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Representations of Race and Romance
in Eighteenth-Century English Novels

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

Literature

by

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2007

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2007

In Memoriam
Michael F. Harper

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Representations of Race and Romance
in Eighteenth-Century English Novels

by

Emily Meri Nitta Kugler

Doctor of Philosophy in Literature

University of California, San Diego, 2007

Kathryn Shevelow, Co-chair

Rosemary Marangoly George, Co-chair

My dissertation analyzes how eighteenth-century novels were still invested in the continuation of the romance and need to be read in the historical context of English interactions with other cultures, in particular those of the Ottoman Empire. Chapter One sets up the racial model of romance and demonstrates how it fit into English politics by contrasting the reinterpretations of Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* (1688) throughout the eighteenth century as the protagonist's cultural affiliations shifts from Islamic to "pagan" African as the prose narrative's use of romance tropes to support Behn's royalist politics is replaced, eventually leading to the narrative's association with the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade. Chapter Two shifts to the establishment of the "Arabick Interest" in Restoration and early eighteenth-century England by examining the contesting reactions to the influence of Islam on English identity through its analysis of

England's translations between 1671 and 1708 of the philosophical romance Muhammad Ibn Tufayl's *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan* as well as the anxieties caused by a Protestant-Islamic connection in Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719).

The second half of this dissertation adds the discussion of women as another "third term" like romance and Islamic influence. Chapter Three's discussion of Samuel Johnson's *Rasselas* (1759) and Charlotte Lennox's *The Female Quixote* (1752) both use romance elements to reference an older form of history writing, one in which the boundaries between romance and fact are porous, to critique English concepts of difference, especially those of gender or culture, in favor of a more universalized view of the world. Their works responded to a mid eighteenth-century shift as England began to emerge as a global power. Chapter Four combines the elements of race, religion and gender from the preceding chapters in its reading of Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya* (1806), of which I argue that even though she does not explicitly argue for increased legal rights or social freedoms for women, Dacre's presentations of the dangers to society through its enforcement of feminine passivity implicitly demonstrates a need to create a society where women are educated to be free subjects and independent of patriarchal control.

Introduction: Race and Romance

In a sense the limitations of Orientalism are, as I said earlier, the limitations that follow upon disregarding, essentializing, denuding the humanity of another culture, people, or geographical region. But Orientalism has taken a further step than that: it views the Orient as something whose existence is not only displayed but has remained fixed in time and place for the West. So impressive have the descriptive and textual successes of Orientalism been that entire periods of the Orient's cultural, political, and social history are considered mere response to the West. The West is the actor, the Orient a passive reactor. The West is the spectator, the judge and jury, of every facet of Oriental behavior (Edward Said, *Orientalism* 108-109).

Edward Said's description of an oppressive Western colonizing subject and a oppressed Oriental subjugated object represents the current view dominating scholarship of European (and U.S.) encounters and representations of the "East."¹ This view is not only a result of the popularity of Said's work, but is also based upon the dominance of the U.S. and Europe in world politics since the nineteenth century. European imperial power over the Orient, he argues, resulted in a static, often monolithic idea of the "Orient" as an absolute Other, who is passive, feminine and incapable of progress in the modern sense of the word. Said points to cultural representations as part of the foundation and justification of future colonialism: "To say simply that Orientalism was a rationalization of colonial rule is to ignore the extent to which colonial rule was justified in advance by Orientalism, rather than after the fact" (39).² However, just as now this power structure is being challenged by the "East" - China, India, Southeast Asia and to a lesser extent, Eastern Europe - the Western rise to power can be traced back to a historical moment.³

In texts during the periods leading up to and throughout the eighteenth century, the Orient represented was not always portrayed by Europeans as powerless, decaying or

passive. Instead, the Ottoman Empire, one such location in the Orient, represented a viable and powerful force that influenced European politics, culture and self-image.⁴ Prior to late eighteenth-century "eastern swing" away from colonial efforts the Americas towards new ones in Asia, England during Restoration and eighteenth century grappled with a different relationship to the "East," in which the Ottoman empire represented a powerful political, economic and cultural force in the Mediterranean and throughout Europe.

The relationship of England with a potent Islamic empire is reflected in a diverse array of texts throughout the long eighteenth century: Aphra Behn's 1688 *Oroonoko* applies an Islamic gloss to her African hero so that readers will view him as civilized and similar to them; Daniel Defoe's 1719 novel *Robinson Crusoe* reflects the image of a powerful Ottoman empire contrasting fledgling English colonial holdings; and Charlotte Lennox and Samuel Johnson's mid-century texts, *The Female Quixote* (1752) and *Rasselas* (1759), counter a nationalism with universalism by blurring boundaries between Christian European and African Islamic cultures. It was not until the end of the eighteenth century that a new kind of Orientalism began to dominate the English cultural imagination, in which British Empire became central and powerful in global interactions, with little political or economic challenge from non-Christian states. It is at this moment that texts, such as Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya* (1806), began to align with the power dynamics described by Said.

This dissertation points to an alternative tradition existing throughout the eighteenth century in which the relationship between East and West was not stable; nor was the Orient always weak, either in reality or in the cultural representations of the time.

To demonstrate this, I will analyze how the use of romance in eighteenth-century novels needs to be read in the historical context of English interactions with other cultures, particularly the Islamic Mediterranean. It is vital that this history be viewed not only through the global imperialism Europe set up in the nineteenth century, but in its own historical context when Islamic empires stood as world powers often superior to their European counterparts.

Romance and the Rise of the Novel

Framing my discussion of representations of Islam and romance in English eighteenth-century novels are the theories of the “rise of the novel.” It is virtually impossible to produce a discussion of novels from this period without addressing the tradition that views eighteenth-century England as the birthplace of the novel and through it, the space where “modern individualism” was created. Mid-twentieth-century scholarship positions the novel as a new, middle-class, Protestant and distinctly domestic form of prose fiction to emerge in England during the eighteenth century, presenting the romance as its reverse: archaic, aristocratic, non-Protestant and foreign. However, my project aims to complicate this image by showing how the genre of romance did not simply die out but continued to flourish alongside and within the novel.

Within much of Anglo-American academia, the twentieth-century perception of the novel and its “origins” in the eighteenth century cannot be discussed without reference to Ian Watt’s *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding*. He acknowledges that novel-like texts existed before this period and in other cultures; however, Watt views the eighteenth-century English novel as an innovative break with tradition: the introduction of “realism.” The characters, their situations and their actions

needed to be both believable in terms of narrative – as opposed to the romance tradition - but more importantly, “realism” required that the text portray a variety of human experiences; in other words, “the novel’s realism does not reside in the kind of life it presents, but in the way it presents it” (11). Watt contrasts the new realism of the novel with the genre of romance, which has roots in Classical Greece and Rome.

What distinguishes the novel from romance, according to his argument, is its articulation of a new kind of individualism. Pointing out that even the term “individualism” only dates back to the mid-nineteenth century, Watt explains why he believes the eighteenth century ushered in a new mode of consciousness: individualism requires that “a whole society [be] mainly governed by the idea of every individual’s intrinsic independence both from other individuals and from that multifarious allegiance to past modes of thought and action denoted by the word ‘tradition’ – a force that is always social, not individual.” In addition, “such a society . . . depends on a special type of economic and political organization which allows its members a very wide range of choices in their actions . . . [based] on the autonomy of the individual, irrespective of his particular social status or personal capacity.” Watt views England as capable of producing such a society during the eighteenth century due to its possession of two historical conditions: “the rise of modern industrial capitalism and the spread of Protestantism, especially in its Calvinist or Puritan forms” (60). The novel in turn “rises” to meet the needs of this new breed of individualistic readers, reflecting their preferences for capitalist and Protestant biased narratives.

This focus on individualized experience leads to a change in how characters and setting were presented. Characters had realistic names and were treated as if they could

exist outside of the novel (21) and their personal narratives took place within a specific time frame and at a defined location. All of these factors helped contribute to what Watt perceives as “an authentic account of the actual experiences of individuals” (27). Taking up the ideology of the bourgeoisie, the novel is presented as a new form of literature for a new reading public. The rise in literacy that included some of the laboring classes such as apprentices and domestic servants and the innovations in print culture that circulated both the novel and the periodical to a wider audience both acted in tandem to create a demand for narratives in novel form. In his case studies, Watt argues that Defoe and Richardson act as the first novel writers because they broke with tradition in “nearly every aspect of their vision of life, and of the techniques by which it was embodied” (57). They are novelists because they realistically portray the individual human consciousness that reflects a middle-class mentality, while other influential writers such as Henry Fielding clung – in part due to conservative political views – to the older forms of narration.

In the tradition that follows Watt, romance becomes viewed as an inferior, archaic, foreign genre consisting of underdeveloped, unrealistic plots and characters: similar to the image of Said’s Oriental Other, it is both childlike in its lack of development, yet older, steeped in a tradition that favored the decadent rule of a few at the expense of the many. In these theories, the novel is defined in opposition to the romance: it is seen as an expression of national identity through its promotion of a Protestant, bourgeois English identity.

Demonstrating the influence of Watt’s view of the novel, Michael McKeon offers a similar definition of the novel in his 1987 *The Origins of the English Novel 1600-1740*, but is more insistent in his demarcation of the boundaries between the romance and the

novel. Like Watt, he sees the novel as a new form reflecting the desires of a new audience. However, unlike Watt, he attempts to de-emphasize the ideas of realism and the middle class in favor of emphasizing the novel as an assertion of a national identity. McKeon views the novel as the revolution of a cross-class cultural crisis over the dialectical forces of “truth” and “virtue” throughout Europe. In Cervantes and Bunyan, McKeon sees an anxiety over what constitutes virtue. *Don Quixote* expresses a concern over the “contradiction of a [racial, class] ‘purity’ that was institutionally subject to monetary corruption, and the absence of any creditable standard of achievement between the extremes of the ancient possession of status and the resent purchase of it” (294). As he does with the English novel of the eighteenth century, McKeon reads this Spanish text as a response to social crises. Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*, he argues, also sets out to reconcile the conflict between a virtuous spiritual ideal and a corrupt social reality. McKeon sees this text as actively attempting to break away from the old romance narrative defined here as “an imagined fiction, whereas this [*Pilgrim’s Progress*] incorporates its historicity into its own documentary objecthood. Bunyan then acts as a bridge between the older orders of romance and religious allegory and the approaching desire for fiction that confronts the moral and ethical realities faced by the reader. The crises readers were dealing with involved how to reconcile what was increasingly perceived as a gap between truth and virtue brought about by secularization.⁵ The crisis, however, is positioned as occurring within England: while he cites continental sources for parallels and intellectual background, the focus of his argument is on the emergence of an English genre out of debates over “truth” and “virtue” between the English authors, Henry Fielding and Samuel Richardson. Romance is positioned as part of a past from

which English culture has been severed: “From Hesiod to Chrétien, lineage existed [within romances] to resolve questions of virtue and truth with a tact simultaneity, making both a casual claim of genealogical descent attesting to an eminence of birth, hence worth, and a logical claim of testimonial precedent validating all present claims as true” (420). Within this argument, the novel represents a new form to represent a new era for England, in which domestic writers had broken free of the foreign traditions represented by writers such as Hesoid and Chrétien.

However, Watt and McKeon’s definition of “authenticity” and “realism” leads to overly demarcated boundary between novels and other forms of prose fiction preceding and continuing through the eighteenth century. For example, in chapter one, I argue that Aphra Behn’s *Oroonoko* deliberately uses romance as a literary technique to evoke an idealized past political order no longer found in English culture. Behn’s themes of decay and loss in society reflect the individual experiences of her two main characters, Oroonoko and the narrator, who both long for a return to what they perceive as a more stable social hierarchy than the one offered to them in Surinam. The narrator’s consciousness is shaped by a romance lexicon – a tragic variation on the comic belief in romance found in Cervantes’ *Don Quixote* and, as discussed in chapter three, Charlotte Lennox’s *Female Quixote*. Yet, for Watt and McKeon, the use of romance bars one from being categorized as a novel because it causes the text to carry “foreign, archaic or literary connotations which excluded any suggestion of real and contemporary life” (19). Here, it becomes apparent that realism is not limited just to issues of individuality, but also to a kind of nationalism. Novels must be confined within the bounds of nationalism and contemporary moments; in this light, romance becomes rewritten as continental and

un-English, despite the close cultural and political relationships England shared with other countries.⁶

The focus on England as culturally unique along with a lack of discussion on foreign influences, such as Islamic culture, and the positioning of the novel as distinct from romance continues to dominate discussions of eighteenth-century prose fiction. While many scholars working on the eighteenth-century novel attempt to distinguish themselves from Watt, they often make only minor alterations while still relying on the distinction between romance and the novel as paralleling changes to the social order brought about by a rising middle class.⁷

Occasionally, the Watt-McKeon definition of the novel has been broadened or refocused, but for the most part, many scholars have been concerned with what historical forces produced the novel and not what constitutes a novel, leaving readers with the image of the novel as a distinctly English creation with its roots in the seventeenth century and the rise of a Protestant middle class readership. Even romance scholars have adhered to this rather condescending differentiation of romance from the novel. In *Anatomy of Criticism*, Northrop Frye pinpoints the difference between romance and the novel in much the same way as scholars of the novel: “The romancer does not attempt to create ‘real people’ so much as stylized figures which expand into psychological archetypes,” while the “novelist deals with personality, with characters wearing their *personae* or social masks” (304, 305). By doing so, romance is frequently represented as a less well-written genre due to its supposed lack of realism and psychological depth, and its associations with the past and non-English, non-Protestant, aristocratic traditions leads

to a perceived cultural incompatibility with a post-Reformation culture increasingly dominated by a Protestant middle-class.

In re-examining the role of romance in the long eighteenth century, I will be drawing upon the work of Margaret Anne Doody and J. Paul Hunter, both of whom reject the romance/novel dichotomy and question the search for “origins” in studies of the English novel. In her ambitiously titled *The True Story of the Novel*, Doody challenges the view that the novel is a specifically English creation by stressing its foreign rather than domestic origins. Arguing that the novel has its roots not in seventeenth and eighteenth-century England but in Classical Rome and the Hellenistic world, Doody directly addresses the assertion made by previous scholars of the English novel that early texts are romances and not novels. She dismisses this as a “supposed distinction [that] has often done more harm than good” and instead defines novels as prose fiction that meets certain length requirements (16). However, though this does challenge some fundamental assumptions made by Watt and his heirs, it does not necessarily alter what is perceived as the “eighteenth-century English novel.” While she mocks Watt’s favoring of English literature, she does not debate the “Rise of Realism” itself (287), interpreting the eighteenth-century English novel as differing from its predecessors in its motivation to preserve the culture’s patriarchy and keep its national traditions free from foreign influence.

Doody sees the eighteenth-century shift towards realism as a reaction to more preceding schools of thought such as those represented by seventeenth-century scholar Pierre-Daniel Huet, who argued for an “international history of the novel . . . that favored the power of women writers” (287). In contrast, “the new Novel would define itself as

home-grown, Aryan” and Shakespeare would replace Homer as the cultural standard by which texts are judged (287-288). Though she views it in a much more negative light as part of a jingoistic and racist ideology, Doody’s reading of the eighteenth-century English novel falls along the lines of the Watt tradition: she defines the novel of this period as reflecting a domestic culture shaped by internal dynamics and shunning foreign influence.

Doody’s interpretation of this period in the novel’s history also connects to the concept of dominant European cultures oppressing the rest of the world. Realism is, for her, a mechanism for oppression through what she perceives as the style’s innate masculinity and Europeaness. Since “there is no reason in nature why the poor or oppressed should choose realistic material when they turn to writing fiction” (288), women writers are defined as writing against this emerging ideology. Her theory of the Goddess as the unifying trope of the Novel throughout history acts as both the conclusion of her history of the Novel and a political call to arms for her readers. The Goddess can embrace both realistic and other texts because she underlies all realities. This also allows for a literature rooted in both the abstract and the material since “bodily life is holy life” (458). It also provides a means to instigate profound cultural and political change in the world through the way novels are read: it goes against patriarchal divisions of culture and nature because the “Novel endeavors to show . . . that there is no need to think of humans and nature in opposition” (460).⁸ By positing a feminine interpretation to challenge a previously masculine reading of the novel, Doody challenges Watt and her other predecessors only to replace their theories with a similar model: its imposition of a battle between patriarchy and matriarchy on the novel reduces the social conditions that

produced it to the sort of fixed binary opposition – Self and Other, Oppressor and Oppressed – that I wish to avoid. While her view of the early history of the novel encompassing the Mediterranean world and including the romance is compatible with my argument, we diverge in our views of the eighteenth century: in this dissertation, I am arguing that the novel in eighteenth-century England neither lost its connection to its romance heritage nor excluded the influence of women and other cultures. Instead, the novel's use of romance and representations of an Islamic Orient persisted throughout the eighteenth century.

In doing so, I hope to follow Paul J. Hunter's precedent of discussing of the novel while sidestepping two theoretical traps: limiting the definition and history of the genre to eighteenth-century England and attempting too broad a time frame for close analysis of a specific cultural moment. In *Before Novels: the cultural contexts of eighteenth-century English fiction*, Hunter acknowledges a scholarly debt to Watt while critiquing the scholarly discourse surrounding the novel in general. He interprets the eighteenth-century English novel as disciplining readers by teaching them to distinguish between the literal and implied meanings. Indeed the central feature he perceives during this historical period is didacticism (55). However, his most significant addition to the discourse is to critique the discourse itself. He finds the debates over the definition of what qualifies as a novel counterproductive. Texts should not be seen as "failing" to meet the criteria imposed on them by present-day critics such as Watt; instead, theory should embrace the ambiguities of genre found at the time period: "Beyond sly winks and smug smiles, we have no methodology for reading the bread-and-butter popular works of the eighteenth century" (247).

