintroduced Persia to England as a spatial reality rather a territory of the mind.
After a flurry of activity early in the seventeenth century during which time England and Persia exchanged ambassadors, diplomatic relations between the two countries ceased. Such contacts as existed were carried out by factors of the East India Company or travelers such as John Chardin and Jonas Hanaway, who sojourned in Persia for pleasure or profit. This chapter addresses both the causes and the consequences of the renewal of Anglo-Persian diplomatic relations in the first decade of the nineteenth century. It describes the political atmosphere which engendered the missions of John Malcolm and Harford Jones to Persia, and argues that the exigencies they endured in the fulfillment of their offices, in combination with the make up of their characters, compelled the envoys to closely identify, if not deliberately confuse, the treatment of their persons with the dignity of the governments they served. This conclusion, and the rigidity with which they sought to enforce and uphold it, led the envoys to strange conceits, to affectations of grandeur, displays of largess, quibbles over minutiae and protocol. For to assert British authority in Persia meant, in a sense, to become "Persian"—speaking and acting in an "idiom of ritual," to borrow a phrase from a Modern application of anthropology to history. Malcolm and Jones mistook, or endeavored to mistake, the signs of difference for spectacle. Persia, thus hollowed, became a land of facade and artifice, a theatrical space populated by actors; the envoys, in their protracted struggles to impress, would abide by the rules of the stage. These impersonations, nonetheless, were meant to appear as authentic before the natives. The English audience, of which Malcolm and Jones were equally conscious, were to interpret these exercises for what they were—a donning of masks.
The assertion of British authority in Persia, I have argued in the previous chapters, required an assumption of native habits. Both Anthony Sherley and his younger brother, Robert, were born in Persia. Such self-fashionings, instances of going native, I have suggested, are moments of collapse. The English Self is not just appropriating the Persian Other, but merging with it, being subsumed by it. Whatever motivated such a loss of Self and however theatrically enacted, going native caused the English reader to view the traveler skeptically. Anthony, in his own apologia and in the Sherlian discourse that he encouraged and perpetuated, ultimately escapes the charge of disloyalty. His stay in Persia is too brief and his Persia is too obviously a stage. If at times he appears to function as the Sophy's double, it is the Sophy who is crossing the boundary, appearing English in his resolve, in his ability to distinguish between the stage and reality. For Robert Sherley, the turbaned ambassador, the Persian conversion is more complete and disastrous. He is too long a resident in Persia; he marries an exotic. And the Sherlian discourse for which he has acted as a conduit and informant, defines him as a Persian product. If Anthony defines Persia as a stage, Robert, transporting that unreality with him to London, is victimized by it.

In some ways, in the renewal of Anglo-Persian relations, we witness the obverse of Robert Sherley's enactment. Turbaned and robed, he brings the Persian before the English audience. Malcolm and Jones take the Persian before the Persian Court. Their Persian performance, then, may be regarded as an extension of Robert Sherley's. Such a view, however, is not entirely accurate. For much like Robert Sherley's older brother, Anthony, Malcolm and Jones are aware of their distinct audiences--the Persian interlocutor and the
English reader. Malcolm and Jones, again very much like Anthony Sherley, are eager to define their Persian performance as a theatrical necessity—theatrical because it is assumed behavior, yet necessary because, as we shall see, the envoys, unlike the stereotype of the British diplomat overseas, operate from a position of weakness not strength.

The story of the renewal of Anglo-Persia diplomacy at the start of the nineteenth century is a complicated one involving numerous ambassadors. To highlight the difficulties experienced by the British envoys, difficulties which throw into sharp relief the inaccuracy of seeing the European traveler in Persia as a self-assured imperialist, I shall start with a critical year—1810—and then turn to the events that preceded that crisis. After a summation of this history, I consider how the envoys reacted to historical events and how they represented these episodes years later in their Persian travelogues.

I. The Rival Envoys, 1810

As he neared Tehran in April of 1810, the recently promoted Brigadier General John Malcolm, the envoy to the Court of Persia from the Governor-General of India, Lord Minto, contemplated a diplomatic embarrassment. Dispatched to oversee the implementation of a treaty negotiated by Sir Harford Jones, the Crown-Ambassador, Malcolm had reason to fear a contrecoup. He was in a curious position: the man he had come to succeed was in no mood to be superseded. Jones, still resident in the capital, was holding his ground. Apprised of Malcolm’s approach, Jones had tendered his resignation to the Foreign Office hopeful of either a refusal or the promise of employment elsewhere. Both scenarios, in effect, would have clarified his position and freed him from the importunities of the British Government
of India, which had engaged, in Jones's embittered testimony, in "injurious and unjust inveteracy" against him 82. In the meantime, he was resolved to assert the supremacy of his privilege as the sole rightful representative of the government of England.

Rivals of some years standing, the envoys made for a colorful pair - Malcolm, the army man, versus Jones, the civil servant. These superficial differences, however, disintegrated as they delved deeper into the realm of diplomacy. Malcolm, to begin with, had proved an inadequate soldier; Jones, when necessary, could strike a martial pose. They shared a propensity for intrigue, clung ruthlessly to opportunities for advancement. But Jones, who had had a less auspicious beginning (he had labored thanklessly for nearly eleven years in the "Bombay civil service, the least prestigious of the three services in India"), was similarly unlucky in his choice of patrons. "Malcolm's most powerful sponsor helped to win the battle of Waterloo: Jones's was the last minister of the crown to be impeached" 83.

In their dispatches from and pronouncements on the area, the envoys had continued to cross paths and rhetorical swords. The General's supporters, while Jones actively campaigned for his appointment in London, proffered Malcolm as the more suitable candidate, calling Jones "an improper man" (Strategies of British India 43). Jones himself, casting about for reasons why he should be sent, proposed that he should journey to Persia to revise and clarify obscurities in the Anglo-Persian treaty of 1801, a pact which Malcolm had negotiated (Yapp 44). For his part, chagrined at being considered in the same league


as Jones and then judged his inferior, Malcolm would write irritably, "I cannot refrain from stating that it was not possible that I could have suffered a greater mortification than to have the pretensions of that gentleman brought in competition with my own." Jones, he claimed, had bargained and intrigued for his appointment (50).

On the occasion of their meeting in Persia, Malcolm recoiled from an unequal fight. Jones was accredited by the King and made frequent and obtrusive mention of this fact. Malcolm, when he had finally departed for Persia, had received his mandate from the Governor-General. Malcolm's biographer, John Kaye, describes the dilemma succinctly:

It was, doubtless, the duty of the Ambassador from the Court of St. James [Jones] to uphold the dignity of that Court, and to assert, on every occasion, the supremacy of his ambassadorial character. The Indian Government had certainly exerted itself to blacken the face of Sir Harford Jones in the eyes of the Persian Court; and Jones may now have thought it incumbent upon him to prove that he was vested with authority higher than any that could be conferred by the Governor-General of India. There were two ways of doing this, and Malcolm had good reason to think that the Crown Ambassador would choose the more unseemly and vexatious of the two (2: 15).

Assessing his disadvantages, Malcolm decided to avoid a collision and forwarded a conciliatory message to Jones, wishing that he "would see the propriety of their meeting as countrymen and saving at least outward appearances" (2: 15). The General vouchsafed that he "had banished all private feeling" from his mind and extended himself so far as to offer to pay the first courtesy call on his compatriot, "provided I was assured of his meeting and returning this advance in a manner which both my public situation and private character gave me a right to expect" (2: 16). Placating Jones proved difficult. "It was no easy thing," writes Kaye, "to conciliate the Welsh baronet and bring him to a reasonable state of mind" (2: 17).
Jones had been assured by the Persians that Malcolm would not be presented to the Shah until further clarifications from London. Jones, consequently, demanded concessions from Malcolm. In later life Jones neglected to mention these requirements, but Malcolm's biographer provides them gleefully. Extraordinary in scope and kind, Jones's conditions ranged from petty to the absurd:

2nd. That the General shall sound no trumpets on his entrance into the King's camp, nor carry any flags.
3rd. That he shall hoist no flag in the royal camp, or pitch any kurnauts or tujeers (outer tent-walls) round his tent.
4th. That he shall not at any time have an audience of the King without the Ambassador being present.
5th. That independent of the presents General Malcolm has brought on the part of the Governor-General, everything else connected with the preliminary articles of the treaty shall be transferred to the Ambassador [Jones], in order that he might make them over to the Persian Government. (2: 18).

Malcolm, one commentator suggests, was blessed in a biographer who is as responsible for his subject's posthumous reputation as any glory the General ever attached to his own name (Ingram 37). Jones, by comparison, has suffered an indifferent press. His account of his trials in Persia reaches at times a histrionic pitch, and his authorial skills are slight enough to render transparent the awkward stabs at self-aggrandizement and justification inherent in any such project. He strikes a characteristic note when, in what he would call his "unfortunate discussions with the Governor-General," he informed Minto, "I may stand on a very slippery footing in this dreadful breach,—power will be exerted to crush a person humble as I am,—I may be on the point of being hurled into the ditch,—but when lying there lacerated and wounded, I will still cry out,—'I have maintained the honor of my King..." (Mission 219). The image is revealing—Jones, the last patriot. Reality was more
mundane, although Jones's grievances, delivered in muter tones, would have constituted a long and lamentable catalogue. At every stage of his embassy he had suffered the slights and rebukes of the Governor-General who sought to delay and undermine him, and Jones labored, for a time, under extreme pressures. For while he sued for peace, Minto, prompted by Malcolm, was threatening an invasion of Persia. It was, further, the paradox of Jones's position that even as he rested secure in the knowledge of his status, he was prey to the chicaneries of the Governor-General and the East India Company.

Jones had two masters. While the Crown had appointed him, it was the Company and the Viceroy who controlled his finances. The arrangement was inherently flawed, yet the question of finance and control of the mission was never satisfactorily settled. The Crown made the paltriest of donations to the endeavor by equipping Jones with a baronetcy. Neither of the other parties involved—Jones or the East India Company—emerged from the arrangement similarly satisfied. If the company were to finance the mission, it demanded a say in its message. Let "the East India Company 'pay the piper," Jones had been cautioned prophetically in London, "and Government appoint the Envoy" (Mission 11). Jones would not abide such interference, and Minto, squeezing the purse strings, began pulling them frequently, withholding the "piper's" payment as he pleased. The moment of crisis was reached when early in his negotiations with Persian ministers Jones learned that Minto had refused to honor his bills. The maneuver mortified Jones, endangering his mission and angering Fath Ali Shah. Jones retaliated by requesting an audience with the Shah to defend the legitimacy of his office. He commenced by posing a hypothetical question to the Shah:
Suppose your Majesty had sent an Ambassador, provided with proper credentials, and charged with a letter from your own gracious self to the Turkish Emperor; and he had been received at Constantinople, and negotiated [sic] a treaty in your Majesty's name; and after that, one of your Beglerbegs, started up, and wrote a letter to the Ministers at the Porte, saying to them--you must not credit nor conclude a treaty with the fellow sent by the King, because, in a few days, I shall send you a much greater and cleverer man than he is, who shall be accredited to you from me, and shall begin his negotiations [sic] with you according to the latest rules of established diplomacy; that is, by bringing a large military force with him, and seizing the castle of the Dardanelles. What does your Majesty imagine your good brother Sultan Mahmoud would say to this (Mission 209-210)?

The explanation won the day. The Shah pronounced himself satisfied, as "pleased" with Jones as ever (Mission 210). The financial squabble was settled, the treaty concluded. News of Jones's triumph was, naturally, anathema in India. "I need not tell you," Minto informed Malcolm, "all that has been done through the zealous ministry of Sir Harford Jones to lower the rank and estimation of the British Government of India within the sphere of his influence. I entreat you, therefore, to go and lift us to our own height and to the station that belongs to us once more" (Kaye 1: 59). Soon thereafter, Malcolm was knocking at the gate, so to speak, to restore the reputation of British India.

II. The Diplomatic Background, 1800-1810

The events which precipitated, in a strange echo of the Robert Sherley and Nagd Ali Beg squabble, the appointment of simultaneous and rival English ambassadors to the court of Fath Ali Shah Qajar mark a comic interlude in the revival of Anglo-Persian diplomatic relations. The inherent comedic touches of the episode--that a quarreling Jones and Malcolm should seek relief from the government to which they were accredited--should not obscure the tenousness of their position in Persia. We might safely presume that it could not have
escaped Malcolm and Jones that their quarrel weakened their own positions in Persia and 
lessened their influence. In the overture to Persia the British, to paraphrase Minto, took a 
fall; much of the energy of the British envoys would be devoted to the cause of rehabilitation. 
But jealous and personal rivalries between Malcolm and Jones were only one of the 
complicating factors for British diplomacy in Persia.

In the final decades of the eighteenth century Britain had pondered the importance 
of an opening to Persia. Fresh impetus was added to these discussions during the 
Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars (Ingram 8). In 1800 Lord Wellesley, then Governor-
General of India and eager to forestall French encroachment in the East, dispatched Captain 
John Malcolm to Persia, the first accredited British ambassador to visit Persia since the ill-
fated mission of Sir Dodmore Cotton in 1627. Malcolm's instructions were to bolster trade; 
to encourage Persian attacks upon Zaman Shah, the Afghan ruler who threatened India; and 
finally "to counteract the possible attempt of those villainous but active democrats, the 
French" (Kaye 1: 90). The thirty-year-old Malcolm, who had already made an impression 
in the employ of the East India Company, was eager to press the advantage home. "The 
objects of this mission," Malcolm had written to a correspondent, "are various and important, 
and if I am sufficiently fortunate as to succeed in the accomplishment of any one of them, 
it will be attended with more reputation than I could hope to obtain in this quarter [i.e., 
India]" (1: 89–90).

In Persia, so Kaye claims, Malcolm soon learned the two tenets of Persian diplomacy, 
"the giving of presents and the stickling for form" (1: 111). A believer in the pomp of
Empire, Malcolm traveled in a country where, he was convinced, "so much depends on show and expense" (1: 134). This belief may have supplied the initial motive for Malcolm's theatricality; that he represented the Viceroy rather than the King, a distinction the Persians might try to manipulate, tipped the scales. Determined to avoid insults, Malcolm conducted each of his three missions in style, but at no time was he more lavish in his gifts or imposing in his retinue than on the occasion of his first trip, before scrutiny and complaint diminished his resources. In 1801, Malcolm's embassy consisted of "six European gentlemen, two European servants, two surveying boys, forty-two troopers of the Madras Native Cavalry, forty-nine Bombay Grenadiers, sixty-eight Indian servants and followers, a hundred and three Persian attendants, and two hundred and thirty-six servants and followers belonging to the gentlemen of the Mission" (1: 116). This was the most impressive European embassy ever to travel to Persia.84 Hundreds of pack animals were pressed into service to transport Malcolm's attendants and presents for the Shah—"watches glittering with jewels; caskets of gold beautifully enameled; lustres of variegated glass; richly chased guns and pistols of curious constructions; marvels of European science, as air-guns and electrifying machines; besides a diamond of great value and the mirrors, which had been brought up with so much toil" (1: 312-133).

Of the grandeur of Malcolm's visit and his extravagant largess, we shall learn more later. For now we shall observe that Malcolm negotiated two treaties, one political, the other

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84 By way of contrast, we should note that the first French embassy to Persia comprised about thirty civilian and military members. See R. M. Savory, "British and French Diplomacy in Persia," 1800-1810, Iran: Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies 10 (1972): 33.
commercial. Some among his contemporaries derided this achievement, and historians have been scarcely more kind to it.\textsuperscript{85} Returning to India Malcolm suffered a number of checks. The Persian ambassador, sent by the Shah to obtain the ratification of the treaty, was accidentally killed in a melee; subsequently Malcolm's mentor and supporter, Lord Wellesley, was replaced by men who looked on Malcolm's grandiose schemes skeptically. They were determined on more austere measures and in this they were seconded by some of the directors of the East India Company who viewed the Persian ventures "as useless as they were ostentatious and extravagantly expensive" (1: 449). Malcolm had hoped that the success of his first mission would engender a second, this time commissioned by the Crown, but it was not until 1807 and the appointment of Lord Minto that Malcolm's advocacy of a Persian connection was heeded again. In a long letter to Minto Malcolm warned that, "The ambassadors of Buonaparte are said to have been very successful in establishing an influence at the Court of Persia." Dashed hopes of aid in its war with Russia had driven Persia to France, Malcolm reasoned. This was a mistake for England and Persia: for England because she needed to protect India by creating a barrier in Persia; and for Persia because only England could offer an equitable settlement with Russia. Persian rulers, furthermore, "can hardly be so blind as not to perceive that the complete subjection of their country must be the first step towards an invasion of India, by either Russia or France, as, without that preliminary measure, these nations would be at the mercy of Persia, a change in whose

\textsuperscript{85}M. E. Yapp describes the two treaties as "a vague and ill-worded commercial treaty which brought no advantages and ...a political alliance [which] in the situation of 1801 served no purpose whatsoever and was little more than an embarrassment" (30).
politics would destroy their line of communication, and cut off all hopes of retreat" (1: 396-397).

The desire to administer the coup de grace to the French in Central Asia had been a cherished hope of Malcolm's. Kaye, identifying thoroughly with his subject, avers:

"In those days we lived, and not without reason, in continual horror of the French. We believed that God had smitten them, hip and thigh, with a moral leprosy; that there was no atrocity, however appalling, which they were not capable of committing; and that it would be only righteousness on our parts to place them beyond the pale of humanity, and to hunt them like wild beasts (1: 92)." The qualms about French machinations that Malcolm expressed to Minto, however, were not hyperbole. By the time he sounded the alarm, the French were gaining a foothold in Persia. Napoleon's scheme to invade India via an overland route had resulted in the dispatch of two envoys to the Court of the Shah in 1803. One died shortly after reaching his destination, but the other returned accompanied by a Persian ambassador. The Treaty of Finkenstein signed by representatives of France and Persia in May of 1807 stipulated that France would aid in the modernization of the Persian military and exert its influence upon Russia to withdraw from Persian territories. In return the Shah promised to sever all political and commercial ties with England, to incite the Afghans, and to refuse free passage to any but French troops. Compliance with the requirements of the treaty necessitated another mission to Persia led by General Claude Mathie Gardane at the head of an entourage which consisted of nearly thirty military and civilian members. Napoleon's instructions to Gardane at the time of his departure required that he compile
intelligence on routes and highways, make maps and sketches, and inquire into the availability of water and provisions. Gardane went about the business of his embassy industriously. His position in Persia was soon irreparably damaged. Napoleon signed the treaty of Tilsit with Russia, "which converted, in an hour, the Emperor of France and the Autocrat of Russia into sworn friends and active allies" (1: 399) without insisting on the restoration of Persian territories.

In the meantime, as Malcolm besieged Minto with long closely reasoned memoranda, the home government had also kept a close watch on developments in Persia. For Minto the choice of an envoy was simple. "Who had equal experience of the Persian Court," Kaye writes paraphrasing Minto's reasoning, "who was held in such esteem there-who had personal qualities so likely to secure success in such a conjuncture--who so conciliatory, when conciliation was required--who so vigorous, when there was need of vigor?" (1: 400). The perception of Malcolm in London, however, differed from India's view of him. In England, Malcolm had earned the reputation of being "able [and] energetic" but "unsafe." The Foreign Office needed someone with "less magnificent notions of the greatness of England and the dignity of an ambassador" (1: 401). It settled on a more suitable candidate, Sir Harford Jones, lately British Resident in Baghdad. Of Jones, Kaye writes: "he was not without a certain kind of cleverness, but it had never obtained for him any reputation in India, and among the Persians themselves his standing had been never such as to invest him with any prestige of authority, or to secure for him general respect. What it was that particularly recommended him to the authorities at home—except that he was in almost every respect the very reverse
of Malcolm—it is difficult to say; but they made him a Baronet, and dispatched him... (1: 401).” The aftermath of this disagreement between the British and Indian Governments resulted in the race to Persia of "two British ambassadors [Jones and Malcolm], barely on speaking terms" (Islam, Europe 185) and fully prepared to combat each other, the French, and the Persians.

Malcolm was the first to sail from India on April 17 1808. Minto, having dispatched Malcolm, had a change of heart and wrote, belatedly, to avoid a clash between the two envoys. His letters to Malcolm delineated the limitations of his powers in Persia, but sought to appease him by widening his sphere of operations to Baghdad and Syria. Later still, Minto sought to defer Malcolm's mission. Malcolm, however, had coveted the appointment for nearly seven years. He seized the initiative, moving one step ahead of Minto (Yapp 55).