With Hunter's warning against relying too much on the ability to categorize a text, this project will examine how eighteenth-century texts use elements that were associated with romance. Romance offered authors during the eighteenth century a means of using a particular type of history to comment upon their present moment, by asking its readers to compare their present politics to a medieval (and sometimes classical) pre-Enlightenment past. At times this can be reactionary, like Aphra Behn and Daniel Defoe's expressions of anxiety over emerging political social orders; others are more satirical, such as Charlotte Lennox and Samuel Johnson's humorous undermining of their society's self-image as "progressive"; and others, such as Charlotte Dacre are more ambivalent as they seem to both glorify and reject the romance ideals of the past. This project aims to trouble the distinction between the two genres. Furthermore, by looking at the use of romance in novels as a means of questioning and critiquing their historical moment, and focusing upon representations of the Orient in these texts, I want to connect the social critique of romance to the cultural tensions surrounding the influence of Islamic culture on English identity.

The Other England: Islamic Influence on English Identity

During the eighteenth century, the Islamic world, especially its Mediterranean territories,⁹ possessed a different relationship with and played a different role in the cultural imagination of Europe than did other areas of the world. In her detailed survey of European perceptions of North Africa during the eighteenth century, Ann Thomson argues that North Africa did not fit into the categories usually assigned to non-European nations: "North Africa was not, in 'civilised' European eyes in the early Eighteenth Century, a savage region; it was not an area to which Europeans traveled in search of

marvels and mysteries, or even in the main to find primitive people, as they went to North America or afterwards to the South Seas. It was not, in short, a land for exploration"; nor was it "an immediate example of an ancient civilisation from whose philosophy they could learn, as were China or India." Instead, North Africa represented an immediate part of European life through the two "numerous and continuous contacts throughout history, . . . [making North Africa] an integral part of the Mediterranean civilisation" (1). Based on a historical relationship between Europe and the Mediterranean, Thomson contends that while Europeans perceived North Africans as different from themselves, this perception remains distinct from Said's concept of an Oriental Other: instead of comprising an unfamiliar, exotic culture, the "Barbary states were in many ways part of the world that was familiar to Europeans . . . [thus they] tend to become invisible to present scholarship, although this does not mean they were not present in European thought" (2).¹⁰ Thomson's insistence on the immediacy of the Islamic world, specifically the Ottoman Mediterranean, in European scholarship is part of the foundation of my own interpretation of eighteenth-century texts. It is vital that this period of history be viewed not only through the global imperialism it set up in the nineteenth century, but in its own historical context when Islamic empires stood as world powers often superior to their European counterparts.

England in particular was not in a position to dominate the "Orient" until perhaps its eastward colonial swing at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Even as it began to grow as a colonial power throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it is important to keep in mind that England's political situation remained precarious: the Tudor period was marked by religious upheaval and uncertain succession; the Stuarts by

regicide and civil war; even the Hanovers dealt with political unrest throughout its rule. During the period of time examined in this project, the existence of a British empire – or for that matter, “Britain” as a unified political entity – were emerging concepts of future aspirations. In the history leading up to the Restoration, England was not a powerful, international force, but a small, isolated island when compared to more powerful, better organized world powers, such as the Ottomans. In his examination of early modern English portrayals of Islam, Daniel Vitkus reminds his readers that “the ‘idea’ of empire arose in England long before there was a real, material empire on the ground . . . like that ruled by Spain, or ancient Rome. Even a [post-1603] ‘composite monarchy’ if that is what Jacobean ‘Britain’ was, does not comprise a fully imperial power that holds sway over a variety of conquered subject people” (6). The discourse surrounding English power is further brought into question when one considers that a term such as “empire” at this time does not necessarily carry the same meaning as it does today: “For example, after the break with Rome in 1533, Henry VIII began to claim that England was an empire or ‘imperium,’ meaning that the kingdom of England was an autonomous polity” (200, n. 6). Orientalism, in the sense that Said uses it, could not exist at this time because England lacked the power to dominate the East.

In many ways, when compared to the Ottomans, England can be seen as inhabiting a position similar to Said’s Other: a “passive reactor” to the military and cultural incursions of an Islamic “actor.” When addressing Islamic-Christian relations, English texts frequently cast Muslims in a position of power, while they – or their European counterparts – exist in a subordinate, even oppressed position. Recent Early Modern scholarship has focused on these representations of Islamic culture in English

popular culture. Vitkus, for instance, analyzes early modern English plays on the assumption that its authors and audience viewed the Islamic holdings in the Mediterranean from “a vantage point of awe and deference (and sometimes envy) . . . from a position of inferiority” and that “English subjects were well aware that the metropolitan centers of wealth, culture, [and] civilization . . . were located in the Mediterranean.” By contrast “London was on the periphery of Europe and far from the Mediterranean Sea, . . . which had been home to the empires that really counted – Rome, Byzantium, then the empire of the Turks”; by controlling large sections of the Mediterranean, the Ottoman empire was perceived both as the heir to the region’s “imperial history (from Alexander the Great to Suleiman the Great)” as well as, “for Christians, the religious center of the world,” as Jerusalem and Constantinople “were now ruled, however, by the Turks” (31). While he contends that Early Modern theatrical representations “helped to introduce a model of contact and engagement with foreign peoples that prepared the way for empire” (198), his discussion of English representations of Islam upsets today’s concepts of Occident-Orient power dynamics. My project will examine how the alternative view offered by Early Modern scholars such as Vitkus can be extended into eighteenth-century studies. This dissertation combines an analysis of representations of Islam with a discussion of continuation of romance alongside and within the “rise” of the novel. Linking these two threads, evocations of “oriental” characters and settings in a diverse set of texts will demonstrate the ways in which English national identity and culture were actively shaped by the Islamic world.

Chapter One sets up the racial model of romance and demonstrates how it fit into English politics by contrasting the reinterpretations of Aphra Behn’s *Oroonoko* (1688)

throughout the long eighteenth century. The protagonist's cultural affiliation shifts from Islamic to "pagan" African as the prose narrative's use of romance tropes to support Behn's royalist politics is replaced by the changing ideology of the stage adaptations following the 1688 coup, eventually leading to the narrative's association with the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade. However, its romance roots allow the original prose narrative to use Islamic imagery as a marker of civilization that its English readers would immediately recognize.

The romance model of race is based in the genre's consistent portrayal of nobles being innately fit to rule commoners. In "The Invention of Romance," John J. Winkler describes Greek romance as "an elaboration of the period between initial desire and final consummation" (28), allowing the potentially dangerous sexual passion (*eros*) to find containment within marriage (*gamos*). The common plot line for many romances follows the outline Ronald McCail provides in his introduction to Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe*:

[The] main characters are a newly married couple or a betrothed couple or a pair of lovers. Some mishap causes them to be separated and conveyed far apart from one another . . . Both travel far over land and sea . . . They are sold into slavery, and their chastity is assailed by a lustful master or mistress. Their lives are repeatedly endangered, by warfare or cruel punishments. There are trial scenes. . . . At last the lovers are reunited, by the agency of chance, or with the help of well-wishers or faithful slaves (x).

The status of the romance's two lovers as of the noble race innately separates them intellectually, morally and physically from the commoners who raise them. Each of their trials throughout the text rearticulates their fitness to rule over their companions. From this point of view the romance racial model seems to reinforce existing views of social hierarchy by dividing peoples within into two major groups: nobles and commoners.

However, this division between castes also lends itself to unusual connections between peoples: even as in the Middle Ages a nationalist perspective emerges in English romances, it is complicated by the racial division within that group which separates subjects from their rulers, who instead are connected more to other nobles – even those with whom they are in military and religious conflict. The medieval form of romance focuses, for the most part, on the interactions of nobles across cultural and religious boundaries. Often crusade or quest narratives tell the histories of the noble race that ruled. Unlike frequently negative portrayal of Jews, these stories were just as likely to depict Muslim nobles as positive counterparts to Christian aristocrats as they were to portray them as demonic monsters.

Medieval scholar Debra Higgs Strickland argues that the frequently positive portrayal of Muslims within chivalric romance is informed by a desire to increase the sense of chivalric honor associated with Crusader victories: “the idea here seems to be that Christian victory would be all the more glorious if the vanquished were both dangerous and worthy. From an artistic perspective, worthiness had to be translated into some conventionally recognizable form” (188). Out of the desire to make a foreign character’s worthiness legible to a European audience, romances employed domestic conceptions of nobility. Even romances such as *Song of Roland*, in which animalistic and demonic characteristics are placed on Muslim forces, there is still a sense of similarity between Christians and Muslim knights: in a mirror image of their Christian counterparts, the Muslim soldiers carry a demonic trinity of Tervagant, Muhammad and Apollo, and just as there are treacherous knights among the good Christians, the Muslim forces

contain some valiant, good knights, such as Grandonie and Margariz, who are represented as serving the wrong side but still honorable.

When placed in a favorable light, Muslim nobles were beautiful, brave, honorable and possessing highly refined feelings. In the German romance *Parzival*, the nobility of its two principle Muslim characters, Belacane and her son Feirefiz, are described in terms of European standards of nobility. Despite her dark skin, Belacane possesses “a woman’s manner . . . and was on other counts worthy of a knight” and despite her non-Christian beliefs, “Her innocence was a pure baptism” (14, 17). Similarly, her son Feirefiz is admired by the Arthurian knights and desired by the European women, eventually marrying the Grail Maiden. In romance, the noble races have exclusive ownership of emotional and aesthetic sensitivity. Romance privileges the ideas of emotions and people are driven not by reason but by their honorable feelings. Swooning, crying, blushing all serve as another example of how their outer appearances mark inner superiority. This romance model of rank set up a tradition of a peculiar variation of universalism: while peasants and the nobles who ruled them were presented as innately different, this separation was seen as crossing cultural and religious boundaries, binding nobles together as part of one race destined to rule.¹¹

In addition to its use of a racial model of rank that represented Muslim and Christian nobles as similar to and compatible with one another, the romance also complements this project’s discussion of Islamic representation in English literature through its own cosmopolitan heritage. Romance scholars such as Winkler and Elizabeth Archibald locate the genre’s origins in accounts of Alexander the Great. Winkler sees the narrative tropes of romances as “a resident alien in Greek culture,” and being “born in

and (presumably) appropriate to the social forms of a Near Eastern culture . . . Hellenized in the wake of Alexander's conquests" (35). Adding to this viewpoint, Archibald points out that "within a few years of his [Alexander the Great's] death his history was being turned into a romance which proved so popular that versions of it survive not only in Greek and Latin and in all the European vernacular languages, but also in Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Malay, Ethiopian, and even Mongolian" (17).¹² In this light, romance is founded in the merging of "Eastern" and "Western" traditions, making it difficult to distinguish what cultural elements in each are free of the other's influence.

This ambiguity between cultural traditions continues in the history of the romance in England. Though by the Restoration, the genre would have been associated more with continental, specifically French, traditions, Judith Weiss points to multiple long-established exchanges across the Channel: pointing to the influence of English historical work and the transnational interests of Eleanor of Aquitaine, she argues that at the beginning of the twelfth century, England's "Latin historians . . ., such as William of Malmesbury, Henry of Huntingdon, and Geoffrey of Monmouth, prepared the ground for the blossoming of the *estorie*, the French verse history which appeared a century earlier in England than on the Continent and which was undoubtedly also indebted to Anglo-Saxon England's well-established vernacular tradition" (27).¹³ With its transnational history, romance, provides an ideal vehicle for questioning the boundaries of national literatures and illuminating outside influences.

These romance depictions of Islam originate from a historical reality of cultural, political and economic exchanges, in which foreign powers such as the Ottoman often represented the more powerful player. Along with the discussion of romance's influence

on the novel, this close relationship between England and the Islamic world had a profound effect on the former's intellectual and cultural development will provide one of two major focal points in my analysis of eighteenth-century novels.

Chapter Two deals with the impact of Islam on English Protestantism, by examining the contesting reactions to the influence of Islam, usually in the form of the Ottoman Empire, on English identity. The first half of this chapter deals with the scholarly side of England "Arabick Interest" in its analysis of the translations 1671 and 1708 English translations of the philosophical romance *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan* by the twelfth-century Andalusian writer Muhammad Ibn Tufayl. While some such as Edward Pocock, George Ashwell and Simon Ockley wanted to keep Arabic studies within elite intellectual circles, others such as George Keith, a Quaker, saw Arabic texts such as I. Tufayl's as a means of breaking away from the old social hierarchies represented by the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches.

The debate over the use of the text in English society reflects a larger trend within English scholarship. In the introduction to *The 'Arabick' Interest of the Natural Philosophers in Seventeenth-Century England*, G.A. Russell lays out the multiple ways texts by Muslim scholars were integrated into English intellectual life. She argues that a distinction exists between the medieval use of Arabic texts and the seventeenth and early eighteenth century's: "Prior to the twelfth century, its [Europe's] meager classical resources were in sharp contrast to the extensive Arabic heritage of Greek Hellenistic philosophy, science, and technology, enriched by Persian, Chinese, and Indian influences. . . . As a consequence, Arabic became a symbol of wealth, power and intellectual prestige" (2). However, Russell contends that the "roots of the 'second wave' of interest

in Arabic lie, in fact, in the very movements which seemed to rule out any possible basis for its existence: The Protestant Reformation, the Humanist classical revival, and the ‘expansion’ of Europe and its emergence as the centre of world trade” (3).¹⁴ Arabic became a major part of Protestant-Catholic religious debates: both sides sought historical precedents to support their arguments, turning to Arabic as a means of accessing Hebrew and Greek sources and their commentaries. Reading Hebrew, for example, required linguists to turn towards scholarship that had developed in Islamic Spain, so that out “of the deep concern to read the Old Testament in the original, Arabic emerged as an ancillary language to Hebrew. . . . It was believed that Arabic could help elucidate difficult passages not only in the Old Testament but also in the Rabbinical commentaries which in turn were being used for the interpretation of the New Testament” (4).¹⁵ Secular scholarship’s “skeptical attitude to Latin translations [of Greek texts], then, provided the grounds for an examination of Arabic sources,” which in turn required not only knowledge of the language but access to Arabic texts: “Already by the 1620s, there were sufficient interest not only at Cambridge . . . but also at Oxford . . . Those who gave support were not only theologians and physicians, but also mathematicians . . . because of their interest in reading Arabic mathematical texts” (7). By reaching what is arguably an intellectual elite, the “Arabick” interest’s impact can be seen in the era’s political and religious theory.

In her essay, “The Impact of *The Philosophus Audodidactus*: Pockocke, John Locke, and the Society of Friends,” Russell makes a compelling argument that the Locke’s political philosophy – and by extension, its role in justifying the 1688 coup as well as the form of the government established – was deeply influenced by the late

seventeenth-century translations of a narrative by Ibn Tufayl, a twelfth-century philosopher from Islamic Spain. Focusing on the new ideas that emerge in Locke's *Essay on Human Understanding*, Russell posits that the earlier text influenced Locke's positions on "the question of whether the concept of God was self-evident (intuitive or innately provide) or derived from rational considerations. . . . on the concept of the 'law of nature' and of 'natural religion', with its implications for morality. . . . Above all, the content of the narrative provides a perfect support for the Lockean notion of the mind as a *tabula rasa*" (230-231). In Chapter Two, I will examine the translations of this particular text from 1671 to 1708, but will focus on its interactions with debates over emerging definitions of English Protestant identity.

While the academic nature of the "Arabick interest" may seem to be a phenomenon limited to England's universities and not the everyday lives of most inhabitants, it is important to keep mind two factors. First, as Thomson points out, "Small as this educated elite was, it is nevertheless the body of knowledge constituted by them that has come down to us and influences to some extent our perceptions of the rest of the world, despite later developments" (1). The views of an elite body of intellectuals were crucial for shaping political policy as well as public perceptions. Second, it would be a mistake to think that only the educated elite were influenced by this contact with the Islamic world.

Repercussions of the debate over the influence of Islam on English Protestantism affected people of all classes, as is shown in the second half of Chapter Two. The sailors on merchant ships, the customers throughout England buying products like coffee, all had their everyday life impacted by England's relationship with the East. A scholar of the

impact of Islamic culture on Early Modern England, Nabil Matar reasons that the references to English captives and dangers of conversion relates back to an English sense of cultural, financial and military inferiority to Islamic culture, often represented by the Ottoman empire.¹⁶ The reality of English nationals being enslaved by Muslims and the fear that those captives would convert to their captors' religion was present in the English cultural imagination "ever since the first recorded visit of a Briton into the Ottoman Empire, Anthony Jenkinson 1553, . . . [when] English traders and seamen in the Mediterranean, some of whom fell into Muslim hands and converted to Islam." Throughout the Stuart reign, numerous English ships were taken by Turkish pirates at Algiers, Tunis, and Salee, with the crown (along with the Commonwealth and Protectorate) was frequently petitioned by these prisoners and their relatives for relief. For example, by "October 1640, families of 3, 000 Englishmen held in captivity in Algiers were petitioning the King for help, and two years later the author of *Libertas*¹⁷ stated that the number of Englishmen 'in chaines' had risen to 5, 0000" (Matar 5, 6-7, 7).

These attacks affected communities across ranks and throughout the British Isles "from Liverpool to Dover, from Dundee to Hull, and from Edinburgh to Barnstaple, although the highest number came from London" (9). But while this often caused a source of anxiety - and financial burden from the loss of a wage-earner - for those with captive relatives in Barbary, it could also represent an opportunity for social and financial advancement for those who chose to adapt to their new environment. According to Matar, Islamic societies held a strong attraction for English Christians, particularly the poor and illiterate. The desirability for conversion came from the image of Islamic societies as richer, holding more promise of upward mobility (included the belief that a converted

slave might be freed sooner than a Christian one) and being viewed as culturally close to Christianity.¹⁸ The second half of Chapter Two continues to look at the anxieties caused by a Protestant-Islamic connection in Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719). I argue that by recognizing the centrality of Crusoe's North African captivity, the text should be read as a meditation on English fears of being conquered through the loss of English identity to a more powerful Ottoman empire, and not a celebration of English colonial conquest.

The second half of this dissertation adds the status of women into the discussion of romance and English representations of Islam. Chapter Three argues that Samuel Johnson's *Rasselas* (1759) and Charlotte Lennox's *The Female Quixote* (1752) both use romance elements to reference an older form of history writing, one in which the boundaries between romance and fact are porous, to critique English concepts of difference, especially those of gender or culture, in favor of a more universalized view of the world. Their works responded to a mid eighteenth-century shift as England began to emerge as a global power. As a result, the narratives endeavor to counter ideologies of European, especially English superiority, by showing that the Oriental characters are the reader's cultural equals, while also making an argument against the sexual inequality existing within England.¹⁹

Their work fits into a tradition that uses the oriental settings and characters of romance in a way that allows the foreign to become a social critique of the domestic. These instances of oriental romance I view as similar to what Vitkus refers to as the "third term" in English literature. In his reading of Christopher Marlowe's *Tamburlaine, Parts I and II*, he situates Tamburlaine's multiple religious conversions as disrupting "the

binary opposition of Christian to non-Christian or Protestant to Roman Catholic” and reflecting Catholic-Protestant tensions where Islam acts as a “third term” (59, 60): “In post-Reformation polemics, Catholics compared Protestants to Turks, and Protestants returned the insult,” with the latter conflating the “pope and the Ottoman sultan” (61). Tamburlaine emerges as an element that does not fit easily into – and therefore disrupts – the existing binaries of Catholic-Protestant conflicts.

Rather than the Muslim character existing as just a foil for turmoil within Christianity, the character recontextualizes the religious debate it originated from as a foil to discuss the new idea that the character represents. In Vitkus’ reading of *Tamburlaine*, the play uses the Catholic-Protestant debate as a starting point: the Christian-Muslim conflict stands in for its Protestant-Catholic counterpart, as the conflation with Islam is used to denigrate the Catholic Church. By the end of play, Tamburlaine has upset these binaries by representing a third alternative – atheism: “Under the guise of an anti-Islamic drama that superficially confirms and conforms to orthodox demonizations of the Turk, the play insinuates that the discourses of providentialism, prophecy, and holy war are merely empty rhetoric, and that if there is a God in heaven, he is no more than another ‘sleepy Mahomet’ who does not hear the prayers of Christians” (64).

I want to expand Vitkus’ description of Muslims as a “third term” that destabilizes English identity to encompass my discussion of the insertion of Islamic culture into a text through romance. Both romance and Islam will be presented as a “third term” that destabilizes concepts of genre and identity within the eighteenth-century English novel. The use of the “third term” of romance depictions of an Islamic Orient becomes the vehicle to challenge both social conditions within England, such as the legal

oppression of women, as well as its view of foreign cultures. While, at the mid-point of the eighteenth century, some elements surfaced which would later give rise to the kind of Orientalism Said describes, the older tradition that view the East as culturally and militarily superior continued to exist. In their novels, Samuel Johnson and Charlotte Lennox represent an alternative to eighteenth-century definitions of universalism that privilege Western European culture as the norm; instead, they modify the romance racial model to argue for a form of universality that transcends national, class and gender boundaries. I view Johnson and Lennox's texts as attempts to take that older tradition and update it in a way that challenge the growing sense that England was superior to other, especially those considered oriental, cultures. Through romance, they offer a "third term" as an alternative to a philosophical position that divides the world between Europeans and non-Europeans.

Chapter Four combines the elements of race, religion and gender from the preceding chapters in its reading of Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya* (1806), a gothic romance dealing with the manipulations and damnations of the rebellious Victoria and the royal slave Zofloya the Moor. I argue that the novel uses discourses of oriental despotism to critique the "slavish" conditions imposed on English women. Using an enslaved Moor turned devil as a foil, Dacre presents examples of submissive women who are secretly rebelling against the social order. Though she does not explicitly argue for increased legal rights or social freedoms for women, Dacre's presentation of the dangers to society through its enforcement of feminine passivity implicitly demonstrates a need to create a society where women are educated to be free subjects and independent of patriarchal control.

In conclusion, this dissertation seeks to bridge what I see as a gap between Early Modern and nineteenth-century scholarship on England's interactions with the Orient. The majority of work that challenges concepts of an ahistorically powerful England has concentrated mainly upon the centuries prior to the eighteenth century – Matar, Vitkus and Russell all focus on the Early Modern era – or on broader issues of European thought – such as Thomson's exploration of Enlightenment scholarship on North Africa. At the other side of the divide, scholars following in the tradition of Said read signs of an imperial England back into eighteenth-century culture even though the nation did not gain a true empire until the nineteenth century. In the following chapters, I will show that that the intermingling of Islamic and English Protestant identity was a recurring theme in literature of the century, and that this cultural mixing was a topic of debate and anxiety in the English cultural imagination. To do so, I will draw on the concept of the "rise" of the eighteenth-century English novel, which has been perceived as a nationalistic genre, and show that throughout the century it remained connected to the older, foreign genre of romance. Examining a diverse set of novels written throughout the long eighteenth century, I argue that romance becomes a means for these texts to explore England's relationship with the Islamic Orient.

1 By creating a binary between Orient and Occident, European colonizers could justify their oppression of these other cultures by representing themselves in positive characteristics in opposition to those assigned to their subjects: if the "Oriental is irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, 'different,'" then the European can emerge as "rational, virtuous, mature, 'normal'" (40). The European is set up as the Subject who gives meaning to the Orient as object: "what gave the Oriental's world its intelligibility and identity was not the result of his own efforts but rather the whole complex series of knowledgeable manipulations by which the Orient was identified by the West." Separate from any cultural or political reality existing in North Africa, the Middle East and Asia, the Orient stands in for a system of ideas that negatively define Europe: Knowledge of the Orient, because generated out of strength in a sense *creates* the Orient, the Oriental, and his world. . . . [The] Oriental is depicted as something one judges (as in a court of law), something one studies and depicts (as in a curriculum), something one disciplines (as in a school or prison), something one

illustrates (as in a zoological manual). The point is that in each of these cases the Oriental is *contained* and *represented* by dominated frameworks (40).

While Said does not dwell on the active role the oriental subjects had in creating the objects that represented them - native informants, for example, acting as translators and guides or booksellers providing European scholars with local texts and artifacts, he does provide a key to understanding the representations of the East and how they fit into the cultural logic of Europe.

2 The first branch of this trend he locates in the scholarship can be applied to the texts discussed in this project such as the Ibn Tufayl translations in chapter two or the historical writing influencing Johnson and Lennox; this "growing systematic knowledge in Europe about the Orient, . . . [was] reinforced by the colonial encounter as well as by the widespread interest in the alien and unusual, exploited by the developing sciences of ethnology, comparative anatomy, philology, and history; furthermore, to this systematic knowledge was added a sizable body of literature produced by novelists, poets, translators, and gifted travelers" (39-40). The other branch came from the increasing imperial power of Europe, especially England: "Europe was always in a position of strength, not to say domination. There is no way of putting this euphemistically. . . the essential relationship, on political, cultural, and even religious grounds, was seen - in the West, which is what concerns us here - to be one between a strong and a weak partner" (40).

3 Recent scholarship in economics and political science as well in discussion in the mainstream media's coverage of international relations has pointed to the growing economic, political and cultural power of these countries. Scholars who use power transition theory place this new trend within a history of multiple cycles of power as nations used to exerting power over less powerful nations, loses its ability to influence the lesser powers in a global hierarchy; unable to control the status quo that keeps it in power, the hierarchy alters to fit the preference of new set up world players. In "The Politics of Population: India, China, and the Future of the World," Taduesz Kugler and Siddharth Swaminathan argue that due largely in part to population growth, countries such as China and India will be able to exert an increasing amount of influence on world politics: "China and India are the two rising giants of Asia . . . [the] sheer size of their populations, combined with increasing access to technology and education, leads to projections that these developing giants will become contenders for international dominance even before they reach the income per capita levels of current developed societies" (582); while "France, England, and Germany *were* great powers" as long as "the rest of the world had not yet joined the industrial revolution" they can no longer compete with national populations of the size of the United States, Russia, China, or India" (590). The eighteenth century can be seen as a transitional period similar to what we are observing today. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Ottoman Empire exerted more political, economic and cultural power than countries such as England. While they remained influential in the eighteenth century, England and other European nations were also gaining prominence; by the end of the nineteenth century, these countries were able to dominant world politics and eventually dismantle the Ottoman Empire.

4 The Ottoman Empire existed from 1299 to 1922, though the height of its power is widely seen as occurring in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Its territories stretched from the Middle East to Southeastern Europe and North Africa. Though it declined during the nineteenth century, it remained a force in global politics until its defeat in WWI, after which it was partitioned and placed under the control of France, Britain, Russia, Italy and Greece.

5 Novels, he argues, mediate this conflict by portraying the "truth" of the world while at the same time reinforcing ideas of "virtue." In the eighteenth-century, McKeon sees authors such as Defoe, Swift, Richardson and Fielding as addressing this social crisis. For instance, Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* may be "blind to providential signs" during his youth (321), but the narrative that contains him is not: as the novel progresses both the protagonist and the reader learn to read divine signs in the contemporary world. At first there is a gap between the economic realities Crusoe leaves his home for and the moral warnings of his father against material greed. The novel charts his progression towards conversion while allowing him to become upwardly mobile. By the time he returns to England, he has learned to humbly focus on God while attaining status and wealth. However, this social success is different from the riches and adventure he longed for as a youth: "What is crucial about Robinson Crusoe's achievement of social success is not the degree of his elevation but his capacity to justify each station to which he attains as the way of nature and the will of God" (336) His conversion has made him worthy of his worldly rewards just as Pamela can

retain her chastity without sacrificing an upper-class husband and Tom Jones can be a bastard but socially worthy of Sophia.

6 Watt links his belief in an eighteenth century shift away from the unrealistic, idealized, and aristocratic romance towards the realistic, middle-class novel to a series of philosophical trends in the seventeenth-century, especially Descartes' and Locke's emphasis on "the individual apprehension of reality" (15). It seems ironic that Watt cites Descartes, Locke and Hobbes as sources for the shift towards the individualism defining the English novel when these three authors do not represent an exclusively English background or perspective. Locke and Hobbes, despite their English affiliation, spent many years abroad in political exile, during which they formed many of their ideas which were so influential on English philosophy and politics. 7 For example, John J. Richetti's *The English Novel in History 1700-1780* attempts to fit the novel into a theory of shift in ideas of individual consciousness in a similar manner to Watt and McKeon, but also wants to widen what is considered a novel and which novels played a significant role in the formation of the genre during the eighteenth century. He attempts to include what Watt would consider unrealistic texts due to their portrayal of existence and their "foreign" influences such as amatory fiction, romance and the picaresque. Unlike Watt, Richetti posits what constitutes realism as ambiguous and sees these novels as "part of a debate about the nature of the moral and social world" (16), and this shift enables him to categorize didactic, polemic and sentimental texts as realistic, allowing Richetti to address more thoroughly a group largely ignored by Watt and McKeon: women writers and readers (While Watt acknowledges that a large part of the growing audience for novels included women, neither he nor McKeon chose to segregate their reading audience: individual consciousness becomes a universal concept).

Similarly, the work of Robert Mayer, Lennard J. Davis, and Joseph F. Bartolomeo can be seen as part of a movement rooted firmly in Watt's realism but choosing to privilege a particular social discourse in the formation of the novel. In all three, issues of historicity and truth become the central issue addressed by novels from this period. *History and the early English Novel: matters of fact from Bacon to Defoe* focuses on historical writing as the direct predecessor of novels. This leads to the dual position of the novel as fiction and history: readers could conceive *Robinson Crusoe* as a history or read it as pure fiction: "Undoubtedly there were some in London who knew . . . that it had been written by Defoe, and others who guess that it was imaginary, but there were also apparently many of read it as a n account of matters of fact and probably more who were not sure" (192). Davis takes a similar tack to Mayer in his *Factual Fictions: The Origins of the English Novel*, which substitutes news for history writing as the most direct predecessor to the novel. Davis criticizes Watt's omission of a foundational narrative, contending that *The Rise of the Novel* "moves rapidly to the Defoes, Richardsons, and Fieldings" rather than examine the "considerable history of early novels in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries" (5). However, Davis does not stray far from Watt's definition of the novel and distinguishes it from the romance by asserting that novels must be set in a "more recent, less heroic setting" and concerns itself with the realism of the non-aristocratic (i.e. middle) class (40).

In turn, Bartolomeo's *A New Species of Criticism*, he focuses –like many of his fellow commentators – on the status of *Robinson Crusoe* as one of the earliest manifestations of what would become the novel. Bartolomeo focuses on how authors presented their works – the frame stories created by prefaces and imaginary authors, such as Richardson's position as "editor" of *Clarissa* and *Pamela*. This anxiety over how a text would be read emerges as what Bartolomeo posits as the chief force behind the formation of the novel. But as the reading experience can become as diverse as the number of readers examining a text, Bartolomeo's reading makes it unclear how to categorize this plurality of readers: who was reading novels or reviews is not dwelled on as much as individual cases like Charles Gildon's reading of *Robinson Crusoe*.

8 This political aspect prompts the reader to actively challenge his or her paradigm is one of the most distinctive features of Doody's argument. It also opens up the novel to some of its more recent manifestations such as magical realism. While I will not using her unifying theory or looking for an alternative one, Doody's attention to the ideological implications of defining novels and romances against each other will inform my own readings of the texts as well as their historical context.

9 While it remained in existence, the Ottoman Empire's retained control of Algiers, Tunis and Tripoli. These Turkish Regencies, while nominally under Turkish control, enjoyed a large degree of autonomy, the details of which will be discussed more in chapter two.

10 Thomson supports this claim by pointing to areas of study where North Africa is absent and other countries are positioned as the Other: “We never find the North African used as an example in ethnographical, sociological or philosophical works in the Eighteenth Century. Nor did Barbary exercise the exotic fascination of civilizations like that of China or even of oriental towns like Constantinople.” She goes on to argue that by looking “more closely at the way Barbary was perceived,” we can then learn “how categories present during the Enlightenment for interpreting the rest of the world made it difficult to find a place for this reason and for the knowledge concerning it” (2).

11 This vision of a universal nobility is similar to the historical reality of the educated elite of the Ancient Roman empire: men of a certain status received a nearly identical education to those of the same station as them throughout the empire. In this way, a citizen from Spain could socialize with another from Byzantium with little cultural conflict: their manners, reading habits and other social niceties would be nearly identical.

12 “Ancient Romance.” *A Companion to Romance from Classical to Contemporary*. Ed. Corinne Saunders. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004. 10-25.

13 “Insular Beginnings: Anglo-Norman Romance.” *A Companion to Romance from Classical to Contemporary*. Ed. Corinne Saunders. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004. 26-44.

14 Russell argues that by “the seventeenth century, the ‘expansion of Europe’ and its growing wealthy though trade had tilted the balance of power irreversibly westward” (3); while it can be argued that Europe became more powerful at this time, I believe that the numerous conflicts (especially surrounding religion) in Europe make it difficult to view it as a powerful whole. Also, in the specific case of England, I do not believe that the Ottoman Empire was seen as weak, irrelevant or really declining until the nineteenth century. This view of England’s lack of power in world politics will be discussed later in the introduction and will be a theme for the project as a whole.

15 Russell demonstrates the affinity between biblical studies and Arabic in seventeenth-century by pointing out that not only was Arabic incorporated into theological training, it also overlapped in the academic world: “at Oxford both the Laudian Professorship of Arabic and the Regius Professorship of Hebrew were held by the same person – Dr. Edward Pococke, whose expertise also extended to Syriac and Aramaic” (4). Also influencing the Protestant interest in Arabic “was the existence of Arabic-speaking Christians. . . These older Christian Communities, such as the Copts and particularly the Greek Church, had resisted incorporation by the Church of Rome. Arabic was seen as a means of establishing communication with these Christians” (5).

16 Matar, Nabil. *Islam in Britain 1558-1685*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998.

17 *Libertas, or Reliefe to the English Captives in Algier... Presented to the serious Consideration of the Honorable Court of Parliament* was written in 1642 by Henry Robinson.

18 “Thousands of European Christians converted to Islam in the Renaissance and the seventeenth century, either because their poor social conditions forced them toward such a choice, or because they sought to identify with a powerful empire, much like the converts to Christianity in nineteenth-century Africa . . . The Ottoman Empire in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries presented a higher civilization than Christendom and offered opportunities to numerous Christians who sought employment and advancement. And since for many Christians, especially the poor and illiterate, conversion to Islam did not entail a traumatic change from one religion into another, then it was possible to view conversion in the same way that Greek Orthodox Christians viewed their ‘conversion’ to Anglicanism and Presbyterianism in the nineteenth-century Middle East: as an adoption of a religion which provided them with a sense of imperial power and with prospects for success. Although there were already infrastructural and economic weaknesses in the Ottomans Empire, they were not yet widely evident to the average Christian/Briton” (Matar 15-16).