In the mean time, literally looming over the horizon was Jones. Nine days after Malcolm's departure Jones reached Bombay, convinced that his rival had sailed with the knowledge of his imminent arrival (Mission 17). Malcolm having gained the advantage, Jones had three options open to him: "to go immediately, not to go at all, or to delay going to September" (Savory 38). He chose to bide his time. Meanwhile, Malcolm, landing in Persia, was coldly received. He "erred," Kaye admits, "in assuming too dictatorial a tone at the outset, and precipitating a crisis which it would have been sounder policy to delay" (1: 419). The French influence still reigned in the capital; “Their diplomatists, their soldiers, their men of science were all energetically at work. Whilst we had been sleeping, they had been striving. We had left the field of action clear for them, and they had occupied it with..."
vigor and address" (1: 418). The Shah, at Gardanne's behest, rebuffed Malcolm, and the envoy, conceding the issue, reembarked for India to argue for military intervention and to claim, colorfully, that Persians planned to seize him (Yapp 58). Malcolm had barely quitted the scene when Jones, released from Minto's "diplomatic quarantine" (1: 441), sailed for Persia, promising Minto to abide by any decisions the Governor-General should formulate after his consultations with Malcolm.

Despite these reassurances, Minto, mercurial and irresolute, soon experienced another reversal of thought and tried to recall Jones. Preparations had been underway, even as Jones received permission to sail, to send an expeditionary force to the Persian Gulf. Jones, perhaps innocently, managed to evade Minto's letters, although Malcolm would note sardonically that Jones was "as successful in getting away from Bushire two days before he received Lord Minto's orders to return, as he was in escaping by twenty-four hours the orders of the Supreme Government for him to remain in India" (1: 448). The letters finally reached Jones as he approached Tehran, but by then Jones was prepared to ignore the Governor-General's command. With an eye on a posterity that would be unkind to him, Jones would protest to his secretary:

I gave his Lordship ample proof at Bombay, by my conduct towards Malcolm, that before I really commenced the duties of my Mission, I was most willing, and most ready to make all proceedings square with his—but now my position is materially changed, I am in Persia, and I am not only in Persia, but I am the king's accredited Minister in Persia, I have my Sovereign's honor and name to support, and these are things, which, if necessary, I will support with my life and fortune—besides which, have I not the fairest prospect of completely executing my Sovereign's commands? I will not retire from Persia, for many reasons, but principally for this, that by doing so, at this moment, I should proclaim to the Persians, that the
Governor-General is superior in power to the King; and this my Welsh blood will never suffer me to do (*Mission* 128).

Through the summer and autumn of 1808 the French fortunes in Persia had waned. With the fading possibility of a campaign against India, and Napoleon's rapprochement with the Tsar, Gardane's position had become untenable. He could no longer insist, as he had during Malcolm's aborted mission, on Persia's pledge to refuse communication with Britain. After mutual recriminations Gardane took his leave. Close on his heels was Jones, who entered the capital and began his negotiations for a new treaty.

The French had moved "heaven and earth" to prevent him from reaching Tehran (*Mission* 117). The English, Jones would now learn, were equally adept at disrupting the universe. Unable to recall Jones, Minto sought his disgrace, writing directly to the Persian Court to suspend Jones's mission, and, as if to provide proof of his contention, refusing to honor Jones's bills. The bewilderment of the Persian Ministers may be imagined; they were further distressed when news circulated of a possible English attack in the Persian Gulf. Minto and Malcolm were leagues away; Jones, on the scene, negotiating. In his grandest gesture Jones had already offered himself as bond for Malcolm's good behavior. Should Malcolm commence hostilities, he had assured a Persian negotiator, "I shall deliver myself to your Highness, as a prisoner, and I will beseech you to chop off my head, for I neither could, nor would, wish to survive so lamentable, and unnatural a warfare" (*Mission* 136).

With similar but perhaps less dramatic vigor, Jones now delved into the spirit of negotiations and managed to have a treaty signed by March 1809.

In Minto's view, Jones had exceeded his instructions. Honor bound to execute them,
Minto needed, for the job, a "person of confidence" in Tehran. This person was none other than Malcolm. The General's reappearance, at the moment when Jones may have deserved commendation, was galling to Jones. Had he known that Minto apparently harbored secret hopes that Gardane would return to Tehran so Malcolm could expel him, Jones may have had cause for an uproar (Daniel 187). Such grievances, real or imagined, compelled Minto and Jones to spar in epistles, Jones observing bitterly to the Governor-General that, "Amidst the singularities which have attended His Majesty's Mission under my charge, the following is, I believe, unique. General Gardane has been disgraced by this Court for quitting Persia, and Your Excellency has attempted to disgrace me for procuring his Expulsion" (Yapp 65). At the same time Malcolm and Jones set about disgracing each other, and for much of the autumn and winter of 1809, the struggle for precedence between the two envoys continued. Malcolm, as we have observed, made a tentative offer of truce and found himself aggrieved when Jones responded with absurd stipulations. Scoffing at these demands, Malcolm, in his frustration, did what by then had become something of a routine in his conduct—he threatened to leave. In a separate communiqué to Persian ministers, he had the good sense to propose conditions which, apart from the insistence that he be allowed to "sound his trumpets, [and] beat his drums," were reasonable. Nevertheless, he warned the Persian Court that should the reception afforded him suffer in comparison with the way he had been received on his first mission to Persia, he would leave for India rather than endure insults. His messenger was to inform the Persian ministers that, "though I [Malcolm] may regret that my efforts to conciliate that officer [Jones] to a just sense of the benefits which would arise
from mutual good understanding have failed, his continuing to act under the influence of private feelings and passions cannot justify me in a deviation from duty. In short, I beg you will tell them that they will, unless they treat me in every instance as I ought to be treated, compel me to insist upon my being permitted immediately to depart" (2: 19).

It was left to Fath Ali Shah to intercede between the quarreling envoys and receive Malcolm with full honors. While Jones absented himself from the proceedings (and therefor shall be excused, for a time, from these pages), Malcolm was granted an audience at which stage his self-possession, for once, deserted him. He had on his previous mission in 1800 always sat down in the royal presence, a privilege "he had contended for and established," a point of some significance to which I shall return. But a few months earlier Jones had broken this custom by electing, in imitation of Persian courtiers, to stand before the Shah. As a mark of his favor, the Shah invited, then instructed Malcolm to be seated; still, the envoy demurred, pondering the delicacy of the issue. " 'Why, Malcolm,' said the King, half in jest and half in earnest, 'what new thing is this—what has come over you? You used not to hesitate in conforming to the King's command.' On this Malcolm sate [sic] down. The embarrassment passed over, and Funteh Ali Shah and Malcolm were soon in earnest discourse (2: 24)." Malcolm had planned an oration. He began laboriously, and the speech collapsed under the weight of his vacillations. The Shah rescued him again like a prompter in the wings.

"Come," said the King, smiling, "you are an old friend; I do not put you on a footing with other men. Compose yourself; I know what you would say"-- and he commenced a speech of fulsome panegyric. Then, breaking into laughter, he said, "Now your speech is made, let me know about yourself.
How have you been these many years?" "Except for the wish to revisit your Majesty, I have been well and happy," said Malcolm. "But what, asked the King, "made you go back in dudgeon last year [referring to Malcolm's second mission], without seeing my son at Shiraz?" "How could he," said Malcolm, "who had been warmed by the sunshine of his Majesty's favor, be satisfied with the mere reflexion [sic] of that refulgence through the person of his Majesty's son"? "Mashallah! Mashallah!" cried the King, "Malcolm is himself again" (2: 24-25)!

Malcolm, after a momentary lapse, is "himself" again. But just what is it that Malcolm regains to earn that curious commendation—the sycophancy which the Shah appears to expect in "other" men, or the resolution of spirit, that attribute of his "Englishness" which had compelled him earlier to break the rules of etiquette and sit before the King? Is it, in other words, Malcolm's mimicry of Persian habits which the Shah disparages in "others" that he appreciates in Malcolm? And why should Malcolm's Persian impersonation signify, to the Shah, that the envoy is resoundingly himself once more? In Kaye's rendering, the Shah appears to appreciate in Malcolm a two-fold persona, one which moves with ease between two worlds, and is commendable precisely because it can defy or conform to custom. For now, we shall also note, in the exchange, that while the Shah expresses a desire to dispense with formalities, Malcolm clings to them. The English envoy, not the Persian King, is the one unable to cast off what Malcolm will define as the characteristic patterns of Persian conversation.

III. The Persian Within

The intermittent alarms of a French invasion of India—legitimate or feigned—which propelled Malcolm and Jones to the Court of Fath Ali Shah, and the subsequent rivalry which flared between them in Persia, caused the envoys to have more in common with their
seventeenth-century precursors than their nineteenth-century successors. Although Malcolm and Jones would strike the imperialist pose, they were harassed men, quarreling with superiors, with one another, with the Persians. Anthony and Robert Sherley had literally absconded to Persia. Malcolm and Jones were racing against one another and time. Minto's instructions to Malcolm, Yapp observes, "represent an attempt to smuggle Malcolm into Iran under the camouflage of a vague and general responsibility in the Middle East. But the limitations imposed by the Crown mission's existence meant that Minto could make only limited offers to Iran. Malcolm went to Iran not only camouflaged but hamstrung as well" (51). But Jones, as we have seen, was equally impeded and "hamstrung." Both Malcolm and Jones were acerbic in their dealings with the Persians, often condescending in their opinions of Persian manner and customs. They espoused archetypical attitudes, but they were themselves far from prototypical imperialists.

The vicissitudes of their missions to Persia swayed the conduct of Malcolm and Jones, colored their judgment, and affected theirceptions of Persia and the Persians. They were fantastic egos, Malcolm and Jones, deeply pragmatic and capable of grand gestures. Yet they were not foolish men. The details and resolution of the Harfordian Controversy reveal the divisions between the British government and the government of India, divisions which dated from the mid-eighteenth century. Pawns and participants in these wrangles, the envoys' quarrel reflects, in a microcosm, the disagreements of their superiors, disputes which Malcolm and Jones fostered and by which they meant, no doubt, to profit. Their moment in Persia, despite its ludicrous undertones and petty jealousies, indicates a divergence of
opinion over serious issues: the sovereignty of the British government of India and its ability to maintain a foreign policy; the role of Persia in the defense of India and the balance of power in Europe, how this role should be defined, and how Persia should play it.  

The contentious environment that formed the backdrop to the renewal of Anglo-Persian diplomatic contacts caused in Malcolm and Jones intriguing contradictions. They embarked for Persia dreaming of advancement, but conscious of looming defeat. Minto, an indecisive patron to Malcolm, was an ambivalent foe to Jones. Traveling in fits and starts, racing each other, the Governor-General's messengers of recall in pursuit, Malcolm and Jones realized that their careers might founder (as in fact they did) in Persia, and that their salvation lay in producing quick results, before their mandates could be rescinded or withdrawn. In this fear, the envoys who differed so drastically in their aims and politics found common ground—not only was the Persian to be convinced quickly, but the swiftest means of persuasion was to dazzle him. Malcolm proffers the following quotation, but Jones would have attested to its accuracy: "If you wish my countrymen to understand you," Malcolm recalls the opinion of a Persian ambassador to India, "speak to their eyes, not ears" (1: 50). To impress rather than to receive impressions, acting instead of speaking, was the modus operandi of the envoys. This theatricality is evident in how the envoys depicted the Persian and how they behaved as Englishmen in Persia.

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86 Malcolm, an adherent of the forward policy, sought in Persia a weak ally. Jones wanted a sovereign buffer state. Malcolm would argue that the best policy vis-a-vis Persia was, in essence, to subvert her government. The proper use of a military base in the Persian Gulf would subdue the Qajar dynasty. Jones actively, and for almost the same number of years, denounced this idea. He contended that neither upheaval in their southern provinces, nor the threat to constrain her trade through the Persian Gulf, was as disturbing to the Qajars as turmoil in the Persian provinces bordering on the Caspian Sea, a region from which the ruling dynasty drew its support (Ingram 39-41).
In the squabble over trumpets and drums, in Jones's offer to have himself decapitated should Malcolm misbehave, or in Malcolm's felicitous responses to the Shah, indeed in much of the Harfordian Controversy lurks a curious paradox. To be English in Persia—or, as in the case of Robert Sherley, to be Persian in England—meant to adopt an idiom of ritual, to take on symbolic, essentially hollow motifs which had little to do with the substance of the envoys' proposals. In Persia this charade was to appeal to the Persian by echoing his nature, and it allowed Jones and Malcolm first to define the Persian and then to expropriate him. For both Malcolm and Jones, Persians are a different sort—florid in speech, gaudy in action, fond of show and display. And when it came time for the English envoy to speak, he elected the language of the Persian, or what he understood this language to be. Robert Sherley brought the Other to the Self. His mimesis simply required that he satisfy the expectations of the untutored English audience. Malcolm and Jones's performances, on the other hand, were more nuanced and refracted. For Malcolm, the Persian performance meant that he should best the Persian. Malcolm, therefore, has to be constantly visible. Jones's Persian performance, on the other hand, depends on invisibility, what is hinted at but not seen. I shall discuss each envoy's Persian play in the next two sections of this essay.

IV. Malcolm and the Carpet

Towards the end of their lives Malcolm and Jones wrote of their Persian embassies: Malcolm in *Sketches of Persia* (1827) and Jones in *An Account of the Transactions of His Majesty's Mission to the Court of Persia in the Years 1807-1811* (1834). Malcolm and Jones, then, as envoys in Persia and later still as authors in Britain, are engaged in two types
of representation. For if they present the Persian Other to the English Self through the medium of their texts, they also introduce the English Self to the Persian Other for at least the duration of their embassies. There is thus, in Malcolm and Jones, a complicated awareness of two distinct audiences—the Persian onlooker and the English reader.

The sense of a bifurcated audience manifests, in Malcolm and Jones, a double existence—of a self-consciously English representative who adapts and adopts Persian customs and yet imparts to the endeavor all the guile and perseverance of his English nature. This duality, the sense that one labors at playing, is present in Jones, who speaks explicitly of the private life of public figures, but is best evidenced in Malcolm's Sketches where it inherits a further and curious twist. Malcolm insists on remaining coyly anonymous in Sketches, referring to himself as the Elchee, Persian for "envoy," a literal reincarnation and a merger of office with officer which permits Malcolm to appear in the text in a two-fold guise—as the resolut, somewhat inscrutable Elchee, and as an unnamed eyewitness narrator who records events, compiles tales, and, above all, persistently admires the Elchee.

Early in their journey, the anonymous narrator of Sketches recalls, the Elchee lectures his retinue:

"These Persians," said he to us one day, "have no knowledge beyond their country; they understand no language but their own and Arabic; and though all the better classes read, the books to which they have access afford them little if any information except of Asia. Europe, in fact, is only known by name, and by general and confused accounts of the fame of its nations, and their comparative greatness. They are however," he added, "a very keen and observing people, and full of curiosity. In the absence of books, they will peruse us, and, from what they hear and see, form their opinion of our country" (Malcolm 1: 68).
Such sentiments shaping the Elchee's perception, he determines to become a text, an image to be read. The embassy is not just to prove itself morally incorruptible, but physically indefatigable. In fact, the Elchee's propensity for action coincides with his duty to impress. He is seldom satisfied unless, after a day's long march, he hunts or hawks, or engages in what his less vigorous English attendants call "political rides." These demonstrations of virtue and robustness, of constant action and play, produce the desired result. A Mehmandar, or official host, attached to the embassy to judge its intentions and personalities notes in the journal he shows to the narrator:

The Elchee, and the English Gentlemen with him, rise at dawn of day; they mount their horses and ride for two or three hours, when they come home and breakfast. From that time till four o'clock, when they dine, the Elchee is either looking at horses, conversing, reading, or writing; he never lies down, and if he has nothing else to do, he walks backwards and forwards before his tent-door, or within it. He sits but a short time at dinner, mounts his horse again in the evening, and when returned from his ride, takes tea, after which he converses or plays at cards till ten o'clock, when he retires to rest; and next day pursues nearly the same course (Malcolm 1: 71).

The Elchee's unflagging energy and his perambulations inside and outside of the tent, a conscious and symbolic performance of his ability to traverse two worlds, impress the Persian observer. The Mehmandar's conclusions are as the Elchee would have wished: "They [the English visitors] are certainly very restless persons; but when it is considered that these habits cause their employing so much more time every day in business, and in acquiring knowledge, than his Majesty's subjects, it is evident that at the end of a year they must have some advantage. I can understand, from what I see, better than I could before, how this extraordinary people conquered India" (Malcolm 1: 71-72)." We see the Elchee, thereafter,
involved in numerous exploits, each intended to prove the martial nature of the British by the effect it has produced upon the Persians.

Demonstrations of English valor and perseverance, the very image of the manly Englishman that Malcolm wishes to project, would be wasted, of course, without the participation of an Other who registers the spectacle. The Persian, in *Sketches*, is maintained on the margins of the narrative. He is, for the most part, a passive, astonished observer, or a "bad reader," to extend Malcolm's metaphor, who peruses only the outline and artifice of the English visitors' "texts." When the Elchee lands in Persia, for instance, he is met by the population of a town who are struck with "wonder" at the sight of his regiment, the regularity of its march, its resplendent uniforms. When an English member of the mission rides badly the Persians, conditioned by the Elchee perhaps, attribute the rider's accident to drunkenness rather than bad horsemanship. "The Persians thought it would have been a reproach for a man of a warlike nation not to ride well," the narrator writes with evident satisfaction, "but not for a European to get drunk" (Malcolm 1: 35). The Elchee at length admits, "I continued to value myself on my superiority; and when in Persia was as eager as any of our party to parade my knowledge, particularly in science (which, by-the-by, was my weak point), and to enjoy the wonder which its displays produced" (Malcolm 2: 175). Consequently, the Elchee produces electric machines and phantasmatography, each device eliciting the needed effect—shock, excitement, agitation and wonder (Malcolm 2: 175-180).

The Persian, however, is not always a spectator. On occasion he may intrude upon the narrative, thereby unwittingly providing the foil against which the visitors may once
again be judged. In this second capacity, the Persian often is enlisted to condemn himself, by implication or explicitly, and to provide a screen upon which tributes to the English Other may be realized. When the envoy contrives, "among other plans for doing good," to introduce potatoes to the country, a Persian merchant applauds vociferously the envoy's "disinterested intentions" to benefit Persia and proffers himself as an instrument. His real intentions, however, are revealed shortly when it appears that his interest is not in introducing a new crop to his country, but in receiving a present from the envoy. In another instance, on his death bed, an old servant of the English factory at Gombroon, at first refuses a cup of wine prescribed by an English doctor, citing the Koranic injunction against alcohol. A few minutes later the dying man reverses himself and begs for the cup saying, "Give me the wine; for it is written in the same volume, that all you unbelievers will be excluded from Paradise; and the experience of fifty years teaches me to prefer your society in the other world, to any place unto which I can be advanced with my own countrymen" (Malcolm 1: 37). A Turkish exile, discoursing on the present conditions in the East, abuses his native country. Asked to deliberate on Persians, he opines, "Why, twenty times worse than of Turkey... because they are to the full as devoid of every public principle, and much more ignorant" (Malcolm 1: 47).

The English then, in Malcolm's view, may exhibit a public persona which may not reflect their private character, while the Persian may boast only of a transparent self. But if, as I have argued, the English are actors and prescient readers while the Persians are relegated to the role of spectators or uncomprehending readers, why would Malcolm seek to
impersonate the Persian? For Malcolm, one of the defining characteristics of the English in particular, and of the European in general, is a pliancy and plasticity of spirit which adapts and incorporates, which can disguise itself and dissimulate. The narrator of *Sketches* recounts with particular glee the story of a Monsieur Tollemache who for years successfully masquerades as a holy Oriental dervish. The Frenchman is so peculiarly invested with the power "to assume any Asiatic character" that years later, at a party the narrator attends, Turkish, Persian, and Arab guests refuse to accept the narrator's debunking of the holy man's myth and continue to claim Tollemache as one of their own (Malcolm 1: 60-62). The narrator notes with similar gusto another instance of impersonation. A young Georgian convert to Islam calls upon the Elchee. The Elchee's treasurer, himself an Armenian and old acquaintance of the youth, is incensed at the changes he observes in the youth's manner. "The vile Mahomedan [sic] wretch!' he exclaimed, "he has lost sight and feeling, as well as religion and virtue..." (Malcolm 1: 79). Subsequently the treasurer meets the youth in private and learns that the boy has been dissembling. The treasurer reports to the narrator: He [the youth] informed me that he recognized the friend of his youth, and never had more difficulty than in the effort to appear a stranger; but he explained his reasons for being so cautious: he is not only a Mahomedan, but has married into a respectable family, and is a great favourite with the Prince, and must, therefore, avoid any conduct that could bring the least shade of suspicion on the sincerity of his faith or allegiance (Malcolm 1: 80).