19 Said argues that “Men have always divided the world up into regions having either real or imagined distinction from each other. . . [Since] the middle of the eighteenth century there had been two principal elements in relation between East and West” (39); this dissertation will diverge from this timeline by pointing to mid-century texts that argue for a universalism that undermines colonial ambitions. It is arguable, however, that Lennox and Johnson can be read as resisting the trends Said discusses: their novels may be seen as a rebuttal against emerging imperial arguments in the mainstream culture.

Chapter One:

Erasing Oriental Romance in Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*

Among the first English novels that would flourish during the century following her death, Aphra Behn's last work *Oroonoko* has enjoyed its popularity almost since its first publication. While the acceptance of Behn as an author and a historical figure by mainstream culture has wavered over the past three centuries, her narrative of the enslaved African prince Oroonoko has continually been seen as relevant to audiences and scholars. Recent attention has focused on Behn's position as the first professional woman writer as well as on the novel's examination of race and gender on the slave holding plantation colony of Surinam. However, during the century following Behn's death in 1689, her narrative took on a new form: eighteenth-century audiences often were more familiar with the stage adaptations of *Oroonoko*. The popularity of the plays reached the point where it becomes difficult to determine if eighteenth-century commentators refer to the novel or its dramatic reincarnations.¹ The change from one genre to another -- along with the subsequent new variations of the play -- resulted in alterations not just to accommodate staging concerns but also to the political stance taken by the novel. Reflecting changing conceptions of romance and Africa, each version is driven by a new need to make amends or apologize for the political indiscretions of its predecessors. The figure of Oroonoko transforms to fit the political expectations of each new audience: from an idealized prince of oriental romance, to a property owning Lockean subject, to a sentimentalized tragic figure trapped in the moral decay of the colonies, until he finally emerges as a hero within the eighteenth-century British abolitionist movement. This

chapter will trace the movement away from Behn's use of romance and the Islamic gloss she places on her African hero to its abolitionist revision is directly linked to debates on sovereignty and subjectivity in England. Behn outfits her African kingdom and its characters with elements from romance depictions of Muslim cultures in order to make a political statement on late-Restoration politics. As subsequent adaptations attempted to distance themselves from the ideological message of the original prose narrative, the depiction of Oroonoko loses its association with the North African Muslim nobles of romance and emerges instead as a symbol of the pagan, African slaves of the West Indies. The differences between the source material and its adaptations demonstrates the interconnectedness of romance and Islam in the English cultural imagination: a vision of Africa associated with Islam evokes images from romance of military prowess and a long established civilization; without this connection to a romance discourse of the Orient, Africa is presented as a country victimized by the transatlantic slave trade and lacking a culturally sophisticated society.

The *Oroonoko* narrative from its initial prose narrative form through its stage adaptations reflects a changing relationship between Britain, its subjects and its colonies in the period of 1688 to 1787. Aphra Behn's version presents a pro-Tory argument against representative governments and giving a fairly positive view of colonial plantations' reliance on slave labor. Later stage adaptations, chiefly those of Thomas Southerne and John Hawkesworth, reflect a change in how British audiences viewed their domestic and colonial spaces. Southerne reflects the new government, with its focus on a free liberal subject as best depicted by Locke.²

However, this concept of “universal manhood” replaced another definition of universality found in the romance idea of a noble race, in which rank presented a means of connecting a social elite across cultural boundaries. Though the romance model is limited to a small group of individuals and acted as way to justify a system of power, Locke’s concept of universality possesses its own limitations on who could claim to be a subject. Property ownership played a large role in determining who could and could not be enslaved. Those who possessed property were at liberty, while those without it became property themselves. Locke’s symbolic use of the term “slavery” to represent a lack of property and individual power allows Southerne to draw a connection between the poorer classes of England and the enslavement of Africans for colonial labor. Later in the century, in part due to the British decline in the Caribbean and a rise in abolitionism occurring throughout in eighteenth-century Britain, the stage adaptations of Behn’s novel portray slavery and the plantation as inherently corrupt. As a result, Behn’s narrative of a royal slave experienced an ideological drift as stage adaptations and audience response reflected changes in cultural attitudes towards the West Indian colonies and the slavery that supported their economy. By the end of the eighteenth century, the narrative’s roots in romance depictions of Islam and its preoccupation with the divine right of kings had been obscured in favor of a new era’s political issues.

Recent criticism on the many manifestations on the *Oroonoko* narrative focuses mainly on the depiction of race and female authorship. For example both Laura Brown’s “The Romance of Empire: *Oroonoko* and the Trade in Slaves” and Margaret Ferguson’s “Juggling Categories of Race, Class and Gender: Aphra Behn’s *Oroonoko*” see the novel’s depictions of Oroonoko’s blackness as bound up in the gender of his author.

Brown interprets Behn's text as downplaying the racial difference between Oroonoko and the female characters, chiefly the narrator. In doing so, she argues that Oroonoko is Europeanized enough to symbolically represent Charles I, to whom the good Englishwomen of Surinam remain loyal. Women, slave, and king become linked by a common political stance against mercantile imperialism. Ferguson takes the categories of race, class and gender to analyze the intellectual history behind U.S. feminism. In her analysis, Oroonoko and Behn's narrator persona are embroiled in common struggles for power: he with his grandfather and she with the provisional Governor Byam. Together, they are a potentially subversive threat, but ultimately, Ferguson sees the conflicting desires of Behn's narrator to critique yet profit from colonial slavery as leading to Oroonoko's demise.

Focusing on Behn's political stance as a Stuart supporter, Laura Doyle and Elliot Visconsi continue this discussion of race but place it in a different historical context. They see Oroonoko's difference from the other slaves and alignment with Behn's narrator persona as signally a racial model that instead of focusing on physiological or geographical divisions, categorizes people according to rank. This chapter relies largely on their readings in order to support its interpretation of the Coramantien court scenes as a deliberate evocation of an idealized past found in medieval romances. Reading the novel within the context of romance highlights connection between the shifting views on race and sovereignty, this chapter traces from Behn's prose narrative to her dramatic descendants. Under the romance equation of race with rank, Oroonoko is not a common African slave but a royal member of a culture with heavy Islamic overtones. Positioning him within the romance context, Behn evokes medieval crusade narratives that – despite

a frequent reliance on negative stereotypes – positions Muslims as a cultural equal to Christian Europe: as the *Oroonoko* narrative experienced a series of stage revisions, this romance view of race gave way to a dual portrayal of African slaves as part of a universal humanity as well as a pagan, uncultured people in need of Christianization.

Critical treatments of the play versions of the novel focus primarily on the first adaptation by Thomas Southerne. Reflecting the concern with intersections of race and gender in the novel's scholarship, analytical work done on of this first stage adaptation frequently focuses on Southerne's choice to present Imoinda as a white European instead of African. Jennifer Elmore interprets the heroine's color change as a sign of her sentimentalization and domestication in order to prompt audience sympathy both with Imoinda herself and with what Elmore reads as an abolitionist agenda in this first play version. This shift, she argues, represents as silencing of black women in the British public. Joseph Roach incorporates the first stage version into his reading of performativity across the Atlantic world, citing it as a "disclosure of how these distinctively circum-Atlantic relationships – reproduction and abundance, surrogation and memory, miscegenation and violence – emerge out of the performance of Behn's narrative through the staging of Southerne's dramatic adaptation" (154). For him, the staging of the play allows these issues to emerge out of Behn's original plot in a way unavailable to the novel. Felicity Nussbaum also focuses on the blanching of Imoinda, linking it to the disappearance of the narrator and the emergence of the comic plot's female characters. Combined, she argues, these changes point to the play's desire to rein in women in general and in particular, the changes are interpreted as a mode of chastising Behn for the independence she displayed throughout her life. While drawing on this

scholarship, I take the position that the changes made by the early stage adaptations such as Southerne and Hawkesworth do not necessarily point to an anti-slavery stance until John Ferriar's 1787 production, which was directly connected to the local abolitionist movement in Manchester. This reading places the novel and plays within the historical context of England's domestic debates over sovereignty and the changing fortunes in the plantocracy of the Caribbean in order to highlight the way romance depictions of Islam is deeply embedded in ideology of the original novel and how the removal the oriental romance elements result in a drastically different vision of English-African relations.

The Problem of Abolition and Royal Slaves

It seems as if a tragedy of a prince kidnapped into slavery who goes on to lead a revolt against plantation owners of a Caribbean colony would in its bare plot lines carry some sort of abolitionist critique of British colonial practices.³ In fact, the Behn version narrative of a slave revolt does lend itself to a superficially anti-slavery reading. Oroonoko's process of self-awakening to his condition as a slave leads directly to his rebellion. For most of his stay in Surinam, Oroonoko occupies himself with the white, mainly female, colonists while awaiting the royally appointed Lord Governor's arrival. Aphra Behn inserts herself into the text as the narrator at the center of Oroonoko's group of female, colonial supporters. Throughout the much of the novel, the prince spends his time freely in the company of these sympathetic women, while occasionally helping the colonists by mediating treaties with the native Caribs. His compliancy is due largely in part to the narrator and her compatriots' insistence that his freedom will be restored once the royally appointed Governor arrives to take power from the provisional government.

Oroonoko's freedom – and not that of the common slaves – is the concern of Behn's narrator persona.

The Governor's drowning in a hurricane, along with the introduction of Oroonoko's unborn child, shift the dynamics of the situation. During this time the narrator and her companions had "diverted" Oroonoko from any thoughts of rebellion (85); but, the European women's power over him wanes when his wife Imoinda begins to use her pregnancy to assert her authority. Doing "nothing but Sigh and Weep" (85), she urges her husband to consider the fate of their future children, who will belong to the plantation owners and not to them. Presenting simply waiting for colonial justice or buying their freedom as impossible, she argues that "if it were so hard to gain the Liberty of Two, 'twou'd be more difficult to get it that for Three" (85). By becoming more aggressive, Imoinda persuades him to cease viewing himself as a royal accidentally turned slave, and instead to view himself as, in the terms of historian Orlando Patterson, "socially dead" and left with no other option but revolt. In *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative History*, Patterson differentiates chattel slavery from other forms of domination by focusing on how the slave is a "socially dead person" lacking any "'rights' or claims of birth." One of the chief features of this is "natal alienation": "not only was the slave denied all claims on, and obligations to, his parents and living blood relations but, by extension, all such claims and obligations on his remote ancestors and on his descendants. He was truly genealogically isolated"(5). Applied to Oroonoko, slavery should have erased his claims to a royal past as well as his future progeny. No longer a king, he should in theory be like the other slaves; however, in this chapter, I will show how Behn's presentation of slavery does not fit this anti-slavery model. Instead of

Oroonoko's revolt acting as a sign of awakening to the social realities of his position as a plantocracy slave, it justifies the enslavement of the common African slaves further distancing the prince from his countrymen.

Continuing this potentially abolitionist reading, Oroonoko's next step toward self-realization involves examining the condition of the other slaves – those not lucky enough to spend their days being distracted by the Behn-like narrator's stories. With pity, he begins “counting up their Toyls and Sufferings, under such Loads, Burdens, and Drudgeries, as were fitter for Beasts than Men; Senseless Brutes than Humane Souls” and after recognizing the moral ills of the situation, Oroonoko progresses to the stage of inciting them to rebel. He informs them that “they had lost the Divine Quality of Men, and were become insensible Asses, fit only to bear; nay worse” (86). In his speech, he appears to specifically show why chattel slavery in the Caribbean is worse than the enslavement of war prisoners in Africa:

And why, said he, my dear Friends and Fellow-sufferers, shou'd we be Slaves to an unknown People? Have they Vanquish'd us Nobly in Fight? . . . [being captured in war] wou'd not anger a Noble Heart . . . but we are Bought and Sold like Apes, or Monkeys to be the Sport of Women, Fools and Cowards; and the Support of Rogues, Runagades, that have abandon'd their own Countries, for Rapin, Murders, Thefts and Villaines.
(86)

Here, his speech seems to directly attack the institution of slavery in the colonies: in war, there exists an understanding that defeat leads to temporary slavery, but it does not involve the base labor they experience here nor does this “noble” form of bondage dehumanize its subjects. In chattel slavery, they are no longer people but commodities in the colonial market bought like animals to labor under colonists unfit for European society. The plantation owners are not representative of European society; instead, they

represent the worst elements of society: those that Behn's English readers should wish to disassociate themselves with by not supporting either colonial products - such as exotic luxuries like the pets mentioned – or the institution of slavery that supports it.

However, this potentially anti-slavery reading is undercut not only by the narrative as a whole but this scene and the events that directly follow it. Oroonoko's ability to observe his fellow slaves actually aligns him with the colonists. As it is Sunday, the white inhabitants of Surinam that he normally socializes with are "overtaken in Drink" during their day off, as are the indentured servants who usually spy on Oroonoko (85). As an educated slave accustomed to being in power along with his apparent lack of assigned labor to perform, Oroonoko is seen as a threat to the slavers, planters and provisional government from his time on the slave ship until his death. The only ones working are the slaves, making Oroonoko's leisure as an outside observer more acute. Another sign of his alienation from the other slaves lies in his uncontested statement that "they had lost the Divine Quality of Men" (86). In his eyes, they have allowed slavery to dehumanize them, while he only possesses the vision necessary to reveal and correct their position.

Their passivity is further emphasized by their hesitancy to follow him; while constantly bowing and deferring to him as their superior, they express concern that a rebellion would endanger their wives and children. Throughout their dialogue, it is clear that the slaves and Oroonoko represent two very different perspectives. The former see the dangers presented by rebellion as making them potentially even more vulnerable to the violent reprimands of their owners. Oroonoko, on the other hand, has not experienced the punishments and tortures set aside each week for "Black *Friday*" (86) nor does he

view himself as a slave leader. He still views himself as a royal general leading an army: they will follow the example of “one *Hannibal* a great Captain, [who] had Cut his Way through Mountains of solid Rocks” and “Plant a New Colony, and Defend it by their Valour” until they can size a ship to their countries of origin or live as his subjects in Coramantien. (87). This mismatched pairing of passive slaves and martial prince leads to the revolt's failure. Rather than mirroring the discipline of a Carthaginian army, the slaves quickly surrender: while attacking the English “observ'd no Order . . . and the Women and Children . . . being of Cowardly Dispositions, and hearing the *English* cry out, *Yield and Live, Yield and Live, Yield and be Pardon'd*” persuade their husbands to betray their leader (89). Despite their coming from the same part of the world as he, Oroonoko finds their cowardice culturally alien and chastises himself for ever grouping himself with them: “he was asham'd of what he had done, in endeavoring to make those Free, who were by Nature Slaves, poor wretched Rogues, fit to be us'd as *Christians* Tools” (90). Not only do their actions distance them from Oroonoko, but they also justify slavery in general by presenting the common Africans as naturally slaves. Within the noble race ideology, Oroonoko should be free because he possesses an innate need for freedom that the common slaves lack. By clearly differentiating Oroonoko from the mass of slaves, Behn does not present an argument against slavery. Instead, it becomes clear that what the text finds fault with is not slavery but the enslavement of this royal slave in particular.

Further countering the abolitionist argument is the relatively benign depiction Behn gives of life in Surinam. Mr. Trefry, for example, is an ideal colonial slave master. He treats Oroonoko as a guest rather than a slave since he has promised to return the prince to his country. On his plantation, the narrative does not observe any abuse of

power. Unlike the colonial “*Rogues . . . that have abandon’d their own Countries, for Rapin . . . and Villaines*” that Oroonoko later decries (86), Trefry poses no physical or sexual threat to his slaves, as is demonstrated by his chaste love for Imoinda. Having been bought earlier and renamed Clemene, Imoinda has bewitched him as “all the white Beautys he had seen, never charm’d him” (70), but he gallantly recognizes Oroonoko’s prior claim to her and is “not little satisfied, that Heaven was so kind to the *Prince*, as to sweeten his fortunes by so lucky an Accident” (72). This view of a benevolent plantation owner can be found in other works by Behn. For example, a year before *Oroonoko*’s publication, her poem “To the Most Illustrious Prince CHRISTOPHER DUKE OF ALBEMARLE, ON HIS VOYAGE TO HIS GOVERNMENT of *JAMACIA*,” she praises the young colonist for choosing to “more Renown His Name, / And still maintain aloft His spreading Fame” (lines 9-10) over “the Confinement of a Home-Retreat” before “soft Repose, that Court-Disease,/ Infectious to the Great and Young,/ Subdu’d His Martial Mind to Ease” (12, 13-15). The colonies provides royal youths the chance to obtain the martial greatness their titles deserve. Ideally, Behn sees the colonies as a means of encouraging noble traits among the aristocracy.

Interestingly, the poem also draws a favorable comparison between the Prince Christopher and Caesar, which also happens to be the name Oroonoko is given in Surinam.⁴ The critique the novel makes is not against colonization and slavery, but against its mismanagement. Behn’s text occurs before the abolitionist movement truly gained momentum. In 1688, the main debate at hand was over monarchical rights and representative government.⁵ After the collapse of the Commonwealth and Protectorate, Charles II restored the monarchy in 1660 and attempted to preserve a balance between his

preserving divine authority as king while keeping the parliament and populace satisfied. Fearing a return to Catholicism as the national religion, Parliament attempted to pass a bill forbidding any Catholic from succeeding to the throne, which would have presented his openly Catholic brother, James II, from becoming king. Charles blocked this. Upon his death in 1685, however, James, like their father, chose to rule without Parliament and promote the Roman Catholic religion. By the time Behn, a Stuart supporter,⁶ wrote *Oroonoko*, James' rule was severely threatened. I argue that Behn used the story of a royal slave to contest what she viewed as a barbarous representative government that threatened the noble race of divinely appointed kings.

Making History: Romantic Tropes of Natural Kings and Noble Savages

Behn introduces Oroonoko as set apart from the other slaves of Surinam, in fact apart from the majority of humanity, in order to make an argument for the divine rights of kings based on the universal rights of nobles found in romance. In order to link an African character to the nobles of romance, the novel must provide narrative cues to its readers that presents its hero as civilized; to accomplish this, the African kingdom of Coramantien is distanced from what English readers perceived as the undeveloped, savagery of pagan Africa and draw it closer to the North African, Islamic culture found in medieval romances.

Behn's narrative opens with an argument for the worthiness of her hero as a noble from a culture its readers would recognize as civilized. Like the heroes of romance, Oroonoko's story needs to be recorded because aristocrats are the proper subjects of history: Oroonoko is, to her, "deserving an immortal Fame" (35). In the narrative's preface, Behn addresses fellow Stuart supporter Lord Maitland and aligns the threat to the

current English king with the unfortunate royal slave. First she refers to the current political state in England in her praise of Maitland for serving his “Religion and Country”⁷ . . . [which] both want such Supporters . . . [with Maitland’s] noble Principles of Loyalty and Religion this Nation Sighs for” (35). For Behn, the nation is in a state of crisis and lacks heroes willing to defend country and faith – figures abundant in romance, especially medieval crusade and grail literature. The present does not live up, in her eyes, to the history offered in romance. Maitland, she contends, could be the figure the “Nation Sighs for,” and following this line of thought, she offers this story to him. She presents Oroonoko as “a Man Gallant enough to merit your [Maitland’s] Protection” if he had survived (97). In other words, Oroonoko represents a lost opportunity to defend the institutions she sees threatened – a hint that Maitland should not neglect to act when future opportunities occur. By having her opening letter progress from Maitland’s greatness to the threats to England to Oroonoko’s situation, Behn frames the narrative within English politics. With this in mind, her use of romance tropes serve to present Oroonoko not as a slave but as a member of a noble race, akin to the Stuarts. Oroonoko lacked an adequate champion to define his position as a king; Behn is urging Maitland and other Stuart supporters not to fail to champion their own embattled James II.

As the divinely appointed kings were threatened by the cry for a more representative form of government, Behn presents Oroonoko as an ideal romance ruler in a less than ideal age. Her choice to place this narrative in novel form rather than a play allows her to include details that clearly place her hero in the romance tradition, without producing a conventional romance; this evocation of the past is not emphasized in the plays, which instead incorporate the emerging trend of sentimentalism more and more

throughout the century.⁸ Using romance troupes, Behn aligns Oroonoko with the Stuart kings rather than the common slaves. She accomplishes this in three ways: first, by establishing him as a romance figure and member of a noble race; second, through his wife Imoinda's passive subjection of herself, representing an ideal body politic; last, by comparing Oroonoko's aptness as a leader with the barbarism of the provisional government.

As a Royalist, Behn perceived the loss of the Stuart line as a fall from lawful governance to mob rule. Basing her defense of Oroonoko and his Stuart counterpart in an older model of race found in the romance tradition, she critiques what she sees as an unfeeling, unrefined and unfit new government.⁹ This early model of race, which goes back as far as Classical Greece and continued through the Middle Ages, Renaissance up to the Restoration, divides peoples within a kingdom into two major groups: nobles and commoners. Writing at the end of seventeenth century, Behn employs the older genre of romance into the emerging form of the English novel. The common plot line for many romances closely resembles the *Oroonoko* narrative outlined in the introduction: young lovers, eligible to marry one another, are separated by some misadventure, forced to travel long distances, are sold into slavery where their lives and chastity are endangered, until they are reunited and restored to their rightful social. Behn turns to these past tropes as a political stance against the changes threatened by the anti-Stuart movement. By placing the right to rule based on the belief in a noble race in an idealized past, the novel conflates James' claim to the throne with a naturalized stability and any challenge to him as a sign of corruption in a deteriorating contemporary moment. The violation of the

noble race hierarchy represents in *Oroonoko* a rejection of a better, more orderly past that makes the royal slave's plight lamentable on a larger scale.

In her reading of *Oroonoko*, Laura Doyle locates the text in an ideological shift centering on which groups could claim the necessary qualities to rule. The older romance model held that the ruling aristocracies belonged to a different race than their subjects. As a noble race, they had claim to finer feelings, intelligence, and other qualities that made them innately more fit to rule the nation than a commoner. Historical roots of this division between king and subject, Doyle points out, lie in the fact of a past military victory: "originally these aristocracies were made up of the descendants of foreign warriors who had invaded and taken power" (Doyle 163). As a result, a tension emerges between races, which for England, pits noble Norman against the common Germanic Anglo-Saxon. This action is mirrored in Oroonoko's claim that slavery based on military conquest is an acceptable form of servitude as discussed earlier. To this reading I add that Behn's use of a medieval model of race is complicated by that era's interactions between Christian and Muslim Europeans. As discussed in the introduction, the medieval form focuses, for the most part, on the interactions of nobles across cultural and religious boundaries.

This romance view of Islam maintained its popularity into the Early Modern era and Restoration. Mirroring Behn's use of dual racial models, Shakespeare's narrative of a Moor's incorporation into a Christian society in the 1623 play *Othello* and Mme de La Fayette's presentation of inter-faith lovers in her 1670-1671 romance *Zaïde* both highlight the trop of a noble Muslim prince. Just as Oroonoko receives the seemingly contradictory title of Royal Slave, Othello is referred to as the "Moor of Venice,"

signifying his dual position as outsider and insider: he defends Venice from a foreign threat, yet at the same time is seen as foreign element himself, disrupting the domestic lives of those he serves. Othello falls in line with romance race theory in that his flaws and virtues transcend national differences to fit within a universal chivalric code. His eloquent wooing of Desdemona – as well as the councils listening to the description of the courtship – emphasizes his martial prowess and her reaction, like a romance heroine, responds to him with “a world of sighs” (1.3.158).¹⁰

Zaïde, which like Behn’s text references the romance tradition while juxtaposing it with a new cultural order, mixes military and amorous battles between Muslim and Christian characters; however, while the text presents favorably the occasional conversion of a Muslim character to Christianity, the two cultures are seen as equally admirable and share a common, noble race. In the case of *La Fayette*, the new order is less political and more stylistic. Like Behn, she uses romance conventions but subverts them: while Behn does this by having a representative government not recognize the old romance deference to nobility, *La Fayette* has characters misreading their situations by judging others by romance standards. For example, both Consalve and Zaïde disbelieve the other’s love for them because they assume an imaginary rival: first he believes she mourns a dead lover and then ignores the plentiful evidence that she does not love Alamir; meanwhile, she remains skeptical of his shows of affection and eventually imagines he still loves his ex lover, Nugna Bella. Nicholas D. Paige notes that “Everything in *Zayde* indicate that twists like these are the result of astonishingly canny reflection on the devices of romance, whose tropes the novel systematically subverts” (19). He argues that the text should be viewed as “a pastiche of romance” straddling the

transition from this old genre to the new one found in the novel: “all the elements of the old genre are there, and they are recognizable as such, but they no longer function as they once did” (21). Part of the “rise of the novel” theories that argue for a distinction between romance and the novel rely heavily on the image of the romance as static. If it is instead viewed as an evolving genre its continued growth alongside and within the novel becomes a more viable possibility.

Written contemporaneously with Behn’s *Oroonoko*, La Fayette’s romance demonstrates that the romance model of race continued past the medieval era, making it plausible that Behn’s readers would be able to recognize her use of it in mounting a defense of James II. In *Zaïde*, rank becomes a universal point of connection for nobles, even in the middle of a military conflict. When the hero Consalve rescues Zuléma, one of the Moorish commanders, from the excessive violence of his own soldiers, he happily finds his expectations of a shared noble culture are met: Zuléma, “this valiant man, perceiving that he could no longer defend himself, relinquished his sword with an air so noble and bold that Consalve could not doubt at all his worthiness of the great reputation he had acquired” (143).¹¹ Whereas his soldiers only saw an enemy who had killed many of their own men, Consalve recognizes him as a fellow noble through his actions and bearing. Zuléma also seems to relate to Consalve in a way he cannot with the lower order of Christian soldiers he encounters: with them, he seems willing to fight to the death, but with Consalve he graciously surrenders his sword, and at the end of the text, his daughter.

Similarly, in the text’s many examples of lovers, religion seems to matter less than the fact that the lovers share a similar rank. *Zaïde* is the product of a Christian/Muslim marriage, and while she spurns the advances of Alamir based on his

religion, her objections are less on the ground of theology and more on those of fidelity – she cannot bear the thought of being one of many wives (173). Further undermining the potential differences between Muslim and Christian nobles in the text, her companion Felime would gladly marry the Muslim prince and dies out of longing for him. The narrative ending presents the two religious groups as symbolically part of the same noble family. It is discovered that the Spanish Christian Consalve not only shares a close physical resemblance with the Prince of Fez, they are also first cousins. The last lines of the text emphasize the compatibility of the two sets of nobles as Consalve and Zaïde’s wedding is celebrated with “all the gallantry of the Moors and all the civility of Spain” (235).¹² This tradition of Muslim/Christian coexistence among the nobility provides Behn with a racial model that allows her to represent the plight of the Stuart kings through the suffering of an African slave.

Behn is able to present an African slave as part of this noble race through her use of tropes from oriental romance, despite his origins in a part of Africa not under the sway of an Islamic culture. Though still emergent, a more physiologically based conception of race did exist at the time and is present in Behn’s text; this alternative model is used to make Oroonoko appear more compatible with European codes of individual worth as well as pushing Behn’s defense of Stuart power. This tradition is reflected in the early scenes of the novel, set in Coramantien, which allows Behn to present an image of Africa that evokes the Islamic courts of medieval romance rather than its contemporary state as a Gold Coast slave trading system. While critics from the late eighteenth through the early twentieth-century praised Behn’s Surinam sections and debated their factuality, the foreign romance is not seen as adding anything useful to their reading. Charlotte E.

Morgan, for instance, condemned this first portion as a “combination of Restoration licentiousness and the luxuriousness of the pseudo-Oriental romances” that detracted from what she read as an abolitionist novel (qtd. Todd 117). I see these later interpretations of *Oroonoko* as evidence that Behn’s novel eventually came to be seen as an anti-slavery text, while its romance elements were dismissed as unnecessary distractions from the “true” point of the text.

In spite of these later readings, the use of romance forms an essential part of Behn’s defense of the House of Stuart. At the time (and arguably to the present day), a non-Islamic African civilization did not exist in the European imagination. As Natalie Zemon Davis points out, European sources tended to present the continent of Africa as undifferentiated by the many cultures it contained: “The land mass that for centuries in Europe was called Africa, in expansion of the ancient Roman province by that name, was rarely identified by a single place-name in the Arabic tradition” (126). Besides a few places such as Egypt, this presentation of Africa required the blurring and often the omission of its diversity. Even as new information was gained during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, older ideologies dating back to Antiquity continued to flourish; these racial theories reflected little knowledge of the continent of Africa, and were largely limited to North Africa and some of West Africa. In her analysis of the influences on and of Leo Africanus’ *De totius Africae descriptione*, Oumelbanine Zhiri argues that rather than falling away as new information surfaced, the old view of the majority of Africa as unknown and uncivilized persisted and emerged in new ways: “The recent knowledge [gained in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries] did not eliminate the old image, which survived in these texts with all their elements” (209).¹³ By viewing Oroonoko’s kingdom

through an orientalist lens, Behn makes a pagan, African culture feasible to her audiences by associating it with Islamic culture. Her text's emphasis on the cultural sophistication of Oroonoko's kingdom by interweaving Islamic imagery throughout creates a cultural equality between the protagonist and the Europeans of Surinam. Rather than belonging to the simple, innocent lifestyle of Surinam's native Caribs, the royal slave comes from a sophisticated culture aligned with Muslim culture.¹⁴ Whereas the natives are compared to Adam and Eve, innocent and without hierarchy or need for the rule of law,¹⁵ Oroonoko's native Coramantien represents an oriental civilization comparable to any in England. In his African kingdom filled with battles and court intrigues, Oroonoko is captured while inspecting a slave ship he helped to stock. Like a European monarch, the prince faces dangers not only to his person but also to his power to govern. Other elements such as the king's harem, citrus groves, and Persian terms such as Otan mark Coramantien as possessing a history intertwined with Europe's; it depicts this land as a developed nation, leaning on the orientalist notions of a highly cultured, even decadent world outside of Europe. By creating a version of African kingdom with Islamic overtones, the text separates Oroonoko from other African slaves and inserts him into nostalgia for romantic tropes of nobility.

By drawing the idea of a race of nobles that transcends geographic and religious differences, Behn uses romance motifs to turn the story of the enslaved African prince into critique of anti-Stuart movements. As an era of absolute rule by divine right was giving way to more contractual, democratic institutions, the weakening of the crown also lent itself to a weakening of the aristocracy's claims of innate nobility as the basis of its right to rule. In response, *Oroonoko* presents ideas of race that transcend nations,

presenting a noble race that alone can control the barbaric tendencies in all commoners, particularly the English. The title of Royal Slave embodies this notion: Oroonoko's kingship is innate within him, regardless of status, because he comes from a noble race. His position as a king is as immutable as his jet-black skin.

The narrator argues that unlike common slaves, Oroonoko clearly belongs to a different stock by aligning him more with European nobles than with the Surinam's Africans, allowing the parallels between his fate and that of the Stuart kings to emerge. He is, for all intents and purposes, a European aristocrat. He behaves "in all Points . . . as if his Education had been in some *European Court*" (43). The text intertwines this demonstration of his worthiness as ruler with a discussion of England's failure to follow its own kings. The fact that the Royal Slave "had heard of the late Civil Wars in *England*, and the deplorable Death of our great Monarch [Charles I]" serves two purposes (43). It shows his intellectual equality to his Western counterparts, setting him up as true noble, while reminding the reader that the common English mob had rejected their own natural rulers of the House of Stuart. The "late king" becomes a way of describing the Royal Slave as well as foreshadowing Oroonoko's own violent death (30).¹⁶

The two men are linked by their rank as nobles: Oroonoko's case is tragic not because slavery is morally wrong, but because his nobility is obvious and should make him untouchable. When an English captain captures Oroonoko, the narrative presents his enslavement as different from the masses of slaves he had sold to this slave trader. Instead, the past slave dealings demonstrate a bond of trust that the captain is criticized for violating. He is ungrateful "for the Favour and Esteem" Oroonoko has shown him. The captain's duplicity is shown by the difference between his outward and inward

appearances: “the Captain seem’d to take as a very great Honour” all the luxuries and attention the prince gave him, but internally, he plotted to enslave his host. The narrator sarcastically comments that “Some have commended this Act, as brave, in the Captain” (64), while her emphasis on the trust Oroonoko placed in him shows the event as treacherous and cowardly as the Captain made sure to separate the prince from his companions and get him drunk. In addition, the characters on the ship agree that the act of imprisoning Oroonoko is starkly different from that of the other slaves: unlike the rest of the cargo, Oroonoko is kept under tight security, because “Valour [was] natural to him” as a prince (64). Implied is the idea that the other slaves lack this valor and ultimately do not see their enslavement as a great offense. Oroonoko’s situation on the ship poses a unique problem because he is naturally a king, not a slave and lives by a different set of rules.

Further separating him from the slaves, the Royal Slave’s body is invested with symbolic value. Like a true romance hero, his nobility is seen in his outward appearance. The European nobility he shows through his education also manifests through his body. Not only does he know Roman history, his “Nose was rising and *Roman*, instead of *African* and flat” (43). While this does point to a tradition of Eurocentric racism that will emerge in later justifications of nineteenth-century colonial rule, this descriptions also serves an alternative purpose of linking him to a literary tradition that extends back to the Classical era.¹⁷ Differentiating him racially from the common slaves that follow him serves to show that he is from a noble race. While his subjects’ skins are “of that brown, rusty Black,” his is “a perfect Ebony, or polish’d Jett” (43). His ideal of blackness complements European aristocratic ideals of whiteness. The comparison between his

skin color and a polished stone objectifies him, making him seem more like the idea of a body than one in reality. This treatment of Oroonoko continues as his idealization comes through his aestheticization. That “the most famous Statuary cou'd not form the Figure of a Man more admirably turn'd from head to Foot” draws attention to his place as an aesthetic object (43). As an object of art, Oroonoko distinguishes himself as a true ruler. A King is a permanent entity that manifests itself in the bodies of a noble line of men. Oroonoko and the Stuarts' bodies transcend the biological and enter the realm of the symbolic. They are objects that embody the idea of king, encompassing nation, law and natural rule. As in romance, his outward appearance represents his inward virtues, and as a king, he serves both as a man and a divinely appointed symbol. Oroonoko's status as a natural sovereign forms one of the chief changes made by the stage adaptations as Southerne, Hawkesworth, and Ferriar attempted to make the story more in step with their current political moments.