The ability to dissemble, is, for Malcolm, a defining note: the masquerade of Tollemache and the Georgian is a measure of their non-Persian insight. For unlike the
European, the Persian lacks the power to excel in imitation. Such binary oppositions, are, of course, standard motifs in later nineteenth century Orientalist lore. Malcolm, however, unlike his future and more complacent successors, must define himself as a dissembler. He may appear a Persian, in other words, but he has not gone native. He is merely playing. To prove this point Malcolm frames his Persian performance by depicting the Persian (as opposed to the European) as both a poor mimic and a lackadaisical schemer.

Persian attempts to mimic European customs elicit Malcolm's contempt. Sketches is replete with episodes where well-meaning Europeans have imprudently sought to teach European manners or technology to the Persians. "I could tell of French and English schemes for harlequin changes," writes the narrator, "which were to leave my Persian friends no remains of barbarism but their beards! of Mahomedan princes trained to be reformers, of the sudden introduction of the fine arts, and of the roving tribes of Tartary, and the wild mountaineers of Fars, becoming, by the proper use of cabalistical phrases, disciplined regiments" (Malcolm 2: 159). The narrator proposes gradual change instead of sudden transformation, as the attempt to disseminate European ideals rapidly will cause more harm than good. Malcolm encounters in Persia the inertia of fable, and he can discourse, from personal experience, on the futility of attempts to jolt the Persian from his torpor. The European, he concedes, may seek to inspire the Persian; the Persian himself may make suitable noises about progress and change, "but their actions will follow their established usage and ordinary habits; and their conduct will too often be what it was formerly" (Malcolm 2: 170). The Elchee, for instance, seeing the Persian Court so impressed with his
present of a curricle, counsels the Persian courtiers on the wisdom of road-building. His advice is taken to heart and immediately lauded. Plans are called for, mandates issued. The counsel, in fact, engenders such a paroxysm of wishful thinking that the Elchee must, having initiated the idea, try to check its mutations. But, in the end, nothing comes of the whole scheme and the "project of road-making, however easy of execution, from the nature of the country and climate, would share the fate of other schemes which it was then the fashion of the Court of Persia to adopt, commence, and abandon" Malcolm 2: 168-169).

The Persian's inability or unwillingness to learn from his European counterpart condemns him to perpetually superficial fluctuations. This failure also provides the template for Malcolm's own diplomatic mimicry. Tales of the superficiality and porousness of the Persian character and the ease with which the Persian's body may be inhabited by a Tollemache or a Georgian convert, foreshadow Malcolm's own activities. To demonstrate English attributes to the Persian is only one half of his purpose; to be impressed the Persian must, in essence, be defeated at his own game--i.e., the spectacle, the ruse that is "being Persian." Indeed, the Persian appears to invite the visitation by paying homage to members of the Elchee's mission for excelling at qualities the Persian prizes in himself. An obstreperous Persian mule driver, for instance, a muscular and temperamental man, is no match for Peter, the English steward, who in a quarrel defeats him. The narrator puzzles over the muleteer's stoical acceptance of defeat, but concludes that he must have valued "superiority in the rough qualities in which he himself excelled" (Malcolm I 67).

Perhaps it is as a result of some such epiphany that the Elchee decides to "excel" at
being Persian, and delve, with an attentiveness bordering on obsession, into questions of protocol. As an example of the minute attention Persians pay to the questions of etiquette, the narrator, for example, includes in the Sketches a letter in which a Persian is instructed on how to receive a superior. A garrison is to travel some distance out of town, "as far as the date trees on the border of the desert" (Malcolm I 82). The personage is to be then conducted to the Elchee's tent, and for the visitor's repose another tent "must be pitched as the General [the Elchee] desires, on the right or left of his encampment." Having proffered this illustration of the Persian's attention to the details of etiquette, the narrator then observes that the respect shown to royalty "extends to the reception of letters, dresses, and presents and every inanimate thing with which their name is associated" (Malcolm I 83). Wryly, then, the narrator recounts an example of such an association, the reverence Persians show to a portrait of the king: "The Governor and inhabitants of Abushelker went a stage to meet it; they all made their obeisance at a respectful distance. On its entering the gates of the city a royal salute was fired; and when the Envoys who had charge of it embarked, the same ceremonies were repeated, and not a little offense was taken at the British Resident because he declined taking a part in this mummerly (Malcolm1: 84)." It is all the more surprising, then, to see the Elchee involved in a similar instance of "mummerly." This latter episode is recounted by Kaye referring to Malcolm's journal, and is not reflected in Malcolm's Sketches. When a letter from the Shah arrives granting the Elchee many of his wishes, we observe the Elchee, in a triumphant moment, in his best Persian pose:

I received it [the Shah's letter] with great state. The Moonshee, who carried it on a gold salver, passed through the whole of the escort, both cavalry and
infantry, who were formed into a street in the front of the tent, and saluted the letter as it passed them. I advanced to the door of the tent to meet it; and after taking the letter from the salver, I applied it to my lips and forehead... (1: 116).

We may notice in the juxtaposition of these episodes that the Persians' fetishizing of a public spectacle (the transportation of the Shah's portrait) becomes, in Malcolm's private, unpublished journal a cause of publicizing a private communication. For the Persian audience, the Elchee makes a display of himself and the royal epistle. Yet he is careful to remove any traces of such "mummery" from the text he offers his English readers. The Elchee appears to realize both the inherent contradiction in the act, and the possibility that it could be misunderstood.

Kaye's biography sheds an interesting light on the Elchee's conduct, for in addition to profusely defending Malcolm's largess and delighting in his impersonations, it also shows the strains in that mimicry. Both Malcolm and Kaye try to justify Malcolm's conduct and largess in terms of its Persian context. Two examples of this strategy in particular point both to the similarity in the authors' logic and to the importance which they attached to this line of reasoning.

Early in the narrative, having sufficiently studied the Persians, the narrator of Sketches concludes:

Ceremonies and forms have, and merit, consideration in all countries, but particularly among Asiatic nations. With these the intercourse of private as well as public life is much regulated by their observance. From the spirit and decisions of a public Envoy upon such points, the Persians very generally form their opinion of the character of the country he represents. This fact I had read in books, and all I saw convinced me of its truth. Fortunately the Elchee had resided at some of the principal courts of India, whose usages are
very similar. He was, therefore, deeply versed in that important science
denominated "Kaida-e-nishest-oo-berkhaust" (or the art of sitting and rising),
in which is included a knowledge of the forms and manners of good society,
and particularly those of Asiatic kings and their courts (Malcolm 1: 120).

Malcolm, Kaye insists in a similar yet less comic vein, delighted in simplicity and
informality and it was only the exigencies of his Persian environment that led him to behave
differently.

Left to his own impulses, he would as readily have negotiated a treaty in his
shirt-sleeves, and signed it with a billiard-cue under his arm, as arrayed in
purple and gold under a salute of artillery, and with a guard of honor at his
back. But, as the representative of a great nation, he was bound to uphold its
dignity to the utmost. He was now among a people out of measure addicted
to pomp and ceremony, with whom statesmanship was mainly a matter of
fine writing; who stickled about forms of address as though the destinies of
empires were dependent upon the color of a compliment or the height of a
chair; and who measured the grandeur of other nations with their own
chamberlain's wand. Any concessions upon his part--any failure to insist
upon the strict observance of what was due to him in his ambassadorial
character--would have been construed, not only to his own disadvantage, but
to that of the nation which he represented. So Malcolm resolved to do in Fars
as is done in Fars, and to stickle as manfully for forms as any Hadjee in the
country (1: 112-113).

Subsequent to this decision, the Elchee is involved in a great number of ceremonial
imbroglios, many of which Malcolm ignores in his own account of his missions. According
to Kaye, the first dispute arises when Malcolm, in response to a letter, receives a missive
from the Governor of Shiraz which Malcolm believes addresses him improperly. "It was
written in the style of a firman or mandate, such as is addressed by a ruler to his subjects, and
commenced with the word "Hookum." The communication, Malcolm contends, "should
have been a Moorasella, such as a King addresses to his Wuzzer" (1: 113). Malcolm's pique
lasts for four months, while the Persians defend their position by arguing that as "the
Governor-General was only the Wuzeer of the King of England, Malcolm's rank, as his delegate, must necessarily be below that of Wuzeer." Kaye comments on the Persians' position that it "was not without some logical acumen," though he registers without elucidation Malcolm's declaration, that "the case had been entirely misunderstood, and that he could not accept such an explanation" (1: 113-114). We see Malcolm, thereafter, in frequent "explanations," observing Persian etiquette or defining it. Kaye, it will be remembered, speaks of Malcolm "establishing" a custom of sitting before the king. It is at this earlier stage of the narrative of Malcolm's journey that the custom is not so much established as invented.

A letter from the Shah settles the issue of Malcolm's title to his satisfaction, but as he travels north questions of custom and courtesy continue to bedevil him. When arrangements are to be made for Malcolm's interview with the Prince Regent of Shiraz, the parties confront one another over delicate matters once more—at what point a ceremonial cup of coffee should be presented to Malcolm, whether the Prince should "incline" his head to permit the envoy to be seated, and whether his English attendants are to follow his example. The Persians, holding firm, argue that the English and Persian attendants should remain standing during the interview. The Elchee, balking,

"declared that he could produce from Persian history no less than five different examples in support of the observance of the custom for which he contended. The authorities were admitted; but it was argued, on the other hand, that such a liberty was "irreconcilable with the present usage of the Court." Malcolm, however, had made up his mind, and was not to be turned away from his purpose (1: 118).

Here, then, we may notice a final nuance in Malcolm's Persian performance. Throughout his
Sketches he has defined Persians as slavishly devoted to protocol. Such rigidity, in fact, defines for Malcolm the Persians’ superficiality. In practice, however and as related by Malcolm, the Persians appear to be arguing that etiquette is ever-evolving and ephemeral. But precedent, when it suits Malcolm, may be recalled, broken, or invented. In Kaye’s account, Malcolm’s curious reasoning declares him more Persian than the Persians, more fully informed of their past and history.87

Although Malcolm is far more ironic and reticent than Kaye in describing his Persian masquerade, the envoy does describe in detail his battles with the court of the Prince Regent of Shiraz. The Elchee, from the start, is anxious to establish precedent and “to fight all his battles regarding ceremonies before he came near the footstool of royalty” (Malcolm 1: 120). Anticipating future battles, the Elchee’s preparations are as strict as they are extensive and comprised of “daily, almost hourly drilling that we might be perfect in our demeanor at all places, and under all circumstances” (1: 120). The members of the mission are instructed on how to move in processon, how to behave indoors, how to meet guests, how to accept and take coffee. Nevertheless, throughout the journey he is plagued on all sides, by “servants, merchants, governors of towns, chiefs and high public officers, presuming upon ignorance, [making] constant attempts to trespass upon our dignity” (1: 122).

Matters come to a head at Malcolm’s first meeting with a member of the Persian royal

87This view is particularly interesting as Kaye admits that Malcolm had little time for academic pursuits on his first trip to Persia. Such efforts, however, are unnecessary, Kaye argues, as Persia is essentially a stage where to observe is to understand: “Little time was allowed to Malcolm, during his residence at Shiraz, either to improve his knowledge of the Persian language, or to acquire information relating to the history and institutions of the country. But he neglected no opportunity that was within his reach; and, at all events, his acquaintance with the manners of the people, without an effort on his part, was continually increasing” (Kaye 1:121).
family, the twelve-year-old son of the Shah. According to the written program to which is attached "a plan of the apartment," the reception is to be conducted in such a manner that the Elchee may sit on a carpet allotted to his suite, "but his right thigh was to rest on the Prince's" carpet (1: 123). Upon entering the apartment, however, Malcolm finds the Persians reneging, the master of ceremonies firmly and uncompromisingly barring his way, "fixed as a statue... and [paying] no attention to the Elchee, who waved his hand for him to go to one side" (1: 124). The Elchee relents momentarily, but "before the second course of refreshments was called for, the Elchee requested the Prince to give him leave to depart; and, without waiting a reply, arose and retired" (1: 124).

It is almost impossible to ignore Malcolm's enjoyment in the recounting of the event, his description of the crisis, riding away "apparently in a great rage," and the manner in which he achieves resolution, stating in a letter "that everything disagreeable was erased from the tablets of Elchee's memory" (1: 127). Like Robert Sherley's turban, in Malcolm's struggle and eventual triumph over the carpet, we may notice the moment of synecdochic interpretation and appropriation. If Robert Sherley presents the Persian to the English, Malcolm is representing the English to the Persian; but even as he leads the most impressive European mission to Persia, or perhaps because of this, Malcolm must appear, in essence, more Persian than the Persian in his insistence upon matters of minutiae, his theatrical leave-taking, his florid acceptance of the offer of reconciliation. It is not that Malcolm fails to comprehend the absurdity of the squabble. He does; in describing the event, his prose is characteristically ironic, mixing comedy and disdain. The carpet fiasco which he calls "the
battle royal" is real nevertheless; and it is only at that moment when Malcolm is most Persian that his superiority as an Englishman is confirmed.

Malcolm's ironic humor is a distancing motif, separating him from his Persian subjects, and aligning him with his English readers. His irony, for this very reason, is meant to be transparent. He claims in the preface, for instance, that he decides to write *Sketches of Persia* after the taking of a "fal or lot... put an end to my indecision" (Malcolm 1: xi). He is equally boisterous about the use of the phantasmagoria which so enthralled the Persian to further his political interests, wishing at one and the same time to proffer and explode a myth: "the Elchee had succeeded in persuading himself that his natural love of amusement was a valuable diplomatic quality; I, as a true follower of a mission, found it necessary to acquiesce in his reasoning, and must, therefore, recommend phantasmagorias, or something similar, as of essential importance to the success of all future embassies to Persia" (Malcolm II 183)! By splitting the role of the narrator and existing as two personas in *Sketches*—the boisterous Elchee and the more sober, anonymous narrator—Malcolm simultaneously observes and mocks Persian customs. His ability to assimilate and imitate Persian customs confirms his abilities as an observer; his amusement is proof of his detachment and distance from his subject. He is dissimulating, he reminds his readers, and dissimulation is a European strategy.

V. Jones's Letter

Publishing his travelogue and *The Dynasty of the Kajars*, a translation, after Malcolm's death, Jones would continue in print a battle that was by then over thirty years old.
He had, he would claim, observed the Persian from a privileged position, having been "admitted in Persia to a considerable degree of intimacy with Princes, Minister, men of Law, merchants, shopkeepers, and agriculturists. I then mixed in society in Persia, at different times, from The Zenith to the Nadir of it." Jones had traveled to Persia long before Malcolm—in 1798 nominally as a guest to a Minister, but in fact to form a "society of persons" interested in buying the King's diamonds (Dynasty cxxiii). Jones may plead, therefore, greater experience than Malcolm and is, in his publications, far less caustic about his Persian sojourns. The Persians, Jones concedes, "amongst us Europeans have not a very high reputation for a strict regard to truth; and perhaps the charge made against them on this head, in some instances, may not be totally groundless" (Dynasty iv). However, he argues, nations must be judged by a single standard of morality. Moreover, the labor of translating Dynasty has produced in him,

so many recollections of the past, always associated with feeling of gratitude, regard, and respect, towards several of the persons mentioned in the MS. and the Notes, that it has been to me (whatever the product of it may be to the reader) one of peculiar pleasure and interest. Those scenes in which we were engaged in early life, and which were agreeable to us at that time, (and mine in Persia, from a variety of circumstances, were peculiarly so to me) the mind afterwards falls back, with no common fondness; and at the close of life few things are more cheering, than to recall to our thoughts the first impressions made on us by what we met with in youth, when visiting distant countries—the acquaintances we made; the friendships we formed there; the kindnesses we received; the mutual efforts made to amuse, to please and inform each other, and the joyous hours spent in the society of amiable and intelligent foreigners; and, in this instance, I may add, in a most luxurious climate, and amidst scenery where brilliancy and picturesque beauty increased the charm of novelty (Dynasty vii-viii).

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88 Harford Jones Brydges, The Dynasty of the Kajars translated from the original Persian Manuscript (London: Bohn, 1833) viii-ix.
He would be remiss to renounce proofs of friendship and offers of aid he had received from Persians when he was being undermined by his own kind (*Dynasty* ix-x). He writes in part and in "the hope, that a disclosure of them [the offers of friendship and aid] may soften the injurious opinion, formed by some persons, of the Persian character from the perusal of books written by such as had only the opportunity of viewing them superficially, or of books published with the avowed design of amusing the idle, by the recital of absurd tales, or extravagant caricature" (*Mission* 92). Allowance must be made for the Persian's "nature and idiom...which is elevated, poetical, and periphrastic" (*Dynasty* iv). Unlike Malcolm, furthermore, Jones willingly admits the transformation a private person undergoes in order to become a public figure. Reaching Shiraz, a city he had visited almost a quarter of a century earlier as a private citizen, Jones reflects on the dichotomy between the carefree attitude of a tourist and the constraints placed upon a public official:

What was I then? My own master--willing to please and be pleased--enjoying, with almost a child's delight, every thing and every body! What am I now? A man bound down to ceremony--who, instead of enjoying a fearless, careless, joyous intercourse with the Persians who visit him, is obliged to measure almost every word he utters to them, and to reflect on almost every sentence which they address him in return (*Mission* 96-97).

In private meetings with Persians, Jones is even willing to doff his public persona (50). Jones's dedication to ceremony is a consequence of the gravity of his office, not a reaction to the obsessions of Persians.

Of course, Jones faces an impossible task--that of defining himself as an English representative, as distinct from the Persians as he is from that other envoy hovering nearby. He must counteract Malcolm's past and his irritating presence, both the legacy of Malcolm's
largess and his more current maneuverings. As a result of the tenuousness of his position
Jones is far less eager to insist on national types, or indeed to distance himself from his
Persian onlookers, and yet we find in Jones the twin motifs of Malcolm's *Sketches*: the ease
with which the representative may move, invisible and unnoticed among the Persians; and
the insistence, more often than not, on being noticed. Jones, like a Tollemache, is so
conversant in the common courtesies of Persian etiquette that he may be mistaken as a native
(cxxxiii). Yet, though he delights in this invisibility, Jones is convinced that his worth as an
English representative is evident only in so far as the Persians extend to him their most
minute delicacies. In a meeting with a Persian functionary, for instance, Jones notices a
transgression.

I then gave him the firman, when, to my utter astonishment, after receiving
the instrument with the accustomed marks of respect to his Prince's mandates,
he said the room was very hot, and with perfect nonchalance, most indecently
and unceremoniously took off his cap, commenced wiping his bald head with
no very clean handkerchief, and then proceeded to read, *sotto voce*, the
contents of the firman. Now, in Persia baring the head in company, would be
considered as the very acme of disrespect; I therefore said:--"Pray does the
firman from the Prince, which I have just put into your hands, and which you
are reading in so slovenly a manner, direct you to insult me by an act, which,
had you dared to commit even in the presence of your equals, there would
not have been of them who would have hesitated to rise and kick you out of
the room; and I do assure you, I am only prevented doing so, by your being
an officer of the Prince... (Mission 40).

It is however the specter of Malcolm that haunts Jones, and Jones is at pains to demonstrate
his superiority to Malcolm. This difference must be rendered explicit. Jones adopts
"ostensible means" of conveying this distinction to the Persians, and the manner he chooses
to do this (we may recall Malcolm's testimony) is peculiarly "Persian." Malcolm's Persian
"ceremonies," we recall, were based on explicit displays of himself. He is forever, riding, quarreling, haggling. Malcolm triumphs over objects; the carpet fiasco ends with Malcolm mastering a corner. For Jones, on the other hand, Persian "customs" denote possession of objects in privacy and withholding them from view. His power and legitimacy is derived from something which is invisible and protected. One of the ways in which Jones differentiates himself from Malcolm, for example, is the manner in which Jones carries his credential from George III.

As one means of effecting this [difference], I caused the Taktrevan, which was prepared for me to travel in, if indisposed on the road, to be covered with fine scarlet broad cloth, and ornamented with gold lace, and a very handsome satin mattrass [sic] to be placed inside it, on which, when we commenced our march from Bushire, I placed, with some ceremony, the box containing the King's letter to the King of Persia. On the line of march, the taktrevan, or litter, was always preceded by one of the troopers carrying before it an Union silk Jack; at each door of the litter a trooper, with drawn sword, was stationed, and as many of the cavalry guard as could be spared from other services, followed behind, under the command of their native, with their swords drawn (70-71).

The ceremony of the delivery of the box, on reaching a town, is even more grandiose. With swords drawn, an officer rode in front of the litter, "a double guard was stationed at the doors and the remainder of the troops followed, with their swords drawn, then came the Mehmendar and myself, abreast; and following us, the gentlemen of the Embassy, two and two." At the halting place, the ambassador followed the litter on foot, through an honor guard who presented arms. The box was assigned the best room at each lodging; a sentinel stood guard over it, relieved at regular intervals. When the ambassador received visitors and the box was to be viewed, "I never suffered, either myself or the gentlemen attached to the
Mission, to enter [the room] without making an obeisance." Jones argues that such displays raise the "character of the Mission in the eyes of the Persians," an argument which resonates with protestations of his rival (71-72).

VI. The Lasting Image

Malcolm's moment in Persia assumed the importance of a controlling image. Against this image of a manly, double fisted Englishman full of bluff and bluster, Jones as well as future ambassadors labored; it was one which they had to try to emulate or negate. Very often, the Persians would fault the new envoys for being somehow less than Malcolm (English Amongst 4). Jones, on the other hand, lacking Malcolm's color and feverish largess, is a simpler and a more complex character. He would intrigue, but to less effect and with less bravado. Knowing the Persians better, he disliked them less. But both Malcolm and Jones were equally aware of the dichotomy between the private self and the public functions of a traveler in a strange land who happens to be representative of a nation. This they would admit to their English but not to their Persian audiences. Both men had taste for display and a fascination with effect. Their quandaries, the ill-defined nature of their offices, their fear of being recalled which urged them on to greater displays led them to strange conceits. They believed that show and display was the Persian's language. They sought to speak in this lexicon. The envoys were avid readers, writers of histories, travelogues and translations, and ironically enough, they had for Persian customs and history, a keener eye than their more famous successor, James Morier, a diplomat and writer, who, less schooled in things Persian, had for them a deeper scorn and whose books on Persia received a wider circulation.
Persian Recreations:
James Morier and Abul Hassan Khan Shirazi, 1810-1828

For the Sherleys, Malcolm, and Jones, I have suggested, Persia served as a backdrop to the promenade of the remade Self. All played the Persian, but played him for disparate reasons and with differing results. Anthony Sherley and his younger brother, the memorably robed and turbaned Robert, sought through their self-fashioning to justify their conduct in Persia and elevate their status in Britain. They understood their English audiences inadequately, however. Anthony played the part poorly. There was too great a disparity between his glorious Persian adventure and his destitute life in Europe. Robert Sherley, on the other hand, played too well. The Persian role enfolded him. After the death of Robert Sherley no English envoy imitated the Persian with quite the same degree of naiveté and desperation. Malcolm and Jones, the Sherleys' nineteenth-century successors, were more conscious of the tension between representing England before Persian viewers and recreating the Persian experience for English readers. Although both envoys played the Persian to advance the English cause in Persia, Malcolm and Jones catered to their English audiences. They had donned Persian masks, they were eager to say, and masks could be discarded at will.

The Persia of the Sherleys, Malcolm and Jones, England's Persia, was inhabited by two types of Persian. Out of their own prejudices and needs, I have said, the British envoys created and embodied a Persian. We have seen this Persian at work and play, in Robert Sherley's protestations on behalf of his turban and in Malcolm's struggles over a rug. This
Persian is formal in manner, a voluptuary, a stickler for detail, a braggart. The stereotype is not consistent; stereotypes rarely are. But besides this conjured Persian much in evidence in the history of Anglo-Persian relations exists another kind what, for lack of a better term, we might call, the real thing. In the tendentious Nagd Ali Beg, Robert Sherley's rival, and in Don Juan of Persia, the converted, renamed Persian, we have encountered the seventeenth-century Persian as a corporeal being, observed him though through the mediation of Western narrators--John Finett the Assistant Master of Ceremonies who recorded Nagd Ali Beg's attack upon Robert Sherley, and Alfonso Remon who collaborated with Don Juan of Persia in the writing of his autobiography. The real Persian, in both cases, succeeded the performance. Robert Sherley, we should recall, had already played the Persian in London in 1613, years prior to Nagd Ali Beg's appearance. Fiction and fact in London in 1626 fight one another to a standstill. Robert Sherley and Nagd Ali Beg were sent packing because, compared to one another, both were found disingenuous. Sir Dodmore Cotton took the combatants to Persia in the equivalent of a fact-finding mission. In this chapter I shall reverse course, as history itself does, and speak of how the real precedes the fiction, or how a real Persian is fictionalized. Abul Hassan Shirazi, the real Persian in this instance, not only inspired a series of fictional portraits, but, at length, was compared with the fiction he had engendered and judged wanting.

Abul Hassan Khan Shirazi, the first Persian Ambassador to England since Nagd Ali Beg in 1626, traveled to England at the conclusion of the Harfordian controversy described in the previous chapter. Having at last supplanted Malcolm, Harford Jones supervised the
details and the signing of a Preliminary Treaty and Alliance in Tehran in March 1809. Persia, under the terms of the treaty, agreed to oppose European advances toward India. England, in return, promised to train and equip a contingent of Persian infantry, and to pay Persia a subsidy of 100,000 pounds sterling (*Persian Connection* 119). To secure ratification of the treaty and clarify final points of contention, James Morier, private secretary to Jones and future novelist, of whom more shall be said later, returned to England in the company of Mirza Abul Hassan Shirazi, the Shah's envoy. The Persian envoy was thirty-five years old. He had had, for a time, a tempestuous career and his reputation had been recently resurrected. Born into an influential family in Shiraz, he had fled Persia, spending four years in exile and out of favor. Harford Jones would say that he suggested Abul Hassan's nomination, his years in India having schooled the future Persian Ambassador in the ways of the British. Something in the character or office of Abul Hassan inspired such claims. As we shall see he was frequently claimed and constructed, by various parties, in approval or reprobation.

Abul Hassan and Morier landed in Plymouth, reaching London in early December of 1809. A house had been provided for the envoy and his expenses were defrayed by the British government. Morier lodged with him. Sir Gore Ouesely, a Persian scholar and soon the next British Ambassador to Persia, served as Abul Hassan's official host. Abul Hassan, Morier would testify, "was distinguished, during his stay in England, by attentions more
marked and continued than, perhaps, were ever paid to any foreigner. Indeed the seven-month visit proved memorable both for the Persian Ambassador who produced an account of his journey upon his return to Persia, and for his English audience who avidly recorded his energetic participation in fashionable circles.

The lavishness of the reception accorded Abul Hassan, at Court and in the press, and the curiosity with which his conduct in England and later Persia was memorialized in the more private musings of British travelers and diplomats, mark an important moment in the history of Anglo-Persian diplomatic relations. Abul Hassan, unlike the combative and incomprehensible Nagd Ali Beg, has some felicity with the English tongue. He is, on occasion, a wit. He is, above all, approachable, touring banks and hospitals, admiring St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey, surveying and taking measurements. British newspapers would print purported letters from Abul Hassan. Others examples of his gallantry were quoted in diaries and correspondences. Yet, just as Nagd Ali Beg came to be invalidated by Robert Sherley's "Persian," Abul Hassan's place in the public imagination shall be taken by specters--fictional figures created by those who admired or opposed him. This chapter examines Abul Hassan's initial depiction in the popular press, and how his image was appropriated and reconstructed for political or didactic purposes. James Morier, Abul

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89 James Morier, A Journey Through Persia, Armenia, and Asia Minor... in Which is Included, Some Account of the Proceedings of His Majesty's Mission, Under Sir Harford Jones, Bart, K.C. to the Court of the King of Persia (London: Longman, 1812) viii.
90 Margaret Morris Cloake, trans. and ed., A Persian At The Court of King George, 1809-1810 (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1988). Copies of Abul Hassan's journals were available in Persia in the nineteenth century, but what he called The Book Of Wonders was not translated into English at that time. Cloake's translation abbreviates and annotates the portions of Abul Hassan's journals which describes his residence in England.
Hassan's companion, was thus not the first author to provide a "true" depiction of the Persian envoy. Morier's portrayal, however, became definitive, erasing the image and memory of Abul Hassan because Morier possessed what his rivals, including Abul Hassan himself, lacked--absolute "knowledge" of the Persian Ambassador, and an ability to create Persian characters who appeared more authentically Persian than Abul Hassan.

I. Abul Hassan Conquers the Beau Monde

"Few of the recent public events which have occurred, independent of the present seemingly interminable war," wrote an anonymous reviewer in 1813, "have excited more interest than the Embassy to Persia, and the consequent arrival in England of the Persian Envoy..." The extent of the excitement generated by the Persian Envoy four years earlier may be gleaned from the pages of London newspapers. A brief column in The Morning Chronicle on December 14, 1809 announced the visit paid to the envoy by "the King's Ministers, in full dress." The cabinet had called on the envoy, the latter being unable to stir from his lodging, "as by the etiquette of his high and lofty Court." Much importance is to be attached to the Persian mission, noted the Chronicle: "it is fortunate for the character of England, it seems to have been arranged for the purpose, that the Marquis Wellesley is the Minister in whose department it falls to do the honours of the British Empire to this most illustrious Person. And as we have lost all European Allies, it is with great prudence and wisdom, that we are to reverence this friend from Asia." Abul Hassan, the Chronicle reported in the same issue, "is a person of most noble and dignified deportment. He is

handsome and elegant. He has a family, which is not considered large, of only sixty-three children; but is considered as a mark of peculiar good fortune, even in Persia, that he had six children born to him on one and the same day."

A mix of fact and fiction (the envoy was a parent but of an only child) (Persians Amongst 60), the article in The Morning Chronicle, printed a mere ten days after Abul Hassan's entry into London, heralds other journalistic portraits of the Ambassador. By the day of Abul Hassan's audience with George III, we read in The Morning Post, "the public curiosity... was so great to see his Excellency on his way to and from...that hundreds of persons were assembled in Mansfield street at an early hour; in the Park there were many thousands. All avenues to St. James's Palace were likewise crowded, and fashionable vehicles of every description were drawn up (from Picadilly, even unto the southern extremity of the Stable-yard)..." (21 December 1809). When the envoy emerged from his lodging to take his seat in the State carriages, "the assembled multitude pulled off their hats and gave him three cheers." In similar, at times, identical language, The Morning Chronicle related the envoy's reception and the government's determination to show every mark of respect to the envoy, permitting him, for instance, "to enter the Queen's Palace by the great doors in front, where no other person is allowed to enter but those of the Royal Family" (21 December). After a pleasurable interlude with the King, Abul Hassan returned to his lodging and the throngs were again "so extremely great, that it was impossible for his Majesty's footmen to get from the carriage, to open the carriage door, and knock at the house door; and had it not been for the vigilance of the Bow-street patrole [sic], it would have been
impossible to clear the doorway" (21 December Morning Post).

Having presented his credentials to the King, the envoy emerged from his solitude to roam the fashionable world, and is thereafter frequently cited in the social columns, his sundry engagements dually noted. He is observed, for example, at the theater where the Italian tenor Tramessiani fails to impress him, while, in the meantime, his attendants teach a lesson in pertinence to an English spectator. "A gentleman standing up before one of them, he made signs to him to sit down, which the gentleman not immediately complying with, the Persian, sans ceremonie, instantly slipt into the vacant seat, thus reducing the unpolite spectator to the alternative of standing all night, or else retiring to some more distant situation" (The Statesman 1 January 1810). Next, the ambassador attends a dinner hosted in his honor by the Directors of the East India Company and the reception was conducted in the first style of elegance. The ceiling and three sides of the room were decorated with a number of beatific emblematic devices and artificial flowers; the fourth side was entirely covered with plate glass, which was ornamented by nine brilliant lustres, and a great number of variegated lamps. Over the President's chair was a most elegant transparency, representing his Majesty, with the King of Persia on his right, which by the splendid illumination around it, had a most beautiful effect. There were also several trophies gained by the British arms, together with the Persian banners, and the Arms of his Excellency, suspended from lofty Egyptian pillars, which were erected at different parts of the tables (Chronicle 12 January 1810).

The envoy, transported in a royal carriage drawn "by six beautiful bay horses, with new harness, and handsomely decorated with ribbons, the coachman, postillion, and two footmen, in rich state liversies," paid a courtesy call on the Prince of Wales. When Abul Hassan arrived at Carlton House, "the signal word of 'Sharp' was given, the same as is done to announce the entrance of their Majesties, or some of the Royal Family" (Statesman 25
January 1810). Abul Hassan was among the guests at Countess Rockinghamshire's party (Post 17 January 1810). At a celebration of the Queen's birthday "the addition of the three bands in state dresses, was in expectation" of his participation in the festivities (Statesman 19 January 1810). At a ball, Abul Hassan himself donned "for the first time, his state costume; it was a superbly embroidered vest" and conversed amiably with the Prince of Wales (Post 4 April). When Abul Hassan appeared at a meeting of the Four-In-Hand Club, one of the leaders of the charioteers "pulled off his hat, and made a very low obeisance; his example was followed by Lord Hawke and the others. 'A good example often produces a good effect.'" On horseback he was seen in the company of two Ladies "dressed in the Persian costume" (Post 17 April). The interest in Abul Hassan had perhaps one unintended consequence. "Persian" fashion was introduced to society and much of it appears to have gone "native." In honor of the ambassador ladies began to wear turbans "of frosted satin" and their hair "in the eastern style" (Post 3 April). At yet another ball, the dancing commenced with the "Persian Dance, introduced in compliment to Mirza Abul Hassan" (Post 11 June).

While Abul Hassan was the toast of London, he was also, behind the scenes, engaged in intricate diplomatic negotiations. He demanded assurances against Russian aggression, required an increase in the English subsidy promised to Persia, and sought the dispatch of skilled artisans of all kinds. To avoid the sort of imbroglio that had flared between Malcolm and Jones, Abul Hassan further suggested that the next British ambassador to Persia be recognized by the government of India.92 Abul Hassan's negotiations, however, were of little

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interest to the London newspapers. For the daily press, he is an object of wonder, and what is of note in him is what can be seen—what he wears, how he conducts himself. Abul Hassan's image in the daily press is an exalted one, nonetheless. He appears worthy of royal patronage, an equal among the English aristocracy. He is above all, however, a creature of the party circuit and the social column: a silent figure, wholly surface. Abul Hassan is spoken about, described, not engaged. But can the envoy speak?

II. Abul Hassan Recreated

The exotic appeal of the envoy, his costume and dignity, explain only in part the British fascination with him. Abul Hassan remained topical for seven months because he had so many claimants. The daily press, I have argued, de-politicized the Persian Ambassador by reducing him to spectacle. But the image of Abul Hassan, unlike that of Nagd Ali Beg, is not merely one of exteriors. If in the daily press Abul Hassan was something to gaze at, in the hands of those who sought to describe his person and not his daily routine, Abul Hassan's image reflected the concerns of the observer. In memoirs, correspondences and tales Abul Hassan became a moral fable, a didactic point. Numerous parties, for political or polemical reasons, seized upon the character of the Mirza, his biography and ethics, and he was reconstructed again and again, in flattering or denigrating terms. In Abul Hassan we see how a literal body becomes a literary trope.

In the construction of this show, the British government was involved. Newspapers reported on the extraordinary attentions and honors paid to Abul Hassan precisely because these honors and attentions were unusual and unprecedented. In this sense, the dailies were
disseminating an image of Abul Hassan which the government sought to propagate. One of the first architects of the legend of Abul Hassan was the government of England. Although the popular press regularly identified him as the "Persian Ambassador," it was uncertain whether he was entitled to such a rank. Persian sources had referred to him as vakil. Harford Jones, in his translation of Abul Hassan's credentials, had called him a charge d'affaire which Gore Ouseley, in London, maintained, may mean a Minister (Persians Amongst 56). The Persian envoy's ambiguous rank was a delicate matter. Mindful of the French threat to India, Perceval, the Prime Minister, and Wellesley, the newly appointed Foreign Secretary, were intent on lavishing the most flattering attentions on the Shah's representative. The government of Britain, however, could not break precedent for a mere charge. A decision was therefore made to promote the envoy. A vakil, possibly a minister, thus became, in his host country, and at the behest of its government, "Envoy Extraordinary." James Morier, Abul Hassan's companion, summarized the solution to Jones, still in Tehran, in this way: "The great difficulty at first lay in what his diplomatic character really was. Although you had given him so very inferior a title, yet we thought it advisable for political reasons to give him a much higher one, and it has at last been fixed as Envoy Extraordinary" (Persians Amongst 55-56). We shall return to Morier's relationship with Abul Hassan shortly, but we should note, for now, the ambiguities in Morier's letter. It is not, after all, Jones who has "given" Abul Hassan a title. Jones is the translator of the title, not its bestower. "The great difficulty," of course, could have been solved by proper inquires. Such a query, no doubt, would have been time consuming, but Abul Hassan's English handlers are not interested in
his "true" rank. Political expediency requires that he should be an ambassador and Abul Hassan is thus the passive beneficiary of a promotion. The issue of his diplomatic character remains a subject of discussion among the English, "you" (Jones) and "we" (the Foreign Office). Abul Hassan Envoy Extraordinary is a creation of the English government; neither the Persian government nor Abul Hassan, it appears, need be consulted.

To further justify the high honors bestowed upon Abul Hassan the Foreign Office instructed Morier to write a glorified account of the reception of the English Mission to Tehran ten months earlier in February of 1809. The article, Morier informed Jones, was "to be produced as an apology to other foreign Ministers or Ambassadors for the distinguished attention that is paid to our Persian guest" (Persians Amongst 56). Morier's article, duly produced and dutifully glowing, ran in various newspapers. In the meantime Wellesley set about explaining to the Court the necessity to the break with custom in homage to Abul Hassan. In a letter to George III on December 11, 1809, Wellesley described the unusual step of calling upon the envoy, "although that attention cannot be claimed by any European Minister below the rank of Ambassador" (Aspinall 469). In order to further impress upon the Persian Mission the importance the British government attached to it,

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8Morier's article appeared anonymously in The Statesman, The Morning Post, and La Belle Assemble. Setting aside the strife that had preceded Jones's arrival in Persia, Morier's article concentrated on "the acts of unparalleled courtesy" that the English Mission encountered. "So anxious was his Persian Majesty to shew [sic] every mark of attention to the King of England's Mission," wrote Morier, "that he broke through the old established customs of his country to give us an early audience, and, to the astonishment of all his court, made it publicly known that he intended to receive the Envoy before the Moharem was expired" (The Statesman 12 January 1810). Besides Morier's article, The Statesman and The Morning Chronicle printed an account of the reception given to the Persian "Ambassador" by the East India Company, in which, Lord Wellesley said, that "he was charged by his Excellency to offer his acknowledgements for the honor paid first to his Monarch, and next to himself. He gloried in avowing the truth of the toast, which gave the natural union of Persia and Great Britain; he trusted Persia would long remain the bulwark to guard the interests of Great Britain, and of the East India Company."
... the Marquess Wellesley humbly submits to your Majesty the expediency of granting a Public Entrance to the Persian Minister; and, considering the extraordinary attention paid to Sir Harford Jones in Persia, and the great efforts which the French Government has made to alienate the King of Persia from your Majesty, it would appear to be highly desirable that the ceremony should be distinguished by every convenient degree of splendour. This mark of attention will be peculiarly acceptable to the Court of Persia; and as the Minister is a personage of high birth (being nearly connected with those who have held the most distinguished situation in that country, & allied to the female branches of the Royal Family) this testimony of your Majesty's consideration would probably produce the most favorable impression in Persia (Aspinall 468-469).