In Behn's novel, Oroonoko's body transcends the corporal, creating a connection between vision and truth. A royal body demonstrates visibly his superiority to others through its beauty and its gaze forces submission from its objects. His appearance inspires loyalty in the other slaves, his natural subjects. Even without his princely robes, the “Royal Youth appear'd in spight [sic] of the Slave, and People cou'd not help treating him after a different manner, without designing it” (68). Because kingship is understood as an innate racial trait, Oroonoko can never appear as anything other than the noble he is; consequently, common races instinctually respond to him. Keeping with the romance tradition, his very gaze carries power. Firstly, it naturalizes his ability to create order: though bound, he shames the slave ship captain “with a Look all fierce and disdainful,

unbraiding him with Eyes, that forc'd Blushes from his guilty Cheeks" (67). His power to pass judgment is defined in bodily terms: the gaze from his noble form forces the captain's body into submission through the power of the blush. The strength of his gaze attaches his power directly to his body, making his position as a monarch a natural part of him.

His relationship with Imoinda further establishes his position as a romance hero. His gaze plays on the sensibility of romance, in which the feelings of the noble race are refined to such an extent that they can communicate their heart without the mediation of language. His ability to tell Imoinda he loves her through his eyes with "that silent Language of new-born Love" demonstrates how his nobility manifests itself on his body (45).¹⁸ What he is (including how he feels) is visible to all. This trait directly contrasts the duplicity of ignoble characters such as the English captain and later, the provisional government. His love, like his nobility, defines him and is integrated into his entire being. Neither Oroonoko, nor any other king, can cease being noble and therefore even if betrayed by foreign or domestic factions, his rightful place as a ruler cannot be challenged.

Imoinda as Ideal Subject

Behn's use of the concepts of noble races and divine right carries the implication that enslavement is the natural state of those without the authority of rank. The idea of nobles and commoners extends into a more intricate alignment of power. While all nobles share certain traits and rights, they are not equal in practice. A king commanded the loyalty of lesser nobles, just as medieval romance knights obey their monarchs. This chain of being is further nuanced by differences between sexes, with women

subordinated to the men of their class such as their husbands and male guardians. Behn complements her notion of the perfect king with the ideal subject – one that cannot rebel.

The initial love triangle between Oroonoko, his grandfather and Imoinda creates a parallel system by which to judge the provisional government. The conflict takes place within and ideally should be resolved by the old system of kingship where the monarch stands in for the divine. As in romance narratives, Imoinda owes her complete loyalty to the monarch. When Oroonoko's grandfather sends her the Royal Veil signaling her induction into his harem, she goes instantly despite her secret marriage because "Delays in these Cases are dangerous, and Pleading worse then Treason" (47). After obeying this decree, her attempts to avoid violating her marriage vows by entering the harem emphasizes her position as a subject: "she believ'd she shou'd be the Occasion of making him commit a great Sin, if she did not reveal her State and Condition, and tell him, she was anothers, and cou'd not be happy to be his" (47).

Within her argument, the king needs remain central and Imoinda remains passive: she is not a person, but an "Occasion" or circumstance that could cause the king to commit a harmful act. Also, her own desire is supplanted: that she "cou'd not be happy to be his" does not refer to her own preference in men, but to her belief, that if she was not already owned, she would obediently become his property. However, youth and virility are privileged over old age, so once the king cannot exert his power – conjugal rights – over Imoinda, he has lost his authority as a king.¹⁹ In this story, Imoinda remains a passive test of kingship: in his failure to rule her sexually, the king loses his right to rule and ideally Oroonoko should take his rightful place as king and husband. Like the power

of Surinam's provisional government, the king's continued insistence on his right to Imoinda – therefore to the throne – signals a break the natural order of rule.

This attitude continues in Surinam, as she is the “Occasion” that prompts Oroonoko's rebellion without being an active agent. The sight of her crying over their unborn child's future slavery inspires Oroonoko to act on her behalf; however, Imoinda never directly tells him to rebel nor does she initiate any acts of rebellion. Instead she does “nothing but Sigh and Weep” occasionally mentioning that “if it were so hard to gain the Liberty of Two, ‘twou'd be more difficult to get that for Three” (85). Her potential as a source of an anti-slavery or anti-colonial critique is hindered by her focus only on the captivity of her family, not the general condition of slavery. Her position is further undermined by failure of the rebellion Oroonoko leads because of her passive urgings. Taking it a step further, by listening to his wife over the narrator, Oroonoko enters a politically limited role: by siding with the common slaves against the Europeans, he loses his ability to negotiate for the freedom of his family alone. The provisional government, initially wary of his authority, gains the evidence they need to show he holds too much influence over the other slaves. His death becomes due to his misplaced alliance with the common slaves instead of the more noble members of the colony. In this way, the possibility of an anti-slavery position for Imoinda becomes Oroonoko's downfall.

Instead of a space of resistance to the colonial plantocracy, Imoinda functions on the whole more as a model for subjecthood. Her valor in battle and willing acceptance of death reinforce her idealized subjection to her husband. When the common slaves abandon the battle, she and one other slave²⁰ stay with him out of their devotion to their

leader. Her refusal to abandon her husband can be connected to Behn's preface expressing the need for people not to turn against the natural rulers of England – the Stuart kings and Roman Catholic Church. In the end, when Imoinda faces slavery and rape, her death continues her pattern of obedience to her lord and husband. While she accepts the impossibility of their situation and desires death, she does not possess the agency to either kill herself or initiate the subject with Oroonoko, two acts of which, in the stage versions, she will be capable. Instead, she waits until he informs “her his Design first of Killing her, and then his Enemies, and next himself” (95); her eager acceptance where she is “faster pleading for Death than he was to propose it” implies that this is not a new thought to her, but that she has patiently waited for him to address the situation or that she obeys him instantaneously. Without him, her husband and ruler, Imoinda argues, she would be unprotected against his enemies, since she is not able to act in her own defense.

As her husband-king, Oroonoko not only decides her fate, but since she is his subject, she is also his property and must be defended. The idea of husbands acting as kings and kings acting as divine representatives is mirrored in her joyful acceptance that he will kill her: “while Tears trickl'd down his Cheeks, hers were Smiling with Joy she shou'd dye by so noble a Hand . . . for Wives have a respect for their Husbands equal to what other People pay to a Deity” (95). As his subject, she cannot exist without his rule, so she gladly welcomes death. By investing him with a godlike authority, Behn presents Oroonoko as more than a husband, but a divinely appointed ruler. While she does become the “Occasion” that leads to his expulsion from Coramantien and his alliance with the common slaves, Imoinda also offers a model of ideal subjecthood in the novel's defense

of the Stuarts. Together, she and Oroonoko embody a vision of society where divine right and absolute rule are answered by unquestioning loyalty and obedience.

Failures of Representative Government

The colonial situation in Surinam represents a threat to the natural order of rule established in Coramantien. The problems of the African court scenes can be rectified within the system. Following the format of the romance, Oroonoko remains the rightful heir to the throne even if he must await his grandfather's death. The provisional government thwarts this destiny in two ways. First, it literally prevents him from returning, as it is assumed the royally appointed Governor would have restored his liberty instead of executing him. Second, it menaces the system of noble rule in general by placing commoners in power over the colony. The corruption of the Coramantien throne is due only to an old king outliving his usefulness as a bodily representation of the state; the provisional government poses the possibility of entirely overturning the system of nobles ruling by divine right.

Behn voices her opposition to this possibility by repeatedly contrasting Oroonoko's natural aptitude as a leader in Surinam against the barbarism and corruption of the provisional government. Like the stability imagined in the arrival of the Surinam Governor, Oroonoko represents the possibility for lawful rule that is thwarted by an unnatural and barbaric mob. Lord Willoughby, the crown appointed Governor, dies in a violent hurricane; Oroonoko falls to an equally violent force, populist politics. Whereas in the natural hierarchy the commoners see the aestheticization of their noble ruler's body as right of the crown's power, the unruly mob governing Surinam sees only its monetary and not its symbolic value. Since power is justified by the need for a noble race to control

the common masses, the provisional government at Surinam represents a rejection of law and order in favor of uncontrolled mob rule. In Elliot Visconsi's reading of *Oroonoko*, the text illustrates Behn's position that the English revolutions give evidence "of a barbarous national character [among the commoners] which prefers violence and personal independence to the mercy and moral prudence of a moral government" (Visconsi 673). The members of the governing council embody the barbaric elements, which need to be suppressed through the rule of the noble Norman race. The council's unfitness is shown through its members: it consists "of such notorious Villains as *Newgate* never transported and possibly originally were such, who understood neither the Laws of *God* or *Man*" (93). These men do not represent order, but are the criminals that undermine it. Comparing them to criminals also highlights the unlawfulness of their rule. Visconsi's argument that Behn sees the general populace as uncivilized becomes explicit in reference to her description of Banister, the council member sent out to capture Oroonoko: he is "a wild *Irish* Man, and one of the council; a Fellow of absolute Barbarity, and fit to execute any Villainy" (99). Epitomizing the text's idea of a barbarous common race, Banister's position as Irishman and villain become interchangeable signs of his unfitness to hold power. Instead of virtue, the council practice vice, which is allowed in a culture that values the wealth of a common colonist over the noble birth of a true king. For Behn, those who call for a more representative government and the removal or limitation of the monarchy are arguing for "the ignorant democratic tyranny of the common people" (Visconsi 676).

As the text plays itself out, Surinam – like England -- engages in a power struggle between nobles and commoners. In the absence of the royally appointed Governor of the

colony, the barbarism kept down by noble rule emerges and seizes control. Oroonoko's natural ability to rule, whether leading a rebellion or brokering peace between the Indians and English colonists, contrasts the blood-thirsty policies of Surinam's governing council. In the text, they are unfit to rule because they lack the qualities found in the noble races. They are duplicitous like the English ship captain who captures Oroonoko: the provisional Governor offers pardon in exchange for surrender, and then withdraws it. Instead, he chooses to torture the rebel leader, Oroonoko. Behn contrasts the non-appointed government with the noble Oroonoko by showing the latter's ability to pass judgment, even when denied the power to punish: Oroonoko "was not perceiv'd to make any Mone [sic], or alter his Face, only to roul his Eyes on the Faithless *Governor*, and those he believ'd Guilty . . . he pronounced a Woe and Revenge form his Eyes, that darted Fire, that 'twas at once both Awful and Terrible to behold" (91). Like his arrival in Surinam where his gaze caused the guilty to blush, Oroonoko maintains his position of authority even while being punished.²¹ This consistency underlines the provisional Governor's untrustworthiness as a leader: the king's word is law, but this man's word could not be relied upon. Whereas before the rebellion Oroonoko had helped bring order to the colony, the mismanagement of the provisional government leads to a slave revolt, an execution and eventually to such disarray that the colony is lost to the Dutch in 1667.

The political agenda of Behn's novel consists of defending the monarchical rights of James II by turning towards the literary past. Her use of tropes from romances, especially the medieval representations of Islam, not only allows the African prince Oroonoko to become interchangeable with the Stuart kings but it also reinforces an older model of race that divides people by rank. By extension, the belief in a noble race

innately fit to rule justifies the ideology of colonialism. The failure of Surinam is due to the wrong race of people holding power. Under a natural king such as Oroonoko or James II, the text argues that national and colonial holdings would not be lost to foreign interests.

Oroonoko after Behn

Dying in 1689, Aphra Behn could not face any repercussions for her political actions when James II was ousted and replaced by the joint rule of his Protestant daughter Mary and Holland's William of Orange. The ascension of the House of Hanover in 1714 fatally weakened the power of the crown. Accepting the Parliament's Declaration of Rights (later the Bill of Rights),²² which was designed to ensure Parliament could function free from royal interference, represented a radical shift from the idea of divine right or a noble race. Ostensibly, this new government was designed around the protection of individual liberties regardless of rank. One of the major proponents of this new constitutional monarchy, John Locke, argued in his *Two Treatises of Government*,²³ directly against the divine authority of kings. Locke holds that an individual (if he is a European, property-owning males) possesses the right to protect his life, liberty and property; if these rights were violated, these free subjects would be justified in dissolving the government in power. This shift presented all men as essentially equal, and no longer divided between nobles and commoners. This idea of universal humanity (though still defined as European men) would become one of the major tenets of the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century. However, though Locke considered the loss of these rights as slavery and the worst state for man, he also participated in the Royal Africa Company and did not see the enslavement of Africans as contradictory to his political arguments.

Servants are divided into two categories: those who “gives the Master but a Temporary Power over him . . . no greater than is contained in the Contract between ‘em” in exchange for wages and those “which by a particular name we call *Slaves*²⁴ . . . [who] by Right of Nature subjected to the Absolute Dominion and Arbitrary Power of their Masters ” (365-366). Their loss of liberty is justified because they are “not escapable of any Property, [and] cannot by the state be considered as any part of *Civil Society*” (366). In other words, membership as a free member of society requires the ability to own property; those who cannot accomplish this – unable to gain the status of free subjects – become the commodities of those who can. A slave then functions as a means of increasing the state’s wealth: he is the property of freemen. Within this context, Oroonoko reemerges on the post-1688 English stage neither as a defense of absolute monarchy nor as a condemnation of slavery, but as an unjust reversal of fortunes for a free property owning subject. The universalism of the romance racial model that linked a noble oriental Africa to Europe is supplanted by a different but still limited view of universal manhood: rather than linking Oroonoko to the Stuart kings through romance, Southerne connects the hero to property owning citizens behind the 1688 coup, transforming the Royal Slave into the enslaved property owner in need of liberation from a corrupt government.

Playwright Thomas Southerne offered the first stage adaptation of Behn’s *Oroonoko* in 1696, and it reflected the changes brought about by the Revolution. Behn’s pro-monarchy message lent itself to its pro-slavery position: nobles naturally ruled and commoners naturally belonged to the nobles, a hierarchy that included kings and subjects, husbands and wives, plantation owners and slaves. After the fall of James II, this political

message needed to be subdued. Southerne removed the pro-monarchy aspects – his Oroonoko views himself more as a part of a universal humanity, while still maintaining his noble heritage. Just as the revolution’s leading apologist, Locke, condemned the enslavement of freemen but endorsed African enslavement, the play treats slavery as both a reality and an abstract concept. Slavery is deemed immoral when it involves those the text views as free subjects such as Oroonoko and Southerne’s additions the Welldon sisters. This adaptation generalizes slavery into an ambiguous condition affecting women and lovers in a more negative way than the common African slaves. However, by removing the pro-monarchy stance that justified slavery in Behn, Southerne’s set the ground work for the increasingly abolitionist reading future adaptations provided as the eighteenth century progressed.

In explaining his motivations for adapting the narrative, Southerne praised Behn as a writer and remained mute on her politics: “She had a great Command of the Stage; and I have often wonder’d that she would bury her Favourite Hero in a *Novel*, when she might have reviv’d him in the *Scene*” (Preface 16-19). However, Behn’s choice of the novel facilitates her Tory message. The unspoken power his royal body, for example, conveys becomes obscured in a stage adaptation: his fierce gaze, finely etched jet-black skin, roman nose and their significance become lost when transferred to a white actor in blackface. The Europeanization would be there but in a different way. In place of Behn’s black man who naturally lends himself to artificial values, the audience would be more aware of the artifice. For the plays, it would not be that the character had a roman nose but that the white actor playing him did. One could argue that blackface would draw

more attention to the hero's racial difference, since the man portraying him must resort to cork in order to bridge the gap between English and African.

Mediation through stage directions and dialogue is needed to convey these elements. Oroonoko must now explain the connection between the reactions of his captors to his appearance. Responding to the honest planter Blanford – Trefry's counterpart in the play – questioning why the other Planters stare at the prince, he declares: "Let 'em stare on. / . . . let the guilty blush" (I.ii.240-242). In the novel, the unspoken authority is part of the racial ideology where authority is visible on the body; in the play, the need for this speech shifts the scene's emphasis from Oroonoko's body to the planters' actions. Their guilty blush comes from their knowledge of their own immorality, a fault originating not from their rank as commoners but from their inhumanity toward their fellow man.

With its universalistic leanings, Southerne's play does not present the prince's enslavement as wrong because of his royalty but because it has deprived him of his natural liberty as a property owner. Without critiquing the colonial system as a whole, this Oroonoko repudiates much of his noble rights in favor a less hierarchal view of the world. For example, Behn chooses for Oroonoko to express surprise that a common slave could incite romantic sensibilities in anyone: "how they came to be so Unhappy, as to be all Undone for one fair *Slave*?" (70). However, in the Southerne version, Oroonoko argues that noble virtues can exist in anyone regardless of rank: "What though she be a slave, / She may deserve him [the Lieutenant Governor]" (II.ii.124-125). Here, worthiness and respect are based on the individual and not on her position in society. By presenting individual slaves as potentially carrying laudable traits, Southerne takes the

story of Oroonoko away from its pro-monarchy roots towards an idea of humanity not naturally divided into aristocrats and commoners.

Reining in Unruly Women

Southerne begins to distance the story of Oroonoko from its original author in the Prologue, which looks at conflicts between governments, not classes. Replacing Behn's prefatory remarks on the threats to Stuart power, Southerne places emphasis on the recent conflict between England and France. The past internal struggle is projected onto an external one. Southerne further deflects from the previous text's political concerns by turning the war into an allegory for the much more mundane competition between theaters, referring to their vying for audience patronage as "hostile times [between] two neighboring states" (1). The Civil War and multiple dethronements of kings over the past sixty years is replaced by the image of a unified country whose only domestic problems appear to be the surplus of single women found in the new comic plot line.