The precise background of the envoy would become a matter for debate, but tremors of Wellesley's efforts to promote the envoy may have been felt as late as 1819, when during the envoy's second mission to England an anonymous article in The London Literary Gazette heralded the envoy's return to England. Although this article may not have been solicited and planted in the same manner as Morier's, it recalls and elaborates much of the same information that Wellesley had provided to the Court. Abul Hassan's family, wrote the anonymous contributor in the "Sketches of Society" column of the Gazette, enjoyed "the highest degree of royal favour." Abul Hassan himself was the son of a "military commander"; his uncle "held the most important position in the state" and the future envoy became governor in childhood. It was a "calumny" that changed his fortunes and forced him into exile. Abul Hassan used his time in exile industriously, in visiting various countries, learning, in India, that he had been restored to royal favor. Since his last mission to England, the Mirza has served his country in august positions, and he remains in high favor.

Feth-Ali-Shah has conferred peculiar honour on his ambassador by presenting

him with his portrait set in diamonds, which the latter constantly wears around his neck...His Majesty has also presented him with an ode which he composed in his praise, and which he accompanied by a superb standard. From this poetical composition, it would appear that Mirza-Aboul-Hassan [sic] is very high in the estimation and favour of the Great King. All the relatives of the favourite occupy important posts, either at the court of Teheran, or about the person of the hereditary prince, Abbas Mirzas [sic], at Tauris. A nephew of Aboul-Hassan received in marriage the hand of one of the King's daughters, but the princess died at an early age, and Feth-Ali-Shah, to prove his attachment for the family, united him to another of his daughters (Literary Gazette 8 May 1819).

Reports of the Persian envoy were not limited to the social columns of the dailies, or the memoranda of government ministers. In memoirs and correspondences meant, we notice the interest with which the envoy was observed and described. In a letter printed originally for private circulation and subsequently published in Gentlemen's Magazine, Lord Radstock, who had befriended the envoy and was in a position to describe him fully, provided a brief sketch of his "friend the Persian." Radstock is concerned not so much with the envoy's pedigree or the politics of his Mission, but his conduct and demeanor. As a relative of Morier's, Radstock has easy access to the envoy, and he is eager to appear among the envoy's familiars. Radstock, for example, supplies the reader with his credential as an intimate of Abul Hassan's. Radstock has visited the envoy, "every day since his arrival, excepting one, when in the evening he told Mr. James Morier that his heart was sick, as he had not seen his friend Lord Radstock during the whole of the day" (119). He has, writes Radstock, attended the envoy sometimes "twice a day, and have dined with him five times."

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95 William Waldegrave Radstock, "A Slight Sketch of the Character, Person...of Aboul Hassen [sic], Envoy Extraordinary from the King of Persia to the Court of Great Britain, in the Years 1809 and 1810", The Gentleman's Magazine 10 January 1820: 119. Admiral William Waldegrave, 1st Baron Radstock, was married to Cornelia von Lennep whose sister, Clara, was James Morier's mother (Cloake 39).
After describing Abul Hassan's person, Radstock delineates the envoy's personality.

At a dinner of Abul Hassan's, Radstock was one of ten guests and found the envoy's deportment engaging.

Nothing could surpass the grace and ease with which he did the honours of the entertainment: I do not mean as to attending to his guests eating and drinking, but to the general tenor of his conduct and behaviour, and unceasing complacency towards them. He drank but one glass of wine at dinner, and not after, although he acknowledged he likes wine, and we kept our seats little short of three hours. This act of his forbearance and abstaining, from religious motives, might have served a lesson to his Christian guests;--but here candour bids me own they seemed by no means inclined to follow so excellent an example... (120).

Radstock's comparison of Abul Hassan's conduct at the dinner table with those of his English guests is significant. For Radstock the envoy is more useful, for the way he comments, or appears to comment, on the land he is visiting than the country from which he hails. In Radstock's depiction, the contrast between the Persian visitor and his English counterparts credits Abul Hassan. His moderation at the dinner table, for instance, is a lesson to his guests. Though a wit, he is hardly a trifler. At the Opera he is incredulous at the frivolity of the whole exercise. He is fond of children, appreciates, though a Moslem, days set aside for the study of Christian sermons.

Abul Hassan in his tact, elegance, and seriousness espouses a philosophy of life which, meeting Radstock's approval, is fit for dissemination. Abul Hassan's deportment is so enthusiastically supported by Radstock that one may wonder if the envoy's views are in fact the Baron's. Both appear to believe in marriage, in industry, in moderation, in social stratification. Such a convergence of sympathies may have indeed been the case, but we
need to question the extent of Radstock's knowledge of Abul Hassan. In the struggle—and struggle it shall soon become—to appropriate the envoy, Radstock suffers from a disadvantage. It is uncertain what Radstock knows about the envoy and how he has acquired his knowledge, as Radstock cannot communicate directly with Abul Hassan: "not understanding the language you readily suppose, how much of what he says escapes me" (120). Radstock, thus, must often resort to his own powers of deduction. We have, for example, already noted how Radstock must extract meaning from the envoy's features. Instances of Radstock attempting to decipher a look, or an intonation are numerous. "He appears to despise and detest the Turks as much as possible" (120) (emphasis added). "The objects which hitherto seem to have made the strongest impression on the Mirza's mind are Greenwich and Chelsea Hospitals..." (121) (emphasis added). "This man's mind seems to be ever on the stretch, and filled with interesting and important objects only" (121) (emphasis added). In trying to understand and explain Abul Hassan, Radstock can only suggest a reading—couched in tentative, conditional prose—of appearances.

Abul Hassan, then, provides, for Radstock, commentary on English mores, excesses as well as accomplishments. He is suitably impressed by English industry, but his abstinence and seriousness are moral lessons to his English contemporaries. The Persian is, for the most part, silent. He is interpreted and translated by Radstock who gazes at Abul Hassan's visage, or by Morier and Ouesely who more literally explain and explicate his pronouncements. Radstock's knowledge of everything except what he can confirm by sight is therefore second-hand. When he is not relying on Morier and Ouesely to translate the envoy's pronouncement,
Radstock transcribes their memories of the envoy. "Sir Gore Ouseley says, that he [Abul Hassan] has a perfect knowledge of that of his own country" (120). "I will now give proof of the Mirza's readiness at reply," Radstock writes of another episode which transpires in Persia and is reported to him, "when at the private audience with his Persian Majesty, the King said, 'Sir Gore Ouseley, you seem to speak Persian quite fluently.' Before the Baronet had time to reply, the Mirza answered, 'better than I sir'" (120).

Radstock's "Sketch" is only one of many attempts to possess the pliable form of the envoy. Radstock had sought to explain the Persian Ambassador by observing his actions and interviewing those who knew him. During the envoy's residence in Britain, and in a vein similar to Radstock though with a greater didactic emphasis, a London literary journal, *La Belle Assemble*, published eight epistles in monthly installments under the title "Persian Letters." This fictional correspondence was from the pen of "Muley Cid Sadi, one of the Secretaries to his Excellency the Persian Ambassador in London, to Osman Cali Beg his friend in Isphahan."56 Citing many of the envoy's activities, his royal audience, for instance, or visits to the theater and opera, "Persian Letters" constructs a narrative parallel to those of the popular press or of Radstock. If the latter texts provided glimpses of the ambassador and a sampling of his conversation, *La Belle Assemble* offers a more privileged perspective upon the Persian Mission: a self-portrait by a Persian attendant of the Ambassador. Sadi, in private correspondence, comments upon English customs, manners, institutions, having promised his friend at Isphahan "a sketch if not a complete portrait of the manner and country

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of these dogs of the earth--these infidels" (I).

Sadi's observations, naturally, allow his creators to engage in much droll commentary. Sadi gapes at paper currency; he questions why the English choose to sit on chairs rather than the ground, and wonders, in this regard, if tailors' recumbent postures identify them as descendants of Persian refugees (II). Witnessing a Sultan on the stage, he reflects on the incongruity of an Asian King having to explain himself. "I will not...deign to inform these outcasts of Heaven, that a Sultan of Persia, like some part of the British Constitution, is above reason, and never stoops to common sense, that it is the prerogative of Mussulman royalty to play the fool, and that our Sultans and Muftis are more holy the nearer they approach idiocy" (IV).

"Persian Letters," however, has more than buffoonery in mind. The confused, grudging Sadi, despite his reservations and frequent misunderstandings of English norms, testifies to English prosperity. Sadi, for example, is continually surprised by signs of luxury, admitting "there is wealth enough in one of their principal towns to purchase the half of the Persian monarch" (I). He praises English ingenuity in trade and commerce; English manufactory is extolled. Describing the uses and merits of pokers and tongs Sadi reflects how, "all these are made of polished steel, and add much in the general look of magnificence and comfort. Upon my word, the King of Persia himself is not better lodged than these infidels" (II).

Sadi's naive appreciation of English enterprise has a corollary in his condemnation of all that prevents the nation from its rigor, all that is soft, luxurious. Awaiting his master's
audience with the King, for instance, Sadi observes the assembled crowd. He takes a raucous nobleman for a victor of some sort; the latter, his English interpreter informs him, is a fop and patron of the opera. Sadi inquires after a "lady of rank," the center of much attention and apparently without an escort. Her husband, Sadi is told, attends separate circles, "to prevent unexpected and unpleasant rencontres."

"What reprintes?" demanded I.
"Why, with each other," replied he.
"What reprintes could possibly be more unpleasant?"
"Than that of a husband and wife?" repeated I.
"Yes," returned he, "under the circumstancies of this husband and wife: each of them holds the other in aversion; each of them would hail a divorce as riddance, yet in compliance with what their peculiar situation demands of them, each of them, observes the most polite conduct towards each other. They do everything but live together... (III)

If criticism is leveled at the aristocracy for its hypocrisy, moral turpitude and self-indulgence, the lower orders are condemned for their lack of faith. "The pulpits are full," writes Sadi, "but the churches are empty" (III). "Persian Letters" upholds the same appreciation for moderation and social stratification that Radstock had commended. The Persian observer, albeit from a different perspective, acts a conveyer of virtue. In "Persian Letters," however, unlike Radstock's Abul Hassan, the Persian is a mere conduit. He may transmit but he cannot partake of wisdom.

Of all classes or groups subjected to Sadi's attacks in La Belle Assemble, women receive the harshest criticism. At first with bemusement, then confusion, and finally anger Sadi deliberates upon gender roles in England. Though he vilifies weak, dandified men, Sadi reserves his greatest opprobrium for liberated or domineering women. This censure reaches
a crescendo in the final two letters. In England Sadi has notices a subversion of the natural order: "women are equal to the men, and therefore both men and women are equal triflers. I can give no other probable reason for the general, the outrageous folly of this people, but their indiscriminate admission of women into all their society. Where women and men are thus equal to each other men sink below where they ought to be, into Merry-Andrews and Morris-Dancers; and women, being loosened from the rein which ought to hold them, are like wild asses in the desert—the most mischievous, unlucky creatures under the heaven" (VII). Men, in a false pursuit of gallantry, abrogate their responsibility, and "as men have raised women to their own level, so have they necessarily sunk themselves to feminine standards" (VIII). In his last letter Sadi awaits the day when he shall return to those "happy lands in which man enjoys his natural dignity and women live in natural subservience" (VIII).

In its condemnation of the inversion of natural order, "Persian Letters" functions as a patriarchal manifesto and should be read in the context of the French Revolution and Napoleonic wars. Subversion among women, for "Persian Letters," portends greater anarchy; the clash of genders bespeaks a clash of classes. This analogy between the aspirations of women and those of the lower orders is, at times, syntactically maintained: "I have myself seen a woman rebel against her husband; I have seen a servant seditious against his master..." (VI). But sedition in the household is itself a sign of an attack upon the rule of law; weak husbands make for weak, apathetic, presumptuous citizens. Above all, "Persian Letters," is a justification and defense of monarchy, and though the aristocracy is often critiqued, the
person of the King, and the legitimacy of government are beyond reproach.

He [the King] is a venerable man, very deservedly respected for his virtues; he deserves to belong to a better people, and were he a Mahometan [sic] would make a good Mussulman prince... his general character is that of a firm and magnanimous prince; and indeed he requires this firmness to govern these Infidel dogs. Nothing can equal their proneness to call into question all the acts of their government, and no one of them is so low in station, or in his own opinion so humble in understanding, but that he has both the faculty and the right of examining the conduct of his governors, and arraigning even the wisdom of the Sovereign himself (III).

The appeal of the East, for "Persian Letters," is its immutability. Incomprehensible and violent the East may be, but it is also a place where laws, however barbaric, are obeyed and justice is swift. Sadi ends his correspondence by ordering his eunuchs to punish one of his wives who has "looked into the street." Her hair is to be shorn, one ear slit. She is to be lashed two hundred times. Sadi has chosen leniency. This is a first offense, and the wife a favorite (VIII). How far we have come from the Persian envoy, bejeweled and robed, on Mansfield Street.

What is noteworthy about the didacticism of La Belle Assemble's "Persian Letters" is not just that it resorts to exhausted themes at a time when English scholars and travelers had generated a lively interest in the language and history of Persia, but that it should resuscitate these images while a Persian delegation was in residence in England. But "Persian Letters" favors fiction over fact. In its epistolary style, in its very title, in its use of a Persian figure to construct a moral tale, La Belle Assemble's "Persian Letters" recalls and imitates two earlier novels, Montesquieu's Lettres Persanes (1721) and George Lyttleton's
Persian Letters (1735). Unlike its predecessors, however, La Belle Assemble's 'Persian letters' aims not for change, but against it, and though the Persian naïveté is mocked, the firmness of his rule, if not his methods, is held up for admiration.

III. Abul Hassan Clowning

The chief difference between Radstock and La Belle Assemble in their treatment of the Persian Ambassador is the genre to which they assign Abul Hassan. For Radstock, the Persian Ambassador is a moral trope; for La Belle Assemble, the Persian visitors are a comic interlude. Despite the efforts of the British government and those well-wishers like Radstock, a burlesque element pervades the later descriptions of the envoy. Abul Hassan himself may have aided in the propagation of this caricature. Comedy, if not entirely


98 It is impossible to tell whether a letter in pidgin English that was printed in The Morning Post was indeed the work of the Ambassador. "When you write to me, some time ago," Abul Hassan supposedly wrote to the newspaper, "to give my thought of what I see good and bad this country, that time I not speak English very well--now I read, I write much better--now I give to you my think. In this country bad not much, every thing very good--but suppose I not tell something little bad, then you say I tell all flattery--therefore I tell most bad thing. I not like much crowd in evening party every night--In cold weather not very good--now, hot weather, much too bad. I very much astonish, every day much hot than before. evening parties much crowd than before.-- Pretty beautiful ladies come sweat that not very good--I always afraid some old lady in great crowd come dead, that not very good, and spoil my happiness.--I think old ladies after 85 years not come to evening party that much better..." Abul Hassan's letter was published in May 29th issue of the Morning Post. In its response on June 1, the Morning Post commented that it had been "assured that the letter which recently appeared in this Paper as actually written in English by his Excellency the Persian Ambassador." The paper marveled at the speed with which the envoy, in so short a time, had gained a "tolerable knowledge of the English language, and expressed a wish that all ladies, and
successful, is partly intended in *La Belle Assemble*’s "Persian Letters," which coyly ridiculed a Persian Secretary and not the Ambassador himself. Others would not be so demuring. My concern here is to examine the comic descriptions of the envoy before turning to the more condemnatory depictions of Abul Hassan which supplanted all others.

"The Persian Ambassador is the principal thing talked of now," Charles Lamb wrote a private correspondent, "I sent some people to see him worship the sun on Primrose Hill at half-past six in the morning, 28th November; but he did not come, which makes me think the old fire-worshippers are a sect almost extinct in Persia... The Persian ambassador's name is Shaw Ali Mirza. The common people call him Shaw Nonsense." Other informants, better situated than Lamb to view the visitors, reported on Abul Hassan's deportment in the world of fashion. In a letter to her father, Lord Minto, Miss Elliot described an activity and preoccupation of the envoy which was viewed with increasing alarm by his English acquaintances: Abul Hassan's pursuit of and by the ladies of fashion.

...the new Persian Ambassador who came home with Mr. Morier is very handsome and extremely admired by the ladies. Some people suspect he is 'no waiter, but a Knight Templar in disguise,' or rather no Ambassador, but a renegade Jew. Some wise man asked him if he adored the sun in Persia; he said, 'No, not in Persia, but he should adore it in England if he happened to see it.' There is only one lady who can speak Persian to him, a Miss Metcalfe, who cracks Persian jokes to him, and laughs in Persian, just as if it was English. They say of course he is in love with her but having two or

not just the elderly as described by the envoy, "might sometimes give their conversation an interest beyond the fleeting frivolities of the moment."

three dozen wives already, there is no room for her, the more's the pity.\footnote{100}

Lamb's contribution to the Abul Hassan legend and Miss Eliot's prudish commentaries foreshadow themes which were enlarged by future critics of Abul Hassan's—the doubts about his authenticity, the bemused and, in time, alarmed observations of his conduct among English women. These condescending notes, however, were privately sounded. Public sentiment, two months after the envoy's arrival, may be judged by verses published in The Statesman, on January 25, 1810 and meant to be sung to the tune of the popular ballad "The Frog in an Opera Hat." A crowd pleaser, the envoy may have been, but he was also, we may deduce from the doggerel, a comic spectacle.

The Persian Ambassador's come to town; Heigh-ho! says Boney;
And he is a person of rank and renown,
Says in Persia they'll knock all French politics down,
With their Parlez-vous, Voulez-vous, gammon and spinach too;
Heigh-ho! says Emperor Boney.

To see the Ambassador all the Folks ran;
Heigh-ho! says Boney;
He has sixty-three children, says Boney: well done!
What a dev'l of a fellow! while I haven't one!
With my Parlez-vous, Voulez-vous, Josephine and others too;
Heigh-ho! says Emperor Boney.

Till presented he'd been he could not go about;
Heigh-ho! says Boney;
So went to the court, while the folks made a rout,
And being presented, and leave to go out,
With a Parlez-vous, Voulez-vous, Johnny Bull, how d'ye do!
Heigh-ho! says Emperor Boney.

\footnote{100 Quoted in Lord Minto in India: Life and Letters of Gilbert, First Earl of Minto from 1807-1814 (London: Longmans, 1880) 137.}
In eight more stanzas, the doggerel details and traces the events of the envoy's residence in London. The jocularity initially directed at Napoleon—the comparison between his infertility and Abul Hassan's fathering of five dozen children, for example—is at length directed at the envoy himself.

To the Op'ra the Persian Ambassador went;
Heigh-ho! says Boney;
He said to go often it was his intent,
For he liked it so well he scarce knew what it meant.

The final lines of the "The Persian Ambassador" promise Abul Hassan contentment "if a best prize he gets in A, B, C, or D." The doggerel simultaneously demonstrates the popular appeal and perception of Abul Hassan. His evolution from court to crowd favorite represents a fall for the figure of "Abul Hassan." He is moving from society columns and epistolary novellas to street ballads, and, as his image is disseminated among larger audiences, it also becomes coarser and more comical.

The private musings of Lamb and Miss Eliot which had found public expression in "The Persian Ambassador," would get a more earnest treatment in one of the final portraits of the envoy to be published in his life time. Five years after the appreciative testimonials of Radstock and The London Literary Gazette and while, we may assume, the memory of Abul Hassan's missions to England remained with those he had charmed, James Ballie Fraser wrote of the enovy in his Narrative of a Journey into Khorasan in the Years 1821 and 1822 (1825). Fraser, a prolific writer and traveller, was attached to the mission of Dr. Jukes to Persia in 1821. Having met Abul Hassan among his own people, and thus, presumably, in
less guarded moments, Fraser endeavored to dispel all myths about Abul Hassan. Fraser begins by addressing talk of the envoy's aristocratic lineage. "Mirza Abool Hussein [sic] Khan—is the descendant of an old but decayed family, which resided sometimes at Sheeraz, sometimes at Isphahan. In his youth he was in very low circumstances, and was known first as a very beautiful and very abandoned boy, much sought after by the great men of the city who sometimes even exhibited him as a dancer in women's attire." Having supplied the "true" account of Abul Hassan's background, Fraser considers the envoy's current reputation in Persia:

There is no man of rank about the court less respected, or less deserving of being so, than Meerza Abool Hussein Khan. He is so mean and dishonest, in all his dealings, that none who can avoid it will have anything to do with him: and so proverbially false, that none believes a word he says. The dissolute and abandoned habits of his youth he maintains in his advanced years to such a degree, that, though, there is little attention paid to morals in Persia, he is spoken of with contempt and disgust by every respectable person at court (150).