Continuing this pattern of removing Behn from the story, her narrator persona is replaced by the comic plot's husband-hunting English women. The Welldon sisters and the Widow Lackitt are all outspoken women eventually subdued by marriage. In place of Behn's Moorish kingdom beginning the narrative, Southerne's play opens on a ship as Lucy Welldon asks her cross-dressed sister Charlotte, "What will this comet to? What can it end in? You have/persuaded me to leave dear England, and dearer London, / the place of the world most worth living in, to follow you a-husband-hunting into America" (I.i.1-4). By beginning with their plot and not introducing Oroonoko until the end of the first act, Southerne radically shifts the story away from Behn's preoccupation with maintaining hierarchal order. Without depicting the African episodes, the play is no

longer about an older order represented by the romanticized Coramantien with a new one represented by the provisional government of Surinam.²⁵ Instead, the two principal places become England as center of all civilization and Surinam as a green space like Shakespeare's forest in *Midsummer's Night Dream* where the plot's disorder eventually leads to a new, better organization. At the end of the play, Oroonoko's death is presented as unfortunate but due in part to his own complicity as a slave trader; the women, on the other hand, are "all agreed and all provided for" (V.i.159-160). They represent a new, better order than emerges for Surinam out of the disordered inversions of the play.

The comic narrative adds a positive foil to each of the Royal Slave's predicaments: while reflecting many of Oroonoko's experiences, the women emerge unscathed due to their ability to function in the inverted world of Surinam. For instance, both experience an inversion of circumstances as they arrive on ships as commodities. Oroonoko has been transformed from a slave trading noble to a chattel slave; the need for a husband has transformed the women into commodities "like the rich silks; they are out of fashion a great while/ before they wear out" (I.i.24-25). To increase their value on the marriage market, they travel to a place where they are not in surplus like London; in Surinam, their labor is needed, so England sends these "decaying beauties/ for breeders into the country to make room for new/ faces to appear" (I.i.44-46). The fates of the Welldons and Oroonoko continue running parallel to one another as they simultaneously reject the slave ship captain and the planters involvement in the slave trade as immoral (I.ii.188-206); and both find a means to undo the inversions that run through both plots.

By killing himself and the Lieutenant Governor, Oroonoko sets aright his contradictory position as a both royal and slave, property owner turned property. As a

prisoner after the revolt, Oroonoko has not yet reentered his state of slavery. Finding him in chains as punishment, his English allies free him and from then until the end of the play Oroonoko does not possess a set position in society. He is no longer a rebel leader, nor is he a slave. A man free of any social contract, he enters what Locke refers to as a State of War. Whereas earlier he awaited the civil arbitration that the true Governor would bring, now he acts on his natural right to kill those who wish to deprive him of his freedom. According to Locke, “he that makes an *attempt to enslave* me, . . . therefore it is Lawful for me to treat him, as one who has put *himself into a State of War* with me, *i.e.* kill him if I can” (320-321). Through violence of the play’s ending, Oroonoko avoids his own re-enslavement and avenges the government’s abuses of power by killing the Lieutenant Governor and then himself. As he dies, he expresses his satisfaction with this resolution, judging that it “’Tis as it should be now” (V.v.302). He has defended himself not as a king, but as a free man.

Whereas Behn presents Oroonoko’s death as the fault of a barbarous provisional government, Southerne’s message becomes more ambiguous. That Oroonoko dies free in order to preserve his freedom is clear, but the play suggests the possibility of his demise being, if not a result of, at least ironically linked to, his involvement in the slave trade. Instead of passive slaves needing him to incite them, Oroonoko’s own proslavery views are challenged by his former slave turned companion, Aboan. Responding to the prince’s justification of slavery as “an honest way of trade” where the “load [is] so light, so little to be felt” (III.ii.110, 116), Aboan must educate him about the “bloody cruelties” of slavery and remind him that even though Blanford did not treat him like a slave, his children would still legally be slaves (123). Oroonoko’s own complicity in the cruelties

of Surinam makes his death a necessary resolution to the play. His unjust enslavement is avenged by his killing the Lieutenant Governor, while his past as a royal slave trader is atoned for by his suicide. This is the reading future adaptations would highlight as England's plantation holdings lost public favor. For Southerne, it is the inversion of roles carried over from Behn that places his enslavement in a special category. By retaining the novel's stance that the revolt fails because the other insurgents are naturally slaves,²⁶ this play does not take a stance against either slavery or against the colonial system.

Also restoring order to inverted roles, the highly independent women from the comic plot are reinscribed into the traditional social order through marriage without critiquing the social order they briefly rebel against. Successfully arranging her sister's marriage to the Widow Lackitt's son Daniel and tricking the widow into marrying her admirer,²⁷ Charlotte puts away her breeches and independence in favor of petticoats and subordination. She changes from Stanmore's "old friend in breeches that was and now your humble servant in petticoats" (V.i.44-45). While the phrase "your humble servant" was a common form of address even between social equals, in this context it serves to underscore how Charlotte willingly gives up the freedom she's enjoyed throughout the play in favor of a heteronormative ending. In *The Limits of the Human*, Felicity A. Nussbaum sees this reining in of women as a potential critique of Behn as both for her own independence: "In the final act Charlotte Welldon reveals that Stanmore 'has persuaded me into a woman again' (V.i). Charlotte, once an 'arrant woman' like Behn (V.i), rejoins the feminine sphere by dressing in petticoats, promising to marry Stanmore and preserving the play's other romantic relationship by becoming Oroonoko's go-between to Imoinda" (174). Giving up her breeches undermines the potential political

critique of her plot. The early acts consist of an inversion of sexual power where Charlotte possesses both economic and martial control. In the last acts, Charlotte no longer performs as the center of her own plot, one that takes up almost half of the play, and subordinates herself to the tragic, male-centered narrative by becoming no more than a barely active supporter of Oroonoko.

Though she intercedes on the royal slave's behalf, Charlotte's plot helps to justify Oroonoko's demise. Both have upset the conventional social order, Oroonoko by his contradictory positions as royal slave/trader and Welldon as a cross-dressed woman enjoying male privileges. Oroonoko's multiple inversions of royal turned slave trader turned slave can only be resolved through his death. Charlotte however can easily shed her masculine woman persona with a costume change. With her happily married and living near the other now married women from her plot, the future of Surinam is not bleak. True, Oroonoko's torture and betrayals are condemned, but they are resolved with the Lieutenant Governor's death. The Welldon sisters successfully freed themselves from slavery and emerge as worthy managers of colonial property.

The similarities of their situation on the marriage market to that of the slaves Southerne creates during the Welldons' marriage negotiations reinforces the Lockean disdain for enslaving free subjects while downplaying any potential critique of the African slave trade. When the slave ship captain announces that he has "money enough" to purchase Lucy (I.ii.123), Charlotte attempts to distance this transaction from that of the slaves: "This is your market for slaves; my sister is a free woman / and must not be disposed of in public" (126-127). The fact that she must articulate her sister's status as a free woman shows that their whiteness does not preclude them from slavery – an idea

reinforced by Southerne's depiction of Imoinda – and that the process of men arranging marriages is a financial exchange of commodities like the African slaves. By Charlotte successfully navigating the marriage market she gives her sister an easily dominated husband and provides herself with a spouse of her own choosing: rather than being sold by male realties, Charlotte's cross-dressing allows her to manipulate the system and emerge owning herself. Planning to remain in Surinam, the couples of the comic plot point to a new future for the colony where princes are not enslaved and the dissolute Lieutenant Governor is no longer in power. Contrasting Behn's bleak image of a Surinam overrun by corruption and eventually lost to the Dutch, Southerne offers a colony purged of its undesirable elements: a violent Governor, Oroonoko and an element absent in the novel, an interracial marriage between Oroonoko and a now white Imoinda.

Imoinda as black moor washed white²⁸

One of the major changes Southerne makes involves the transformation of Oroonoko's wife Imoinda from the daughter of a fellow Coramantien to that of a French man, who immigrated to the African kingdom. While the reason behind this change remains unknown,²⁹ the play's Imoinda gains a degree of agency that her predecessor lacks, which in turn undermines Behn's idealization of the ruler/subject relationship. In the novel, Imoinda's loyalty to her husband is mediated by her viewing Oroonoko as both her natural ruler and a divine authority; in the play, she acts as the moral center of the play and when Oroonoko fails to protect her, she must defend herself. By positioning her as a moral agent in her own right, Southerne further disassociates the narrative with Behn's noble hierarchy and leads to a Lockean universalism that later lends itself to an anti-slavery reading later in the eighteenth century.

This critical change of skin color makes slavery a non-racialized event. At first glance, it seems to remain compatible with the romance tradition of nobles being able to marry across cultural divisions, but the way the play changes her actions moves away from the argument Behn uses romance to support – the innate right of nobles to rule – by erasing the novel’s presentation of their marriage as a symbol of the sovereign-subject relationship. Instead, the new representation of Imoinda lays the foundation for the abolitionist reading that would eventually dominate the narrative. The idea that anyone could be enslaved would repeatedly emerge as a theme in abolitionist writing such as William Wells Brown’s appeal to British anti-slavery groups in his nineteenth-century novel *Clotel*.³⁰ In *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance*, Joseph Roach argues that this serves to “radically condense the circum-Atlantic crucible of sex and race into an imagined community of the disposed” (155). Imoinda, like her husband and the Welldon sisters, arrives in Surinam as a result of global economic and political concerns. They are all international drifters lacking a nation and reacting to various markets: Imoinda’s father as a French born general in Angola’s army, herself as a commodity that can be sold into slavery due to a domestic dispute in her adopted country, Oroonoko as a prince without a throne and slave-trader turned slave, and the Welldon sisters as women traveling to increase their value as potential spouses.

Through Imoinda, slavery ceases to be a matter of European imperialists enslaving Africans, but a cross-cultural condition. She sees herself as “tossed” about the world by “tempestuous fate” (II.iii.149). Regardless of who controls the colony, her condition would remain the same: “Indians or English! / Whoever has me, I am still a slave” (II.iii.150-151). Her ambivalence echoes Southerne’s presentation of the concept

of slavery as harmful, but separates this from the actual institution of slavery in the colonies. She, like Oroonoko and the Welldons, remains a victim of fate and international trade.

As a moral instructor, Imoinda of the play alters the Oroonoko's world view that values martial might, a hallmark of medieval romance. In his relationship with her, Oroonoko comes to dissociate himself with the power he holds as a prince in favor of a relationship based on equality. Before their courtship, Oroonoko initially feels he can lessen Imoinda's grief when her father dies by giving her slaves he captured in battle; however, once they meet, he realizes that she does not want property or a display of dominance and instead needs interpersonal relationship to deal with her grief. She needs a husband to replace her father. With this, Oroonoko shifts from a vocabulary of power, where military victory and domination of other holds sway, to one that values internal characteristics, such as sympathy: "But when I saw her face/ And heard her speak, I offered up myself" (II.ii.89-90). Whereas Behn centers their courtship on silent, meaningful gazes, Southerne emphasizes the exchange of ideas in conversation. The two lovers must enter into a complementary relationship that functions as a partnership.³¹ Imoinda becomes the domestic voice of morality that guides Oroonoko's public actions.

Surinam sees this pattern continue with Imoinda acting as a moral voice as she insistently rejects of the Lieutenant Governor's advances. Not only does she verbally rebuke him, she physically resists him as well: "*She struggles and gets her hand from him*" and when he threatens to rape her – "if you struggle with me, I must take" – she remains defiant – "You may [take something from me], my life, that I can part with freely" (II.iii. 23-24). At this point in the play, Blanford has yet to intervene to protect her

as he does in the last act and Oroonoko is not present to aid her. Southerne has her first scenes on stage be one of articulate, bodily resistance. That she succeeds in avoiding rape repeatedly highlights her ability to act independently, though unlike Charlotte, she behaves within the bounds of conventional femininity.

Her suicide in the final act shows her as Oroonoko's and the audience's moral superior. Southerne picks up on the novel's themes of pagan virtue opposed to Christian vice,³² and positions Imoinda as a lesson in feminine virtue for the London spectators. While the novel's Imoinda waits for her husband to decide her fate, the play requires acting for herself when Oroonoko finds he cannot kill her. After his repeated failures to work up the courage to stab her, Imoinda alone masters her emotions and comes to his aid: "Nay then I must assist you. /And since it is the common cause of both, / 'Tis just that both should be employed in it" (V.v.274-276). This changes what, for Behn, was the enactment of monarchal obligation and authority to a scene of mutuality and consent. While the novel certainly does demonstrate Imoinda's desire to die at her husband's hand, the play invests her with much more agency in the act. Instead of awaiting her husband's blow, Imoinda stabs herself by moving Oroonoko's hand which holds the dagger; she emphasizes their mutuality of their marriage by turning her death into a "common cause" that they should carry equal responsibility. Though her husband and the Epilogue later rewrite Oroonoko as the sole actor,³³ the play positions her as both initiating and completing the act. In place of Behn's image of a docile subject gladly accepting death by her king's hand before the provisional government can execute him, Southerne steps away from this imagery that could evoke the execution of Charles I or the recent coup. Instead their deaths become a double suicide pact: the sentimental notion

of two lovers unable to live without one another covers over the novel's now unpopular politics.

Imoinda moves from moral instructor of the characters to that of the audience. In line with the general trend towards sentimentality that would flourish on the eighteenth-century English stage, the play praises her decision to kill herself as an ideal of wifely devotion, using her to critique the immorality of London women. Describing Imoinda's willingness to die with her husband, a no longer unruly Charlotte denounces the sexual freeness of town ladies:

She wanted some of our town breeding.
 Forgive this Indian's fondness of her spouse;
 Their law no Christian liberty allows.
 Alas! They make a consequence of their vows!
 If virtue in a heathen be a fault,
 Then damn the heathen school where she was taught.
 She might have learned to cuckold, jilt, and sham
 Had Covent Garden been in Surinam. (Epilogue 28-335)

This sarcastic portrayal of "town breeding" perhaps stands as a general condemnation of libertinism of the Stuart Restoration; it certainly contradicts the sexuality found in Behn's own plays as well as the reputation she would garner after her death.³⁴ During her lifetime, she did defend herself against charges that her plays were too bawdy. In 1673, she prefaced *The Dutch Lover* with a preemptive attack on would-be critics: "if such as these durst profane their Chast [sic] ears with hearing it over again, or taking it into their serious Consideration in their Cabinets; they would find nothing that the most innocent Virgins can have cause to blush at" (qtd. Todd 8). However, charges of indecency in her plays as well as personal life continued throughout the eighteenth-century. Todd points out that her proponents "effort[s] to give Behn respectability through critical praise and

genteel biographical claim tended to fade as the age became increasingly clear about what it thought of the Restoration period, with its anathematized politics and its lewd culture” (Todd 28). Southerne’s choice to end with Imoinda as a model of feminine chastity not only reflects the play’s distancing from Behn’s Stuart politics but also the image of Behn as a licentious woman who wrote steamy plays.

His play deflects attention from the novel’s original political ideology by supplanting the romance troupes with sentimentalism of Oroonoko and Imoinda’s marriage and the courtship comedy of the Welldon sisters. Behn’s novel ends with the ultimate deterioration of the English colony with Surinam’s loss to the Dutch. This final loss connects to her pro-Stuart argument that without the natural king, governments cannot be legitimate or successful. Surinam acts as a warning to her audience over the potential danger of losing England itself due to the rule of a barbaric mob. However, by allowing the tragic plot line to run its course, the Southerne play purges Surinam of its corrupt government, leaving the colony safely in the English hands of Charlotte and her companions. They offer the possibility of a bright future for English interest in the Caribbean.

Oroonoko in the Eighteenth Century

Despite the lack of critique on slavery as an institution and its positive portrayal of colonialism, the Southerne play and subsequent adaptations increasingly became read as anti-slavery as the eighteenth century progressed. However, this changing view was tied not so much to a growing abolitionism within the plays, but the declining economic and political status of the British West Indies. The 1759 version by John Hawkesworth points to a growing public dislike of the Caribbean holdings, but not necessarily the slave

systems found there. Hawkesworth continues Southerne's trend toward the sentimental by focusing on the tragic elements of the play. Cutting the comic elements and having every character speak in blank verse, this adaptation eliminates Southerne's differentiation between high and low characters as well as increasing the tragic heroism of the story. Despite Southerne's attempt to create a morally centered play, Hawkesworth finds fault mainly with his predecessor's balance of comedic and tragic elements. The women's courtship plot needed to be cut because it "degraded [Oroonoko and Imoinda's story] by a Connexion with some of the most loose and contemptible [scenes] that have ever disgraced our Language and our Theatre . . . its Immorality ought to prevent its Exhibition; but as it is connected with the tragic, it is in a still higher Degree preposterous, absurd, and pernicious" (vi). The plot dominated by women comes to represent the corruption of the Restoration. Since Southerne's addition of the breeches plot filled in for the absence of Behn as narrator, then this new adaptation's erasure of all female parts -- with the exception of Imoinda and an unnamed woman -- points to yet another degree of separation between the Oroonoko legend and its originator. With her libertinism and pro-Stuart politics, Behn becomes an undesirable within her own narrative. Her use of romance and the oriental gloss she places upon her African kingdom become associated in later adaptations with Restoration decadence and political tyranny. It is not until the romance and Islamic elements are removed that an abolitionist reading -- in which Africans are powerless before English colonial slavery -- can emerge.