How the envoy came to bewitch so much of English society, is a mystery to Fraser. The author commands facts, not conjecture, and while Radstock's lexicon depends on speculative verbs such as "appears" and "seems," Fraser's language is insistently copulative. What he can vouch for, again based on close scrutiny of Abul Hassan, is how the envoy ill-used the favors

101 Born in 1783, Fraser had settled on the East as a career. He began in India by exploring hitherto unknown parts of the peninsula, but most of his career was spent in traveling in or writing about Persia. Apart from his first travelogue in which he sought to demystify Abul Hassan (see next note), Fraser wrote three other accounts of his journeys in Persia and he was the author of a series of tales and romances with Persian themes. He led a diplomatic mission to Persia in 1833-1834, and was subsequently, in 1835, in charge of Persian Princes who spent a year in exile in London. See Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee, eds. *The Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 8 (London: Oxford UP, 1921-22) 651-652.

and kindness of his English hosts.

Although he has for a long time past, and I believe still receives a considerable annuity from the English Government, and has returned to Persia loaded with its presents, he constantly opposes its interests, and talks of it before his countrymen generally in very slighting terms. He carried a number of handsome shawls with him to England, which he boasts to have bartered there for the favours of the first women of the land: and talks openly by name of the ladies of rank, duchesses and others with whom he has had affairs of gallantry, and a whole host of minor females, women of whose letters he produces in Persian parties, and reads out, to vouch for the truth of his statements which are doubted more from his notorious falsity than from any confidence in the virtue of our fair country-women (150).

Fraser's sketch of Abul Hassan is an antidote to every breathless journalist's who has been captivated by the envoy's superficial good humor. For Fraser, unlike Radstock, or any number of other nameless chroniclers, reporters, or reviewers, brings to his perspective the authority of experience. Fraser's is conclusive evidence because he is not only privy to the Persian view of Abul Hassan, but, and more importantly, because Fraser has observed Abul Hassan in his native element. Fraser offers his portrait of the envoy as a cautionary tale. Abul Hassan's indecencies are a warning to every English woman who, misunderstanding his character, has treated him kindly. How they are viewed in Persia may not matter to the ladies in question, but the subject is a trial for "the few of their countrymen who may wander there, to hear these lightly and irreverently spoken of, whose society they so much languish to enjoy" (151). Although Fraser's morality recalls La Belle Assemble'e, the target of his attack is different. Now it is only Abul Hassan who is to blame. He tempts not tottering virtues, but all British women, the innocent and the gullible.

Fraser constructs two images. First he depicts himself, the love-lorn European in the
wilds of the East, pining for company. It is an absurd picture (and are we to accept his belief in the virtues of English women as sincere?), one in which the sympathies of the male English reader are enlisted. But a second image is also constituted, that of the Ambassador, a profligate, debauched former dancing boy who maintaining his "dissolute habits," now quite probably samples the charms of dancing boys. The reader may be forgiven if, for a brief moment, he notices the unintentional juxtaposition of author and subject, of the manly, abstinent Fraser exiled from the society of women, and the effeminate Persian satiated by it. In the brief span of fifteen years the Persian has been transformed, from Radstock's noble mute to Fraser's debauched predator. Between these extremes, and more perniciously, shall oscillate a third possibility—Abul Hassan as a buffoon. We have heard echoes of this reading in the doggerel of The Statesman, the passing allusions of Miss Eliot and Charles Lamb. Abul Hassan the clown shall become the definitive image.

IV. Morier's Mirza Firouz and Abul Hassan's Complaint

If Abul Hassan of the daily press was a spectacle, the Persian envoy, for those who claimed to know him best, is another sort of event observed in contradictory snapshots. Like Nagd Ali Beg and Don Juan of Persia, Abul Hassan becomes a fiction. But what is intriguing, from our standpoint, is that Abul Hassan, the real person, precedes the fiction and could have, if so inclined, witnessed his own transmogrification. This is not true, as I have said, of Nagd Ali Beg. His presence in England was anticipated and undermined by Robert Sherley with whose "Persian" Nagd Ali Beg was compared. In Abul Hassan's case we notice an intensification of this comparison. The "real" or "genuine" Abul Hassan is compared
unfavorably with the fictions he inspires, especially those authored by his companion, James Morier.

Indeed, the travels of Mirza Hassan might have remained only a curious episode in history had it not been for Morier's fiction. In the struggle to appropriate Abul Hassan, no contemporary of the Persian envoy dealt the death's blow to his legend in quite the same way as his companion, Morier. Morier provides first a factual then a fictional portrayal of Abul Hassan. Morier's facts are quite probably highly fictionalized and his subsequent novels are a repackaging of his "facts." This is an overly compacted statement at this stage, but my point here is that Morier's factual/fictional portrayal of Abul Hassan constituted the definitive image of the envoy. As we have already seen, Morier was one of many authors who sought to provide a "true" depiction of the Persian envoy. Morier's portrayal, however, became definitive because, in his recreation of Abul Hassan, Morier was privy to absolute "knowledge" of the Persian Ambassador. Morier not only deflated the august image created by the likes of Radstock, but in time, Morier's "Persian" erased Abul Hassan in the collective imagination. Mention of Persia and Persians, towards the middle of the nineteenth century, caused the recall, not of the two missions of Abul Hassan or any number of scholarly texts written about Persia, but of a fictional character, Hajji Baba, the protagonist of two of Morier's Persian novels.

James Justinian Morier was born in the Turkish port of Smyrna in 1782 or 1783. Little is known of his schooling in England. At the age of seventeen he returned to the Levant and it was in Constantinople that he met Sir Harford Jones. In 1808 when Jones was
entrusted with the task of combating French influence in Persia, Morier traveled with him to Tehran as his private secretary. Morier's first visit to Persia was of short duration; he found the language facile and the country picturesque.\textsuperscript{103} He returned to England, as we have seen, in the company of Abul Hassan, serving as his companion, confidant, and interpreter. At the conclusion of Abul Hassan's mission, Morier departed for Persian in the company of the Persian envoy and Sir Gore Ouseley, Abul Hassan's host in London, who was appointed "Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary" to Persia (\textit{English Amongst} 12-13). Morier's second sojourn was of longer duration and proved more taxing. It may have been on this journey, if not earlier, that Morier conceived of the idea of writing about Abul Hassan. His letters home paint an unflattering portrait of the envoy who had so recently been lionized in London. Abul Hassan, Morier wrote home, had

brought a certain quantity of silk stockings from England. Having exhibited them before the Prince (of Fars), he said that the \textit{ferangis} generally put them on when they went to bed. He hinted that they were great promoters of that sort of vigour which people so debauched and sensualised are ever anxious to acquire. The Mirza's stockings of course became the property of the Prince and the latter immediately hastened to try the Experiment. He returned covered with glory and immediately sent the Mirza for more stockings... I think our hosiery should put up a statue to Mirza Abdol [sic] Hassan for his discovery and send the stockings for his own use gratis (Wemyss 167).

In the meantime, upon reaching Tehran, Ouesely, Morier's superior, began negotiations for the final ratification of the treaty that Harford Jones had initiated and Morier and Abul Hassan had taken with them to London. The Definitive Treaty was finally signed

\textsuperscript{103} Alice Wemyss, "The Birth of Hajji Baba, as seen through the letters of James Morier," \textit{Persica} 7 (1978): 165-166.
in March 1812, but Britain, having allied itself with Russia, almost immediately reneged on those terms which pitted her against Russia. A third set of negotiation was thus begun, just as Ouesely was preparing to depart for England. With the eclipse of the French threat to India and Britain's alliance with Russia, British interest in Persia was fading. The title of the British agent in Tehran was changed to Charge d' Affair, a lower rank which did not appeal to Morier. Having served briefly as chief of the English mission Morier left Persia for the final time in 1816 (English Amongst 14-17).

Morie's seven-year involvement with Persia, a span of time in which he was either residing in Persia or traveling to and fro, commenced as an adventure and ended in boredom and disgust. Something of his attitude towards Persia may be gathered from the pen of Peregrine Persic, the fictional translator and editor of the English manuscript of The Adventures of The Hajji Baba of Isphahan, Morier's first novel. Upon being selected to accompany an English Mission to Persia, Persic reflects upon the Persia of his imagination

I was fortunate enough to be appointed to fill an official situation in the suite of an ambassador, which our government found itself under the necessity of sending to the Shah of Persia. Persia, that imaginary seat of Oriental splendour! that land of poets and roses! that cradle of mankind! that uncontaminated source of Eastern manner lay before me, and I was delighted with the opportunities which would be afforded me of pursuing my favourite subject. 104

Later, on leaving Persia, Persic comments, "I will not say that all my dreams were realized, for perhaps no country in the world less comes up to one's expectation than Persia, whether in the beauties of nature, or the riches and magnificence of its inhabitants" (xliii).

Morier's antipathy for Persia notwithstanding, he would write of it, in travelogues and novels, for the rest of his life. His first effort, *A Journey Through Persia, Armenia, and Asia Minor...in Which is Included, Some Account of the Proceedings of His Majesty's Mission, Under Sir Harford Jones, Bart, K.C. to the Court of the King of Persia*, published during his absence from Britain in 1812, summarized his initial impression of the country as recorded in his journals. It was a breathless work, a hodge podge of various facts and figures about the country. He was not, Morier noted, equipped "to deliberate upon the national character," such deliberations needing a longer stay (248). Morier's second travel narrative, *A Second Journey Through Persia...Together with an Account of the Proceedings of His Majesty's Embassy under His Excellency Sir Gore Ouseley, Bart* (1818) was more decisive and astringent in its observations. The modest critical reception of his two travel narratives could not have prepared Morier for the popular success of his first novel. In 1824 Morier published *The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan*,105 anonymously, following it four years later with a sequel, *The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan in England*.

Morier's first novel, and the one for which he is remembered today, *The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan*, recounts the memories of a mercurial rogue who, buffeted by circumstance, through guile, by chance or accident, rises in the ranks of Persian society. The son of a barber in Ispahan, Hajji Baba begins his picaresque career as a prisoner to a tribe.

105 *The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan* received mixed notices, some reviewers objecting to the immorality of its protagonist. It was, nonetheless, a popular success, *The Monthly Magazine* noting that the first edition, "went off like fire crackers. In forty-eight hours after its publication, we doubt if there was a literary man in the Kingdom who had not seen it." Two editions of the work appeared in the year of its publication; seven more editions were printed in the remainder of the century.
He is, for a time, a water-carrier, a seller of tobacco. From these professions he emerges midway through the novel to become the pupil of a court physician, serves then as attendant to the Chief Executioner, and, for a while masquerades as a holy man, only to have to escape to Constantinople where he impersonates a wealthy Arab merchant, marries a wealthy widow, and suffers another unmasking. Exposed and endangered, Hajji Baba seeks sanctuary with the Persian Ambassador in Constantinople, Mirza Firouz, who at the end of the novel is selected to lead a Persian delegation to England.

The character of Mirza Firouz links *Hajji Baba of Ispahan* with its sequel, *Hajji Baba of Ispahan in England*, for in his capacity as servant to the Persian Ambassador, Hajji travels to England. In this later work, we encounter Hajji busily gathering appropriate gifts for the British Court, among them, a eunuch for the harem of George III, an idea from which he is eventually dissuaded by his nameless English mehmandar. We are introduced, then, to the Ambassador's various attendants, witness Mirza Firouz's reluctance to undertake the mission, and read of their journey to England. The arrival and reception of the envoy in Plymouth and London are described. Hajji, for a time, impersonating a prince, woos the daughter of a Mr. Hogg, and the book concludes with Hajji back in Persia, disbelieved and dismissed when he tries to convince his listeners of the wonders of England.

Morier's later Persian novels and tales are beyond the scope of this chapter, but his first four narratives are of interest because all, in varying degrees, are indebted to the biography and embassies of Abul Hassan. In his travel narratives Morier acknowledges the influence of Abul Hassan explicitly. Morier's first depiction of Mirza Abul Hassan, *A
Journey in 1812, is of a gracious companion, an informed, dignified colleague who has aided Morier in comprehending Persia. "I should be wanting in gratitude," Morier writes in the preface, "if I did not here express the obligations which I owe to my fellow traveler, MIRZA ABUL HASSAN, the late Persian Envoy Extraordinary, for much information on subjects relating to his own country, and for all the facilities of acquiring his language, which his communicative and amiable disposition afforded me" (A Journey iix).\(^{106}\) However, in A Second Journey, Morier's 1818 rendering of Abul Hassan the Persian envoy is a decidedly different character. Eager to satisfy the curiosity regarding the Persian Mission to England, Morier, in an appendix, provides an account of the ambassador's residence in London. The Envoy Extraordinary is now a comical figure, continually confused by English splendor, luxury and comfort. "His [Abul Hassan's] first surprise on reaching England, was at the caravansaries, for so, though no contrast can be greater, he called our hotels. We were lodged in a gay apartment at Plymouth, richly ornamented with looking-glasses, which are so esteemed in Persia, that they are held to be fitting for royal apartments only: and our dinners were served up with such quantities of plate, and of glass ware, as brought forth repeated expressions of surprise every time he was told that they were the common appendages of our caravansaries" (Second Journey 2: 401). Next, Abul Hassan is disquieted by the modesty of the deputation that greets him. He has to be assured that no

\(^{106}\) Morier's homage was not lost on his reviewers. "Mr. Morier speaks," noted one writer, "with much pleasure and gratitude of the obligations he owed to the worthy Mirza Abul Hassan, for the information he afforded him on subjects connected with Persia, and for all the facilities of acquiring his language which his communicative and amiable disposition favoured him with." Gentleman's Magazine 83 (April 1813) 341.
mark of disrespect is intended. The Ambassador, aggrieved, decides to enter London with the windows of his carriage drawn up, "for he said that he did not understand the nature of such an entry which appeared to him more like smuggling a bale of goods into a town, than the reception of a public envoy." (402). His audience with George III further disappoints him. English court etiquette appears meager to him.

To the every day life in London, Morier concedes, Abul Hassan assimilates easily. His ease with English habits, however, is superficial, at times a burlesque.

It was surprising to observe with what ease he acquired our habits of life, how soon he used himself to our furniture, our modes of eating, our hours, our forms and ceremonies, and even our language, though, perhaps with respect to the latter acquirement, it might rather be observed, that he soon learnt sufficient just to misunderstand every thing that was said. He who had sat upon his heels on the ground all his life, here was quite at his ease on chairs and sofas; he who before never eat [sic] but with his fingers, now used knives and forks without inconvenience (403).

Abul Hassan's shallow mimicries, however, are poor equipment for the appreciation of the subtleties of high art or government. At a debate at the House of Commons he is bewitched by a young orator's "earnest manner and vehemence"; at the House of Lords the Chancellor's wig, of all things, intrigues Abul Hassan. At the theater he appreciates the pathos of Lear, but appreciates it too strongly: he is inordinately affected (404). Of Abul Hassan's vaunted wit, Morier supplies one example, and it is significant that when allowed to speak, Abul Hassan conveys his sense of humor in broken English.

He frequently walked in Kensington Gardens by himself. As he was one day seated on a bench, an old gentleman and an old lady, taking him for one of his own attendants, accosted him. They asked him many questions:--How does your master like this, and how does he like that? and so on.--Tired with being questioned, he said, "He like all very well; but one thing he not like--
old man ask too many question" (404-405).

Morier's second depiction of Abul Hassan is clearly offered as a corrective to those whose attention he attracted during his residence in England. Morier shall puncture the romance surrounding the exotic figure. Much like Fraser's, Morier's depiction of Abul Hassan in *A Second Journey* contests the many and mistaken glorified descriptions of the Persian envoy. If Fraser sought to deflate the myth of Abul Hassan by describing what he was prior to his departure for England (a dancing boy) and what became of him (an ingrate and a braggart), Morier will describe Abul Hassan during his residence in England. But Morier, unlike Fraser or any other informant, speaks from the position of absolute familiarity. He has traveled with the envoy, lived with him, aided him as his English teacher, interpreter, and host.

But Morier was not done with Abul Hassan. He had concluded his description of the Abul Hassan in *A Second Journey* with a tantalizing observation. "If the whole history of his residence in England were worth the narrative, it is evident that this note might be greatly lengthened; but, perhaps, that which would afford the most amusement, would be the publication of his own journal, which he regularly kept, during his absence from Persia; and which on his return there, was read with great avidity by his own countrymen" (405). The *Hajji Baba of Isphahan* would offer precisely such a journal.

The authority and authenticity of Oriental portrayals, the twin issues which implicitly informed Morier's depiction of Abul Hassan in *A Second Journey*, are more explicitly addressed in *The Hajji Baba of Isphahan*. In the lengthy introductory epistle to the novel,
addressed to the Reverend Doctor Fundgruben, Chaplain to the Swedish Embassy at the
Ottoman Porte, Peregrine Persic, the author describes the method by which he came to
possess Hajji Baba's manuscript. Persic recalls earlier conversations with the Reverend in
which they had discussed the difficulties of describing, faithfully and accurately, the
character and life of Orientals. Both had agreed that Arabian Nights "gives the truest picture
of the Orientals, and that for the best of all reasons, because it is the work of one of their own
community" (xli). Thereafter, however, the two had found little cause for agreement. The
reverend had judged the Arabian Nights wanting because it failed to provide the Oriental
context for the uninitiated Occidental reader. Persic, in response, proposed that a European
might give a correct idea of the Oriental through an encyclopedic effort, collecting all facts
which "would illustrate the different stations and ranks which compose a Mussulman
community, and then work them into one connected narrative, upon the plan of that excellent
picture of European life, 'Gil Blas,' of Le Sage" (xlii). The Reverend, however, claimed this
approach equally problematic, saying in support of his thesis that even if a European where
to abjure his faith and adopt Oriental manners he could never

...so exactly seize those nice shades and distinctions of purpose, in action and
manner, which a pure Asiatic only could. To support your argument, you
[Fundruben] illustrated it by observing, that neither education, time, nor
talent, could ever give to a foreigner, in any given country, so complete a
possession of its language as to make him pass for a native; and that, do what
he would, some defect in idiom, or even some too great precision in
grammar, would detect him. But, said you, if a native Oriental could ever be
brought to understand so much of the taste of Europeans, in investigations of
this nature, as to write a full and detailed history of his own life, beginning
with his earliest education, and going through to its decline, we might then
stand a chance of acquiring the desired knowledge (xlii).
The import of this conversation remained with Persic. He traveled to Persia and returned with notes and sketches. Sixteen years later, however, he is writing to the Reverend to inform him not of his own researches, but of his extraordinary fortune in finding in Constantinople a manuscript to delight the Reverend, one penned by an Oriental, Hajji Baba's autobiography.

On the one hand, of course, the introduction to the *Hajji Baba of Ispahan* is a commonplace of the epistolary novel—an opportunity for the author to explain how he came into possession (in this case) of a foreign manuscript and why he chose to translate and publish it. Invariably, such introductions, the very conceit that a work of fiction is, in essence, a narrative of facts, are meant to authenticate the text. But for Morier the introduction and extensive conversation between Persic and Fundgruben has a secondary purpose. The two men describe fundamentally different approaches to the Orient and Oriental studies. Persic believes in the encyclopedic effort, penned by a European who having immersed himself in the Orient, emerges from the experience an expert and a guide. Fundgruben, on the other hand, seeks a text by an Oriental schooled in the Occidental expectations of plot and narrative. The two speakers, however, are puppets. Peregrine Persic is a comic pseudonym. Fundgruben, "searching into the very depth of hieroglyphic lore," is the celebrated author of "that very luminous work entitled 'The Biography of Celebrated Mummies" (xxxix). Behind the two speakers lurks the puppeteer, Morier, and the reader is meant to understand that *Hajji Baba of Ispahan*, cognizant of the divergent schools of opinion, combines them. *Hajji Baba*, in other words, is illustrative of "the different stations"
which make a Moslem community and yet captures "the different shades of meaning"; it merges Persic's demands for research in the disguise of Funégruben's requirement of an Oriental's autobiography. Morier thus posits himself at the threshold of two worlds. He may dip into either; he speaks both tongues and is as adept at impersonating an Oriental as he is in serving as the Occidental reader's guide.

More important in validating the Hajji Baba novels, is the voice of the central character. Hajji Baba's voice was a marked departure from the usual stratagems of other practitioners of the Romantic Oriental tale and poem. By literally translating Persian phrases, Morier creates a voice that appears Persian. This voice is turgid and colorful. Declaring himself to a woman, for instance, Hajji Baba avers that "your eyes have made roast meat of my heart" (109). But the voice also, and effortlessly it seems, explains the exotic to the uninitiated Occidental reader. Beginning his narrative, for example, Hajji Baba explains the provenance of his name and the meaning behind the honorific title of Hajji in one swoop. "I... was called Hajji or the pilgrim, a name which has stuck to me through life, and procured for me a great deal of unmerited respect; because, in fact, that honoured title is seldom conferred on any but those who have made the great pilgrimage to the tomb of the blessed Prophet of Mecca" (1). Hajji Baba's explanations are proof of Morier's mastery over Persian culture. For while his text is scarcely footnoted, his contemporaries like Scott, and predecessors such as Southey and Byron had had to rely on extensive annotation to gloss the
meaning of the Orient.\textsuperscript{107}

As a cross-cultural performance \textit{Hajji Baba} was meant to dazzle; reviewers were suitably impressed. Most speak, in differing terms, of Morier's insight into what may be loosely termed as "the Persian's national character"--happy, nebulous phrase. A contemporary reviewer of the novel, for instance, was effusive in regards to "this writer's familiar, almost native knowledge of the people he describes, that we may assert with some confidence, that there are not ten men in the country who are, from their local experience, qualified to have produced the adventures of Hajji Baba."\textsuperscript{108} For his contemporaries and modern scholars, Morier's Persia (and by extension Morier's Abul Hassan) became the definitive portrait. In a review of a later work of Morier's, \textit{Zohrab the Hostage} (1832), the anonymous reviewer reflects on the image of Persia after a decade of Morier's Persian reportage and fiction.

There is no country about which so much has been written and, till the publication of 'Hajji Baba,' so little was really known, of Persia. We used once to depict it all in emeralds--as breathing with the most aromatic gums and spices--as possessing looms, whose fabrics were as unrivaled as those of Tyre and Sidon of old. We had accustomed ourselves from that delight of our boyhood, the 'Arabian Nights,' to revel in the splendour of its processions and courts--its enchanted palaces, inlaid with the finest marbles--its luxurious gardens--its baths and fountains--to feast our imagination on the loves of the Rose and the Nightingale, as told in the mystic and metaphoric language of Hafiz. We are unwilling to have our early illusions question or destroyed. It was for Mr. Morier to complete this invidious task.\textsuperscript{106}

\textsuperscript{107} For a discussion of the meaning of annotation in Romantic Orientalism see Clare A. Simmons, "Useful and Wasteful Both: Souheyl's Thalaba The Destroyer and The Function of Annotation in The Romantic Oriental Poem," \textit{Genre} 27(Spring/Summer 1994) 84-103.


\textsuperscript{109} "Zohrab the Hostage," \textit{Athenaeum} 29 September 1832.
After reading *Hajji Baba*, comments a modern reviewer, the nineteenth-century escapist would have found it difficult to sustain his romantic illusions about Persia.

"He had, frolicking beside him, a serpent whose cheerful whisperings were to strip his Orient of glamour and leave him with a country where rascally barbers' sons lied and cheated their way through life, skipping frivolously from one calling to another, dervish today, executioner tomorrow, quack physician the day after, often cowardly, always nimble with trick and argument to profit by the ups and downs of fortune, and always irresistibly entertaining. The serpent was Morier's *Hajji Baba*, the book which, well into the nineteenth century, took the place of Mandeville, d'Herbelot, and the *Arabian Night's Entertainments* in moulding the popular conception of Persia."

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For Morier there was to be, to use the Jamesian term, another turn to the screw. *Hajji Baba of Ispahan* had confirmed the authority and accuracy of his vision. But Morier is not just in command of the facts; his fiction is fact. Morier insists in the introduction to *Hajji Baba of Ispahan in England* that his second novel is a record of real events. We have, for example, already noted many of the activities of Abul Hassan in London according to contemporaneous accounts. In *Hajji Baba of Ispahan in England* we see the fictional Persian Ambassador, Mirza Firouz, engaged in many of the same activities and espousing many of the same opinions. Just as in Abul Hassan's case, Mirza Firouz's is the first modern Persian embassy to Europe (10). Just like Abul Hassan, in England Morier's fictional Persian

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Ambassador attends parliament, the opera, the theater, visits the India House and is feted by its Directors.

Many of the episodes of *Hajji Baba of Ispahan in England* are, in fact, directly lifted from Morier's two travelogues. Incidents of the journey from Constantinople to Plymouth which Morier had recounted in his *A Journey*—e.g., the Persians' appreciation of a gun salute—are repeated in *Hajji Baba of Ispahan in England*. The appendix to *A Second Journey*, on the other hand, records the adventures of the Persian Mission in England and these Morier used with little alterations in his second novel. In the Appendix, for instance, Morier had described Abul Hassan's discomforts at an inn in Plymouth. "The good folks of the inn, who like most people in England, look upon it as a matter of course that nothing can be too hot for Asiatics, so loaded the Ambassador's bed with warm covering, that he had scarcely been in bed an hour, before he was obliged to get out of it; for having during all his life slept on nothing but a mattrass [sic] on the bare ground, he found the heat insupportable, in this state he walked about the greatest part of the night, with all the people of the inn following him in procession, and unable to divine what could be his wishes" (2: 401). In *Hajji Baba of Ispahan in England*, Hajji Baba, spending his first night in a Plymouth inn, awakens to a ruckus.

The night was passing on very successfully, when I was awoke by the ambassador's voice somewhere in the house. I got up as well as I could in the dark, and found him apparently in great distress, walking about in dishabille, followed by the master and mistress of the caravanserai and all their servants. The parties could not understand each other. The infidels were looking quite aghast, wondering what the ambassador could mean; whilst he was venting his rage in a strange mixture of Persian and English words...upon enquiry it was found that the people of the caravanseria, conceiving we must always be
cold because we came from a hot climate, had so heaped the ambassador's bed with coverings, that no sooner had he got in amongst them than he began to smother (76).

In his Appendix Morier had described the Persian apprehension about traveling in a coach. "They armed themselves from head to foot with pistols, swords, and each a musket in his hand, as if they were about to make a journey in their own country; and thus encumbered, notwithstanding every assurance that nothing could happen to them, they got into the coach (2: 401).” In *Hajji Baba of Ispahan in England*, the perspective is somewhat different. It is now Hajji Baba who testifies to the Persian fear of traveling unarmed. "...of a sudden the sound of a horn was heard, like that used at our hot baths to call the women to bathe, and this we were informed was the last stage of the coachman's impatience... we girded our loins, put on our swords, thrust our pistols into our waists, tied on our cartouch boxes, seized our long carabines, and putting our proper leg foremost on crossing the threshold, saying the bismillah, we left the caravanserai, and sallied into the street" (78-79).

Abul Hassan's Persian companions had wondered, at the opera, whether the actors were human beings. "His servants had been sent to the gallery, and upon the going up to hear what was their conversation, they were found wrangling amongst themselves, whether or not the figures that they saw upon the stage were real men and women or automatons" (404). In *Hajji Baba of Ispahan in England* the Persians, impressed by the Opera, find it, "in every respect so astonishing, that opinion were strongly divided between us, whether those who danced were live figures or automatons" (156-157). Morier's facts, facts for which he is the only witness, need no embellishment so close they are to fiction.
But in case the uninitiated reader missed the connection between Abul Hassan and Mirza Firouz, Morier added to the corrected and revised 1835 edition of *Hajji Baba of Ispahan in England* the entire appendix to his *A Second Journey*. In the introduction to *The Hajji Baba of Ispahan in England*, however, Morier makes an even more rigorous effort to convince the reader that Mirza Firouz is a true portrait of Abul Hassan. The subject of Morier's barbs, Abul Hassan himself, or so Morier claims, has objected to the image.

Morier published his second novel under his own name, dispensing with the specter of Persic and announcing himself as the translator of the two works. He had, in that first novel, he reminds his readers, promised a sequel should he meet with encouragement. But he finds himself now pondering what constitutes encouragement: "the applause of friends...The notices of the daily press?" Dismissing such notions of success, and not finding any other, "to use Hajji's language I folded the arms of idleness over the breast of resignation: and since my book had scarcely exhausted a second edition, I was determined to bid adieu to ambition, and seat myself amongst the obscure class of second or third-rate scribblers" (vi). Inducement arrives from an unexpected quarter and in the form of a letter from Abul Hassan. Abul Hassan's letter, as printed in the introduction of *Hajji Baba of Ispahan in England* is a litany of complaints.

I am offended with you, and not without reason. What for you write Hajji Baba, sir? King very angry, sir. I swear him you never write lies; but he says, yes--write. All people very angry with you, sir. That very bad book, sir. Persian people very bad people, perhaps, but very good to you, sir. What for you abuse them so bad? I very angry... You call me Mirza Firouz, I know very well, and say I talk great deal nonsense. When I talk nonsense? Oh, you think yourself very clever man; but this Hajji Baba very foolish business. I think you sorry for it some time. I do not know, but I think very foolish (vii).
Having upbraided Morier for his betrayal, Abul Hassan ends his letter by making a series of requests from Morier. "I like English flowers in my garden—great many; and King take all my china and glass. As you write so many things 'bout Mirza Firouz, I think you send me some seeds and roots not bad; and because I defend you to the king, and swear so much, little china and glass for me very good" (vii-viii).

Abul Hassan's letter, Morier claims, was the impetus behind *Hajji Baba of Ispahan in England*. "I look upon it as encouragement," Morier writes, "produced any sort of sensation among a lively people like the Persians, by which they may be led to reflect upon themselves as a nation" (viii). Nonetheless, as far as Abul Hassan is concerned, Morier's explanation for his fictional efforts is a simpler one. He answers the envoy, Morier tells us, in a style amenable to the Persian Ambassador.

I have received your letter, and I pray that your shadow may never be less. As for Hajji Baba, what for you not read that book before you write me such a letter, sir?...You very clever man, sir, now, vizier, how you not read before you write. You say Hajji Baba all lies. To be sure all lies. Thousand and One Nights all lies. All Persian starry-books lies; but nobody angry about them. Then why for you angry with me? (ix)

In the conclusion of his letter, Morier, imitating Abul Hassan, asks for a token of friendship, "silver and gold and nice things" (x).

Byobjecting to his portrayal as Mirza Firouz, Abul Hassan confirms, not only the accuracy of Morier's vision, but more generally, Morier's uncanny insight into Persian character. In his greed and covetousness, the laxity of his morals, Abul Hassan echoes the Persian characters who populate the *Hajji Baba* novels. His letter begins with moral
indignation and ends, abruptly, with the demands for remuneration. This Abul Hassan, what Morier would call the real one, cannot create a complex persona. He is merely, and purely, literal. The more interesting character in the introduction, however, is Morier himself who demonstrates his ability to cross cultural boundaries. He is engaged in two distinct forms of communication. Before the English reader, he is wry, ironic, self-effacing. For his Persian audience, he assumes another persona; his voice at a higher pitch (though the English reader understands he is dissembling), is angry, hurt, offended. By assuming, first Hajji’s style and then, and more extensively, Abul Hassan’s, Morier speaks to his Persian and English readers separately and differently, and his mimicries of Abul Hassan’s, unlike Abul Hassan’s adoptions of English manners as delineated in the appendix to *A Second Journey*, are not superficial, but penetrating and revealing.

There is more to Morier’s auto-plagiarism than uninspired writing. Morier’s own observation of Abul Hassan in *A Second Journey* for many of which the author is the sole witness, authenticate Morier’s depiction of Mirza Firouz. As we shall see shortly, that the argument is circular and self-perpetuating seems to have escaped most reviewers who have declared that Morier smashed the romantic aura of Persia. Modern critics have usually focused on two themes in their discussions of the Hajji Baba series—the factual basis of the works and the flawlessness of Morier’s Persian disguise.

Morier’s explicitly stated reliance on the facts of Abul Hassan’s residence in England had two related consequences: first, statements in support of Morier’s veracity, and second, declarations in favor of the authority of his vision. *Hajji Baba of Ispahan*, writes Curzon in
the introduction to his edition of the book, is a record of real characters and actual events.

It is no frolic of imaginative satire only; it is a historical document. The figures that move across the stage are not pasteboard creations, but the living personalities, disguised only in respect of their names, with whom Morier was brought daily into contact while at Tehran. The majority of the incidents so skillfully woven into the narrative of the hero's adventures actually occurred, and can be identified by the student who is familiar with the incidents of the time (xiv).

A more recent critic asserts,

The extent of Morier's indebtedness to fact for his cast of characters is, finally, impressive. Roughly half of the major characters have their close factual parallels, while many minor characters also owe their presence in the novel to their real existence within Morier's Persian world. What is surprising is the ease with which this large cast is perfectly transmuted into fiction, so that to distinguish fact and fiction becomes nearly impossible. Morier's raw material struck him as outlandish--just so the characters of Hajji Baba turn out to be true picaresque types, grotesque, exaggerated, and wonderfully vivid. Morier's achievement was to make all his facts read like fiction, but fiction that could--almost--be fact.\textsuperscript{111}

This is naive reading of Morier, one which refuses to acknowledge that Morier is the only source of his many facts. We are not witnessing a perfect "transmutation of fact into fiction," but a repetition of highly fictionalized observations. For most critics the corollary to Morier's fidelity to the truth is that the author has managed to impersonate Persian mannerisms perfectly. His Persians are not the card-board creations of his predecessors, but figures of flesh and blood. Sir Walter Scott found Hajji Baba superior to the Persians of Montesquieu and Lytteleton as, "the author of Hajji Baba's Travels writes, thinks, and speaks much more

like an oriental than an English-man." Morier, argues another reader, "is far more at home when he is abroad, and the Earth from which he receives his strength is not his natural, but his adopted mother." Another reader, comparing *Hajji Baba* to Thomas Hope's *Memoirs of Anastasius*, concludes that the latter is a better novel, but Hajji the superior creation, "as a map of manners, as the effort of a foreigner to impregnate his style of thought and opinion, his imagination and even his diction, with the singularities of Oriental habits and mind and expression—in a word, to clothe his ideas and language in the complete costume of the east..." The author of *Hajji Baba*, "...has shrouded the habiliments of the traveler under an impenetrable oriental disguise, and has very happily contrived to connect such a description as a Persian might naturally give of his adventures, with explanations of customs which seem to drop from him by accident, and as it were unconsciously, in the course of his story. The keeping of the assumed character appears to us perfect: the tone of the narrative is exclusively oriental, and the turn of expression in the numerous dialogues so appropriate that it is rarely possible to detect a thorough home-bred Anglicanism in their for" (201).

For nineteenth-century readers of *Hajji Baba*, the books are such accurate distillations of the Persian character that to speak like a Persian meant to imitate Morier's Persian characters. "It is so long since we have given up writing in Persian," attests a reader of Morier towards the end of his career, "that we fear our fingers would not be able to master


113 *Fraser's Magazine* 7 Feb 1833:159.

114 George Procter, *Quarterly Review* 30 (October 1823 [sic]) 200.
all its flourishes with the due calligraphy of a scribe of Ispahan. We must therefore content ourselves with wishing, in occidental phrase, that he (Moirer) may live a thousand years, and that when he dies at last he may be translated without delay to the Paradise of all true believers; in which, if there be any libraries at all, all his novels must be the standard literature" Fraser's Magazine (7 Feb 1833).

Moirer's powers of observation are such, furthermore, that not only is Hajji Baba regarded as a typical Persian, but Persian voices which do not echo it are considered fraudulent. Thus, Sir Walter Scott, in his review of Hajji Baba of Ispahan in England, compares the voice of Hajji Baba with that of a recent Persian visitor to England, Abu Taleb, whose narrative of his journey had been translated into English.\textsuperscript{115} Scott finds Abu Taleb's voice lacking credibility, his Orientalism dull and wanting.

...such ludicrous errors as Hajji cherishes and records, his real prototype, when he fell into any of them, took especial care to conceal; giving us only the result of what he learned from mature consideration and experience. Abou Taleb feels, therefore, in matter of fact, and is most prosaic exactly where the secretary of the Persian embassy is most lively, imaginative, and absurd. It is odd that, though, both works bear the marked impress of oriental composition, they hardly evince an idea in common with each other, excepting that the authors show the same holy scruple at employing a brush composed of hogg's bristles for the purposes of the bath (Scott 96).

What is even more intriguing about Scott's comparison is that Scott, having correctly identified Abul Hassan's first Mission to England as the prototype of the one described in

\textit{Hajji Baba of Ispahan in England}, mistakes Abu Taleb for Abul Hassan. For Scott, then,

\textsuperscript{115} Mirza Abu Taleb, an Indian of Persian extraction, had lived for almost three years in London at the start of the nineteenth century (\textit{Persians Amongst 45-52}). The translation of his narrative, \textit{The Travels of Abu Taleb Khan}, trans. Charles Stewart (London: Longman, 1810), may have been timed to benefit from the interest stirred by Abul Hassani's mission.
the fictional Ambassador's musings are far more amusing and typical than those of the real envoy.

We have spoken so far exclusively of Abul Hassan, fictionalized. But Morier himself is present in the Hajji Baba series. He speaks in his own voice, if an author may be said to have a voice, in the introductions to the two novels. He is present elsewhere in the narratives. In the Hajji Baba of Ispahan in England, for example, a nameless English mehmandar is attached to the Persian Mission, and he is often explaining English habits to the Persian visitors, or Persian mores to the English reader. The Persians learn from the inevitable expressions of rage by the mehmandar, for instance, not to accuse an English man of uttering a falsehood, an instance which resonates nicely with issues of veracity that Morier had addressed in the introduction. The English man is incapable of falsehood, as a character or author (159). This nameless, English mehmandar assumes an increasingly important role in Hajji Baba of Ispahan in England. In the Appendix to his Second Journey, for example, Morier is the omniscient narrator who observes the Persians' consternation about boarding a coach and explains their apprehensions by summarizing the dangers of travel in Persia. In Hajji Baba of Ispahan in England the English mehmandar takes a more active role. Hajjii observes the mehmandar trying to make room for an English guide into a coach filled with four Persians armed from head to foot.

The mehmandar, having inserted four into the inside of the coach, was proceeding to put in a fifth, when he was stopped by loud cries. "In the name of Ali, by the soul of your father, there is no more room; we shall die." The more the mehmandar entreated, the more they showed resistance. They had seated themselves most agreeably on their heels, after our fashion, and every corner was occupied. At length, by main force, the mehmandar threw in a
frank who was to accompany them to London, shut the door upon them, hoisted Hassan the cook, and Feridoon the barber, on the top of all, and before we could say "God be with you," they set off like an arrow shot out of a bow (79).

Morier, not only enters the narrative, but gradually and for no apparent novelistic reasons, begins to replace the Hajji, performing his functions as the narrator of the tale. For much of the narrative, the character of Hajji Baba drops from sight, and Mirza Firouz and the mehmandar attend audiences and parties together. Having entered the narrative as the English mehmandar, Morier seems unable to sustain himself in his two disguises: Hajji Baba and the English mehambadar. Many readers of the Hajji Baba series, in fact, have admiringly noted Morier's presence in the narratives. In a review of *Hajji Baba of Ispahan in England*, for instance, the confusion between Hajji Baba the narrator of the tale and Morier its author is regarded as deliberate. *The London Literary Gazette And Journal of Belles Lettres* on 3 May 1828 observes:

> It is rare that an author should be so perfectly master of the feelings of two utterly dissimilar countries as to be able to portray both minutely and by the clever grouping and juxtaposition of them make a work so curious and amusing as the present. But it is, in reality, not merely the acute observer and humorous sketches of English manners, Mr. Morier; it is also Hajji Baba of Ispahan himself, with all his Persian notions, prejudices, and passions—two joined in one. In fact, it is evident, from internal demonstration, that though the former has written the book, the sentiments are truly those of a Persian visitor to England; and two genuine letters with which the volumes set out, will readily point to the person whose actual opinions and adventures have furnished materials for this most amusing publication.

"The truth," argues a more recent critic pondering Hajji Baba's provenance, "probably is that while the ambassador was Mirza Firouz, this device was only a blind; he really was Hajji Baba. Fundamentally, of course, Hajji Baba was Morier himself, disguised as a Persian the
better to caricature the Persians from Life, but the disguise assumed was the real-life ambassador" (Gail 76).

So the figures fold and multiply. Hajji Baba is Abul Hassan who is Mirza Firouz, and, at the end of the narratives, only Morier escapes from fiction. For, in many ways Abul Hassan himself is a creation of Morier's. We shall never know whether the Abul Hassan of *A Second Journey* is an accurate portrait. We do now know that the Abul Hassan who writes to Morier complaining of the Mirza Firouz caricature is an invention of Morier's. No such letter was ever written.\(^{116}\)

\(^{116}\) Scholars have long suspected that Abul Hassan's letter is spurious. Denis Wright claims to have "discovered clear but hitherto unnoticed evidence at the Scottish Record Office, Edinburgh, that the letter was concocted by Dr. John McNeil" (*Persians Amongst* 69).
The Orientalist text, I have argued, reveals as much about the Occidental visitor as it does about the Oriental subject. Persia, for the English diplomat, is a locus for escaping from one's reputation, for self-fashioning. England's Persia, above all, is a stage; the rules governing it are those of performance and play. The traveler's success in remaking himself depends on his understanding of this theatrical motif. Though he plays, he must distinguish between role and Self. Anthony Sherley, the amateur diplomat forbidden to return home, refashions himself in Persia, or at least, endeavors to do so. His anti-Turkish polemics and his exhortations to the Sophy encouraging an alliance with Christendom are thinly veiled efforts to restore the author to favor in England. He is only partly successful. Anthony fails, ultimately, because of the disparity between the Persian role, that of the counselor to Shah Abbas, and the real Self, the meddlesome mendicant. Anthony is playing too obviously to be believed. The correspondences and actions of Anthony's younger brother, the turbaned, peripatetic Robert Sherley expose similar concerns with remaking the Self. His Persian connection is meant to elevate him; his rebirth in Persia must win him status in Britain. But whereas Anthony's fortunes foundered because he plays badly, Robert is doomed because he plays well. His audience cannot distinguish between his Persian role and English Self. The role appears to have subsumed him. He has become a Persian. If Robert "performs" Persia in England, Malcolm and Jones, more boldly, conduct this performance in Persia itself. Malcolm and Jones are far more deliberate in their Persian impersonations, more clever in
discriminating between playing and being. Their ability to convey this distinction to their
English spectators is the fundamental reason why Malcolm and Jones succeed where Robert
Sherley fails. Of all the diplomats considered in these pages, however, it is James Morier
who finds the proper equilibrium between role and Self. Morier's Persian re-creation—Hajji
Baba who is at once essentially Persian, and yet, especially in *The Hajji Baba of Ispahan in
England*, Persian Morier turning a critical glance upon England—is the most successful of
all Persian performances encountered in this essay because Morier need not consider the
reaction of a Persian audience. Morier writes solely for the edification and enjoyment of
English readers whose expectations of what it means to be Persian Morier himself has helped
define.

To remind ourselves of the performative nature of English diplomacy in Persia, at this
stage, is to recall what representation of the Other entails—a series of recorded and enacted
fictions. We do not, except tangentially, require anthropology or sociology from our fictions.
We may retrace an imagined character's footsteps, but we do not treat the book as a tourist
guide. Authorial perspective may enrage us, but we do not expect fairness or objectivity in
our novels or plays. The fiction of Persia is not Persia; the discourse tells us much about the
authors, little about the place. This is an obvious point too often forgotten in the macro-
historiography of recent critiques of Orientalism.

The claim that interaction with and depiction of the Other are highly fictionalized
endeavors does not annihilate the sanctity of facts. Malcolm did go to Persia where he
quarreled tiresomely over questions of etiquette, and matters may have reached the crisis
point in the struggle over seating arrangement upon a rug. Real or not, the rug episode is illustrative—for Malcolm of the Persian character, and, for us, of Malcolm's spirit. Malcolm clearly believes that his behavior during the rug interlude shall sound credible to his readers, or in any event, seem reasonable under the circumstances. This tells us something of the bombast in his persona, and is equally telling of the British audience's acceptance of the length to which a servant of Empire might go to secure a point, to establish English character. The Englishman abroad must best the native at all costs, even if the victory is as negligible or meaningless as securing a corner of a rug. But quite apart from establishing the image of the manly Englishman versus the vanquished native, the episode reveals to us the very troubling uncertainties that beset the English diplomat in Persia. Malcolm's play, his theatrical demands, his threats to break off all negotiations, reveal his weakness, not power. I shall return to this point shortly: Malcolm would not have to play had he been able to impose his will.

A moral reading of Malcolm's rug caper would posit that in this, as in so many other moments in the British "rediscovery" of Persia, the Persian must choose between two debasing positions. Either he conforms to Malcolm's notions and affirms his vision by engaging Malcolm and struggling over minutiae, or the Persian reneges on the rules of engagement and appears rash and inconsistent. In either instance it is Malcolm who sets the rules, Malcolm who appears dynamic and omniscient. The peril of a moral analysis of history—the kind of reading which openly engages Todorov in *The Conquest of America* and Said more implicitly in *Orientalism*—is that it reduces the reader to the task of debunking
myths. We would be poorer if we were to dismiss the rug incident as a fraud or an exaggeration. So many of the episodes recounted in these pages—Malcolm's rug, Anthony Sherley's advice to the Sophy—are highly fictionalized if not spurious accounts; to merely cite their fraudulence is to assume vis-a-vis our subjects a position roughly analogous to the one which they occupy in regard to their subjects.

The aim in rereading Orientalism is to converse with the Orientalist. Such a dialogue, for the Third Worlder, is an attempt to initiate a conversation where none did or could exist. Lagging behind history, we speak on behalf of the silenced, the neglected. To initiate a conversation, then, is to bang upon the bars, or to stand noisily at the door, gazing at our gazers, interfering in our own depiction. We would do well, however, to remind ourselves that Orientalism, like all fiction, is interpretative, removed from its subject and recasting it.

By insisting upon the fictional element in Orientalism we are divorcing it, and ourselves, from the burden of fact checking and fact finding. Thick description, the close reading of the texts, is much more suited to analyzing the fictional in purportedly non-fictional narrative than macro-historiography which gazes distantly at abstractions. Of course, the method of thick description, much like the school of New Historicism which it often serves, can be faulted for its anecdotal mania, its search for the symbolic episode, the exemplary in the everyday. The problem is that the quotidian is sometimes just that: a rug is a rug, and we can derive so much significance from it. Malcolm's initial embassy set the tone for the re-establishment of Anglo-Persian diplomatic relations. His theatricality served to define the Englishman for the Persian and the Persian for the English. To focus narrowly
on any one episode in Malcolm's narrative of his mission, critics of thick description might reason, is to pick, like Malcolm, at minutiae. It will not do, in response, to suggest that thick description differs from hyper-circumstantiality. The sort of event- and actor-oriented analysis of Anglo-Persian diplomacy that I proposed in this essay is a matter, ultimately, of choices, informed choices, one hopes. This is, I admit, an inadequate defense. We cannot define the universe of Orientalism as an utterly subjective one and fail to admit our own participation in such a realm. Thick description, nonetheless, allows us to make an important distinction in our use of Orientalist sources. I shall offer it here gratis.

Throughout this essay, I have insisted on reading Orientalism as inherently subjective renditions of theatricalized events. There are various levels of interpretation at work in these tellings or retellings and it is precisely in regard to deciphering Orientalism as a layered discourse that we may witness the strength of thick description. By insisting upon thicker descriptions we differentiate between the event and the retelling of it, between the actor's perspective on the scene, and the narration of action in retirement or repose. Such categorizations are, obviously, unstable and I do not mean to valorize contemporaneous accounts written to private correspondents at the expense of narratives published for the perusal of wider audiences. The distinction, however, is helpful in highlighting the various levels of authorial intrusion in fictional recreations of the Other. The British discourse of Persia is a fiction, I have said--the traveler arrives having read of Persia, plays a part inspired by his past and current readings while resident in Persia, and departs to write a fictional account. The Orientalist is thus engaged in three tiers of interpretation and, as readers of
Orientalism we can, and should, consider each: the Orientalist as a student of Orientalism, the Orientalist in the field, and finally the Orientalist as scholar and raconteur rewriting his experiences. These are, of course, mutually inclusive events. The Orientalist reads and writes very often simultaneously. It is, nonetheless, beneficial to recall the existence of these categories. For too often, in addition to ignoring the fictional element in purportedly non-fictional narratives, as readers of Orientalism, we have concentrated on the finished product, on the author's narration after the fact.

Earlier I claimed that Malcolm's encroachment upon the rug signaled his weakness. It is only in a reading of the Orientalist on the scene, at work, that we witness the error of assigning to him the position of mastery, thereby ignoring the nuances and complication of the interactions between England and Persia. The narrative of early English diplomacy in Persia may reek of chauvinism and paternalism, but the condescending tone, the bemused irony is shot through with feelings of anxiety and paranoia. Some years before he wrote his apologia, Anthony Sherley, the would-be diplomat, is, in Cottington's description, in need of "shoes to wear" (Shirley 87). Robert Sherley is distrusted in England and Persia alike. To call for the thicker description is to remind ourselves that Malcolm on the scene (or any of the other writers considered here) must have cut a far different figure than the implacable patriarch, the Elchee of his own Sketches, a book written more than a decade after the events and, as Malcolm himself admits, after the success of The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan.

To speak of the power/discourse paradigm in the pre-Victorian encounter with Persia,
then, is to ignore the perilous condition under which most diplomats operated. The Sherleys
literally fled to Persia in 1599. Malcolm and Jones raced to Persia to combat French
encroachment. Until the French threat to India receded, both envoys were eager to impress
the Persian, but also anxious to please. The theatricality of British diplomacy in Persia must
be viewed in light of these factors. But the British performance in Persia is complicated by
an additional issue. To please and to impress, the British diplomats performs very often
without a script. He has read of Persia, but for his current reading (of people, events,
landscape) he is unprepared. We may remind ourselves, for instance, that Malcolm's rug
squabble is inspired by what he "knows" of Persian character and that he is determined to
"play" his part accordingly. But is the Persian a player also? Is he aware of the gaze? Is he
talking back? The traditional analysis of Orientalism would have us believe that the Oriental
is invariably the silent, helpless object of the gaze. In the figure of Nagd Ali Beg, the Persian
who in 1624 disputed the bona fides of Robert Sherley, we have the most glaring instance
of the Persian speaking back to England and following this utterance with a good blow to
Robert Sherley's turban. Such instances of the Persian responding to English narrative are
rare, I have said. Rare though they are, however, these episodes are proof of the inadequacy
of seeing Orientalism as merely a discourse of domination.

Let us return to the figure of Abul Hassan Shriazi and to another true portrait of the
Persian ambassador to the Court of George III in 1810. After the completion of his mission,
Abul Hassan returned to Persia in the company of James Morier, Abul Hassan's future
detector in the Hajji Baba novels, and Sir Gore Ouseley, a scholar of Persia who had served
as Abul Hassan's host in London and had been recently selected as the next English ambassador to Persia. The party reached Persia in March 1811 (*Persians Amongst* 55, 61).

Some months later, among the items of personal belongings and gifts for the Persian court that reached Sir Gore Ouseley in Tehran in 1812 was, intact, the portrait of Abul Hassan drawn by Sir Thomas Lawrence which Ouseley had commissioned. The picture was extraordinarily realistic, an "object of wonder," in Ouseley's words. To demonstrate this point further Ouseley would describe to a correspondent in England the effect the realism of picture produced on the Persian Prime Minister, Mirza Shefi. I quote the passage at length.

His Excellency Mirza Shefi, prime minister of the King of Persia, called upon me one morning at Teheran so unexpectedly, that I had not time to remove the Persian ambassador's portrait from the sofa, on which I had placed it the moment before, from out of its packing case.

I hastened to the door of the drawing-room to receive the minister, and taking him by the hand, was leading him to the sofa, when he unaccountably drew back. It is necessary to premise that in a Persian house (and I was then living in a palace lent me by the King whilst my own was building), the apartments have frequently open windows as well as doors of communication to other rooms on the same floor and that Mirza Shefi may have possibly mistaken the frame of the picture, erect against the wall, for that of a window. At all events, it did not injure the illusion.

I perceived the old minister's countenance inflamed with anger, which before I could inquire the cause of it, burst forth in an apostrophe to the portrait, "I think," said he; "that when the representative of the King of England does me the honour of standing up to receive me, in due respect to him, you should not be seated." I could not resist laughing at his delightful mistake, and before I could explain, he said to me, "yes it is your Excellency's kindness to that impertinent fellow that encourages such disrespect, but with your permission I'll soon teach him to know his distance." Shaking his cane at the picture he uttered a volley of abuse at poor Mirza Abul Hassan, and said, that if he had forgotten all proper respect to Sir Gore Ouseley, he must at least show it to the representative of his own sovereign. His rage was most violent, and I was obliged to bring him close to the picture before he was undeceived. On approaching the picture, he passed his hand over the canvas, and, with a look of unaffected surprise, exclaimed, "Why! it has a flat
surface!'" (Millard 121)

We find in Ouseley's anecdote the themes that would be developed by the likes of Fraser and Morier in their attacks upon Abul Hassan. The former Persian envoy, Mirza Shefi's behavior attests, is an impertinent underling, ill-deserving of the honors heaped upon him in London. Fraser would argue that the true measure of Abul Hassan could only be fathomed in Persia where his compatriots pay him little heed, except to mock or avoid him. Mirza Shefi's anger appears to buttress such testimony. He appears ready to scold Abul Hassan as if he were a school boy. More generally, The Persian Prime Minister's near assault upon the painting, recalls the depictions of other Persians that we have encountered in these pages. The Persian is volatile; without ceremony, the Prime Minister, in the presence of an ambassador, threatens a former envoy with a caning. The episode thus recalls numerous other episodes in which the British envoys in Persia behaved hystriionically, because, they would argue, emotionalism was a Persian norm. Mirza Shefi's behavior, furthermore, reveals the Persian in his naiveté. Much like the Persians of John Day's seventeenth-century play "The English Brothers," the Prime Minister cannot distinguish between illusion and reality. He is restrained. Informed of his mistake, espouses delight and amazement. He testifies, duly, then, to English superiority in art.

Contemporary readers of the *Hajji Baba* series have often insisted on the veracity of the books as factual recounting of the Persian national character, citing not just Morier's knowledge of and residence in Persia, but credulous testimony of the Persian readers who
have taken Hajji Baba as the work of a Persian. Mirza Shefi's astonishment, similarly, lends credibility to the art. Abul Hassan on the painter's canvas, just as Mirza Firouz in Morier's pages, frauds of paint and words, more truly articulate the envoy than any act or gesture on his part: inspiration obliterates its cause. Persian and Englishmen, all acknowledge this.

But should we injure the illusion? Are surfaces so flat? In Ouseley's story of the Prime Minister's address to the painting of Abul Hassan, there are three frames of interpretation. The first two--Ouseley the witness at the scene formulating a reading of the event as it happens and second, Ouseley the author and private correspondent recalling and retelling the anecdote--may be too similar to be distinguishable. This is a leap, of course; we are assuming that Ouseley is not dissimulating or exaggerating. One has the nagging sense that the incident, much like Abul Hassan's purported letter to Morier after the publication of Hajji Baba, is an invention of the author. But let us grant Ouseley his due, and assume that the event occurred as recorded, and that Ouseley's initial and final verdicts upon the episode coincide. But what does the Persian Prime Minister believe? Ouseley would have us think that Mirza Shefi is genuinely deceived by the picture. This may not be the case.

Abul Hassan, in Lawrence's painting, is clearly seated. He fills the frame. The painting is of his bust; indeed, his elbows disappear beneath the frame. More importantly Mirza Saefi believes that Abul Hassan is seated. But on what is the envoy reposing—a chair? He is, after all, looking into a room from a window (the conceit that Mirza Shefi

could believe Abul Hassan is standing in a doorway is patently false; the frame halves the
eenvoy at his chest). The window, moreover, could not be on the level with the ground; again
the picture's frame would not permit the illusion, as the envoy, seated on the ground, would
have undergone more than amputation. But how could the envoy, seated on the floor, peer
into a window that is not level with the ground? Is he seated on a chair? We know from
Hajji Baba's adventures in London that the Persians, accustomed to sleeping and sitting on
the ground, are amazed at the uses to which tables and chairs are put. Were there chairs in
Persia then which Morier, in the interest of caricature, ignored? Or is Ouseley exaggerating
the Prime Minister's astonishment to humor a correspondent, or to flatter Lawrence's
dexterity? Or is the Persian Prime Minister, humoring the British Ambassador, pretending
to mistake the painting for the person?

From Ouseley's amused (self-serving?) narrative we may construct another, a parallel
discourse, the Persian Prime Minister's. Persia, at this time, was dependent upon the British
government for financial help in its wars with Russia, Britain agreeing to subsidize and train
Persian armies. Persia also needed Britain's aid in settling potential dynastic disputes upon
the death of Fath Ali Shah. Mirza Shefi, entering Ouseley's apartments, represented a
tottering kingdom which had illusions of grandeur but very little power. It had sought to play
the geo-political game by pitting European titans against one another and lost; against
Russian advancement the only potential ally was England which was involved in its own
negotiations with Russia. The Persian Prime Minister, then, may have been in the mood to
please, especially since the British government suspected him for harboring pro-French
sympathies and distrusted him (*Persian Connection* 153-182). Is Mirza Shefi, by threatening the recently feted Abul Hassan, indicating his power and independence to Ouseley? Or is the Persian Prime Minister debasing himself to amuse Ouseley? Is the Persian playing?

Nagd Ali Beg, Robert Sherley's rival, Don Juan, the Persian convert in Spain, Abul Hassan, the Persian Ambassador—how are we to see them, then? Are they all players also? How do they contribute to the way they are defined by their observers? How conscious are they of being registered and recorded? The British diplomats in Persia, I have said, play because they are weak, because, except by stratagem and subterfuge, they cannot alter events to their liking. But if we accept this definition of performance—that self-dramatization is the last resort of the weak—would it be logical to assume that Persian castaways such as Nagd Ali Beg or Don Juan are players, that with the shift in the balance of power and the favorable prospect of the British in Persia in the nineteenth century, more and more Persians play?

Ouseley's narrative may ignore the context of Mirza Shefi's astonishment because Ouseley represents an expanding empire, and the Persian Prime Minister a shrinking, debilitated one. But it would be a mistake to say that Ouseley's anecdote silences the Prime Minister. For in Mirza Shefi's clever (craven?) performance we notice a barely audible response. He is playing, most probably to ingratiate himself, a sorry state of affairs, but a significant one nonetheless. We are, as readers of Orientalism, crossing a threshold of sorts. The narrative of British diplomacy in Persia is a discourse of mutual playing—the English impersonating the Persians who may be engaged in their own performance. We may wonder, and wonder in some cases is all we can do, whether the Persians of the English narratives
should be seen as silent, helpless objects of the gaze.

How would Abul Hassan, having read the *Hajji Baba* novels, have responded? We have already seen him, in Fraser's sardonic anecdote, waving ladies' letters, letters which confirm his virility. Himself the inspiration for the fraudulent letters of *La Belle Assemble* and Morier, Abul Hassan's peddling of genuine epistles (under false pretenses, Fraser would add) bespeaks, yet again and faintly, of another Persian's desire to shape or manufacture his own image. How would Abul Hassan, then, have reacted to Morier's Hajji Baba. In anger? In propitiation? How would his reactions be phrased, and in whose voice?

If Orientalism is shot through with fear and paranoia on the part of the Occidental traveler, Orientalism is also, and occasionally, punctured by the Oriental, responding, playing, performing. Only a romantic would suggest that the embedded Oriental voice is as powerful as those of the Occidental narrators who registered him, but to insist on the helplessness of the Oriental subject is to prolong that subjugation.
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