Continuing the shift in focus away from Behn's pro-Stuart rhetoric of divine right and noble races toward a sentimental and potentially abolitionist reading, Hawkesworth credits Southerne the adaptor, not Behn the author, for the popular narrative. Despite his

objections to its immoral comic scenes, Hawkesworth presents the earlier play rather than the novel as what will draw the audience to the production: “This Night your tributary Tears we claim, /For Scenes that *Southern* drew; a fav'rite Name!” (Prologue 1-2). Even though the play has delighted the previous generations by touching “your [the 1759 audience’s] Fathers' Hearts with gen'rous Woe” and teaching “your Mothers' youthful Eyes to flow” (3, 4), Hawkesworth insists that the original play is morally flawed and blames Southerne’s comedic courtship scenes on a corrupt era still tainted by Restoration rule that made the playwright “Slave to Custom in a laughing Age” (7). Just as Southerne felt he was correcting Behn’s failure to place her protagonist on the stage, Hawkesworth presents himself as a moral corrector who while “He bows with Rev'rence to the hoary Sire: /With honest Zeal, a Father's Shame he veils” (16-17). Part of his addition to the Oroonoko legend is his creation of a new history surrounding its authorship. Rather than being authored by a female playwright famous for her licentious plays, Hawkesworth writes a new patrilineal lineage of the story that ignores the novel and only acknowledges its theatrical versions.

Besides his removal of the comic female voices of the play, Hawkesworth also bolsters the role of the other principle slave characters, Aboan and Hotman. By emphasizing Aboan’s role, this version lessens Oroonoko’s uniqueness among his fellow slaves. Whereas in the Southerne version he plays a significant role in convincing his prince to lead the rebellion, the new version introduces him through a soliloquy. It also brings to the forefront a more anti-slavery stance as Aboan relates the anguish of his situation before turning his thoughts towards insurrection: “’Tis all Regret, Oppression, and Despair.--- /Yet why Despair!---something may yet be done” (I.iii.5-6). While

Southerne does present Aboan as the initiator of the slave revolt, his version does not grant Aboan the interiority of the Hawkesworth. In the 1759 production, the audience witnesses the call to action first in Aboan's musing and rousing of other slaves before he approaches his former ruler. He is presented as possessing just as much intellect and sensibility as Oroonoko. Rather than performing the part of a subject still loyal to the sovereign that sold him into slavery, he emerges more as an equal, disrupting the novels depiction of a noble sovereign and his naturally subordinate subjects.³⁵

Despite these changes, it is unclear that Hawkesworth possessed any more abolitionist sentiment than either Southerne or Behn. The 1759 adaptation still retains the Oroonoko's speeches defending the plantation owners' right to buy slaves and his condemnation of the other slaves as fit only for chains. Hawkesworth's removal of the Welldon sisters' success as colonialists points to cultural environment less enthusiastic about a British presence in that part of the world. At the same time, these audiences appeared more open to seeing the plight of slaves in general and not just misplaced princes as appropriately tragic. Hence, characters such as Aboan receive a greater degree of interiority while the comic plots seem out of place.

These changes in the Oroonoko narrative correspond to the economic and political shifts occurring in eighteenth century Britain. After the fall of James II and Behn's death, the idea of the natural right of a noble race and the divine authority of a king lost ground. Without this privileging of nobles as possessing a nearly exclusive hold on virtues, other characters gain more of an inner life. Instead, Parliament in actuality ruled while the monarchy acted as a symbol of national power. This government celebrated the equality and liberty of free-born English men while leaving the slave

plantations of the colonies relatively unchallenged. As Robin Blackburn points out in his comparative history *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery*, in “the period 1630-1750 the British Empire witnessed an increasingly clamorous, and even obsessive ‘egotistical’ revulsion against ‘slavery’ side by side with an almost uncontested exploitation of African Bondage” (42). John Locke opens his *Treatises of Government* declaring that “Slavery is so vile and miserable an Estate of Man and so directly opposite to the Generous Temper and Sprit of Our nation; that ‘tis hardly to be conceived, that an *Englishman*, much less a *Gentleman*, should plead for ‘t” (175). However, as a stock holder in the Royal Africa Company he did not extend this call to end slavery to the literality of chattel slavery occurring in the colonies. At the time, England’s Caribbean holdings stimulated and created new industries and markets in England. Southerne’s adaptation coincides with the coup’s paradoxical belief in individual liberty and plantation slavery. England’s power in the Caribbean was just beginning to grow, so the comic optimism of the Welldon sisters finding marriage and financial stability in Surinam still carried ideological validity with audiences. However, as Britain’s relationship with the Caribbean changed, the popular opinion of it and slavery became radically altered.

As Britain’s imperial interests began their “Eastern Swing” toward India and other locations, Caribbean monopolies on goods such as sugar began to stifle the financial interest of England-based capitalists.³⁶ Alongside these economic changes, abolitionist sentiments began to grow. Evangelicalism and the sentimental valuation of the “man of feeling” also contributed to the anti-slavery movement (Davis 45, 47). For much of Western Europe, Surinam in particular became synonymous with the abuses of the slave plantation. In 1759, Voltaire used it as the setting where his protagonist Candide

abandons his optimism when confronted with slavery (60-61). In 1796, John Gabriel Stedman published his *Narrative of Five Years Expedition against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam*, which became source for the abolitionist movement in England (Price xiii). By the time John Ferriar produced his version of *Oroonoko* in 1787, public sentiment toward slavery, the British Empire in general as well as the Caribbean and Surinam in particular had changed. As Catherine Gallagher points out in her edition of Behn's novel, Ferriar "accused Hawkesworth of weakening the antislavery implications of the story by adhering too closely to Southerne's original design: "'Although the incidents appeared even to invite sentiments adverse to slavery . . . [Southerne] delivered by the medium of his Hero, a groveling apology for slave-holders'" (ii). Over a century after Behn's original, the cultural assumption emerged that any story dealing with plantation slavery must involve a condemnation of that institution.

At the time of Ferriar's *Oroonoko* adaptation, entitled *The Prince of Angola*,³⁷ France had surpassed Britain in its economic success in the Caribbean and the British public was becoming increasingly disenchanted not just with these Atlantic colonies but also with the institution of slavery. A Unitarian physician and active abolitionist, Ferriar deliberately staged his version as an attack upon the slave trade. His Manchester production positioned Oroonoko not as an extraordinary example of one man wrongfully enslaved, but as symbols of the suffering of all slaves regardless of rank. Following its debut, the *Manchester Mercury* reprinted the prologue as part of the local abolitionists' campaign. The new version emphasizes a universal humanity that differed from even the Hawkesworth version. In it, "sad Oroonoko pleases, / For each poor African that toils and bleeds" and the "MIND has no COLOUR – ev'ry Heart can feel" (Ferriar 1). Along with

its later advertisements for the printed versions of the play, the *Mercury* expresses its hopes that Ferriar's play will help influence the anti-slavery legislation soon to come before the British Parliament.

This version represents the solidification of Behn's original narrative's position in the public imagination as an abolitionist text. Staying close to the Hawkesworth version, Ferriar introduces speeches that directly address the slave debate. Oroonoko is no longer a slave trader; in fact, the prince no longer retains the speech from in the Behn novel that argues that those that buy slaves lawfully are not responsible for how the sellers obtain their cargo. Ferriar also removes Oroonoko's concern over only the liberty of his family and not the other slaves:

No private sufferings urge me to your side –
 You've know me honour'd, courted here, and soon
 Would see me publicly restored to freedom,
 And royal rights. But never should my ear
 Forget the bondman's cry; sill should I droop,
 For my sad brethren left in slavery.
 Let us be jointly free or jointly perish" (III.iii).

As Spencer points out, this claim to a universal humanity and transcendence of rank creates a potential bond between Oroonoko and the audience in their shared concern for the suffering slaves.

However, like the universalism expressed in Behn's romance racial model and Southerne's Locken principles, Ferriar's version does not necessary represent a claim of complete equality between all people. Ferriar's version emphasizes a cultural gap between Africa and Europe not found in the romance tropes of the Behn novel. In his preface, Ferriar demonstrates a disdain for non-Christian cultures, calling "an African's highest religious mystery" nothing but "Mumbo Jumbo" (v). Spencer presents this as a

small detraction from an otherwise egalitarian play, arguing that “on the whole it is remarkable how thoughtfully this version of *Oroonoko* deals with the transformation of a heroic tragedy into a piece of political theater” (259). While it does present a laudable attack on colonial slavery, the play also illustrates a Christian bias against the cultural status of those it sought to help. Behn’s use of romance – though containing its own ethnical conundrums – lends itself to a different image of Africa within Christian Europe’s culture. Within the romance tradition and Europe’s long history of Islamic influence, at least part of those enslaved are presented as the cultural equals of those seeking to free them. From Behn’s conflation of European and African nobility to Southerne and Hawkesworth’s critique of Christian hypocrisy to Ferriar’s religious call to arms, the plays trace the cultural attitudes toward Caribbean plantocracy illuminating the interconnectivity of economics and religious forces driving Britain’s political choices.

Despite its continuing popularity throughout the eighteenth century, the political content of the story experienced continual criticism and change. Behn’s story of a royal slave ideologically shifted from her Stuart politics to Southerne’s proto-Hanoverian adaptation to Ferriar’s decidedly abolitionist stance. In the nineteenth century, Behn’s novel gained a reputation as an unquestioned attack on slavery. Victorian poet Algernon Charles Swinburne championed not her more scandalous poems and plays that would seem to connect his work with hers; instead he suggests that *Oroonoko* be reprinted alongside Harriet Beecher Stowe’s abolitionist novel, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (Todd 56). His connection between the two authors was shared by his contemporaries. Wilbur L. Cross, for example, refers to the novel as “the first humanitarian novel in English . . . [meant] to awaken Christendom to the horrors of slavery” (qtd. Todd 55). The insertion of Behn into

a political tradition different from the one she participated in during her lifetime enabled *Oroonoko* to remain a politically viable and actively read text for over three centuries.

Towards the end of the twentieth century, the Royal Shakespeare Company chose to extend this tradition of reinterpreting Behn's narrative for yet another generation's worldview. 'Biyi Bandele's spring 1999 production restores Behn's African court scenes and her Onahal in the person of the outspoken Lady Onola who acts as Imoinda's foster mother. Jessica Munns describes Bandele's production as a "mixture of the ornate and the familiar [in the language of the court scenes] . . . finds an equivalent to Behn's Romance Africa" (187). These changes seem to point to a desire to present a more feminist, anti-racist production, but the reality is a little more complicated.

Like its predecessors, the RSC production actively intends to make amends for the political stances of past productions. It attempts combines the cultural equality found in Behn's use of romance with the decidedly anti-slavery stance of Ferriar, while inserting a non-European female agency lacking in the other versions. In the introduction to the published version of the play, director Gregory Doran touts the play as a recuperation of Behn's original work: "In this version for the RSC, 'Biyi Bandele brings both halves of his hero's story together, from warrior and prince in the West African Kingdom of Coramantien to slave in Surinam. This is the first time, therefore, that Oroonoko's entire story has been presented on the stage" (9). However, the alterations made by the new production center more on the RSC's vision of British liberalism more than a revival of Behn's efforts or a criticism of slavery and the imperialism that drove it.

Part of the appeal of it for contemporary audiences tied into the British abolitionist movement that emerges sooner than its counterparts in the U.S. or South

America. It played into a vision of a tolerant, progressive Britain, augmented by its new playwright, Biyi-Bandele, a British national of Nigerian descent. The play's popularity also came in part due to its original author. Considered the first English woman to earn her living by writing, Aphra Behn and her text have gained advocates as being perhaps the origin of the English novel. With this historic cultural cache behind it, the production went under way. In both subject and authorship, it would present a vision of a liberal, multiculturally tolerant Britain. However, this production also rests on the assumption that a secular, European figure is needed to successfully manage a non-white, potentially violent populace.

The play's recuperation of the African scenes, though perhaps unconsciously, takes a decidedly politicized stance on the role of religious diversity. Though still set in Coramantein, today's Ghana, Bandele writes in his preface to the play that he "re-imagined *Oroonoko* in a Yoruba – which is to say Nigerian – setting" (5). In his native country today, the population is roughly half Muslim.³⁸ Given the orientalist mode of the Behn text, a return to the source material could arguably have incorporated these original details into its depiction of the court and of its hero. However, the new production takes a contrary stance, by placing the court in direct conflict with its Muslim neighbors. The stage directions make it clear that the emissaries, Ibn Saeed and Ibn Sule, should be seen as outsiders: "they are dressed in turbans and other such accoutrements of the desert-farer: clothing that immediately marks them apart from the people of Coramantien, who are dressed in the coastal Yoruba style of 'Agbada' and 'dashiki'" (I.1.i). The first lines of the play open with a military threat issued by Ibn Saeed, and the scene closes with him carrying away the head of his companion. The quick execution of the emissary is meant

to set up the kingdom in the English audience's eyes as strong, proud and politically savvy. Behn makes a similar move in her text, but this is done through descriptions of courtly behavior. This scene of the violent expulsion of the Muslim characters from the kingdom is never critiqued in the play, even though its government will be. King, councilors and Oroonoko look at it in solidarity and approval.

In Behn's original text, the hero's lack of remorse for his past as a slave trader signals the absence of an abolitionist stance in the work as a whole; this political stance changed within the plays as audience preferences changed. What then should be made of audience preferences for the Bandele text? The absence of any critique of the execution of the Muslim emissaries in the new version points to an accepted view of Muslims as a threat whose elimination need little justification. That Bandele's stage directions make a point to portray the Muslims as outsiders also points to the potential critique of present-day Nigeria's own ethnic-religious conflicts. It certainly represents a departure from the Behn version's vision of an Africa predominately dominated by Muslim culture.

While the portrayal of the Muslim emissaries can be seen as a stance on Islamic aggression, the court of Coramantien also reflects the play's stance on the non-Muslim factions of African governments. The king and his councilor are corrupt – shown in their dealings in the slave trade and the rapes of Imoinda. In the Behn version, Oroonoko stands in as a younger, better alternative to his grandfather the king, but in the Bandele, he is re-envisioned into a child needing to be led and not as a warrior-prince fit to rule. His mentor chides him for lacking the “responsibility” to be a good leader when he takes “part in a childish game” and then tries to blame it on his servants (I.1.ii). He is not the aggressor in his marriage to Imoinda; instead, her foster-mother, Onola, arranges it out of

the belief that unlike the other male characters in the Africa scenes, Oroonoko poses no sexual threat to her charge. Throughout the rest of the play, the stage directions and dialogue demonstrate the affection within the marriage but without touching on the erotic. The non-sexual nature of their relationship is reinforced by Bandele's omission of Imoinda's pregnancy, which in earlier versions acted as the impetus for Oroonoko's revolt. Through the early reprimands by a more mature man and Onola's view of him as non-sexual, Oroonoko emerges as a child swept away by events, while those ruling the kingdom are corrupt rapists and it is they, not Oroonoko, who are involved in the slave trade. The first half ends with an image of an African country in need of proper leadership, but without any legitimate internal options for reform.

By comparison, the English colony at Surinam is largely portrayed as egalitarian space.³⁹ The man in charge of the Lord Governor's estate, Trefry, opens Act Two with a critique of slavery and acts as a more effective protector of Imoinda than her husband is able to be. He and not Oroonoko is the one who fights with the villain of the play, Byam, to protect Imoinda. Oroonoko, on the other hand, leads the slave revolt as he does in the older versions, lacks the grand speeches to incite the slaves to follow him. They have been already convinced by his former servant to join. The failure of the uprising, his killing of Imoinda and his own death lose much of their original meaning, since by doing so, he – in Bandele's version – thwarts his own freedom. Too emotionally broken by the events, Oroonoko cannot comprehend the fact that, in the end, Trefry has saved him. Preventing the local authorities from prosecuting Oroonoko for either the revolt or Imoinda's death, Trefry arranges with the newly arrived Lord governor for the slave to be freed. Realizing that if he had not killed his wife she would no longer be in danger,

Oroonoko charges at Trefry with a knife, forcing Trefry to shoot. This is quite different from Behn: in her original, Imoinda's death is justified because the Lord Governor has died and the lovers will not be freed. Instead, the colony has fallen into irredeemable corrupt hands and after Oroonoko's grisly public execution, Imoinda, if left alive, would most certainly face retaliation for her role in the rebellion.

In Bandele's version, Imoinda's death necessitates Oroonoko's: without her, he does not need his freedom. In a play where the women are oppressed and victimized, the majority of the men are corrupt sexual predators, and the hero is largely a non-sexual child, it is oddly Oroonoko's killer who emerges as the play's moral center. The stage directions in the Bandele clear Trefry of culpability in the killing: "*Oroonoko charges towards Mr. Trefry with every intention of stabbing him. Mr. Trefry hesitates, then he shoots Oroonoko. Oroonoko falls down. Mr. Trefry runs over to him*" (II.2.1). The Englishman's hesitation, even when his life is in danger, and immediate concern for his potential killer, mark him as a sympathetic character and justify this final action. This, along with his early speeches against slavery, his protection of Imoinda and Oroonoko, and his alliance with the new colonial government, Trefry represents a character to whom the English audience may relate. However, what are the implications of this choice?

It shows a great deal of comfort with the legacy of slavery. The need to be abolitionist has passed. Instead, characters are caught up in a tragic train of events where well-meaning liberals are forced to kill their non-white friends, but order is restored in the end by the return of Lord Governor and the political triumph of Trefry. This may largely be due to the early moves towards British emancipation, which predate many of the contemporaries in Europe and the Americas. It also contrasts the liberalism of Britain

with the violence and oppression found in other cultures. Observe opening scene: Bandele's fantasy Nigeria depicts Muslims as a threat to be quickly dispatched while non-Muslim governments are corrupt and oppressively patriarchal. Its one hope of a legitimate ruler, Oroonoko, is represented as child-like. In contrast, the English colony is only under a temporary bad rule, which is solved by the end. This along with the de-emphasis on slavery, makes Oroonoko, in many ways, to blame for his own demise – his inability to endure what fate gives him and not his enslavement - and certainly not Trefry's act of self-defense - becomes the culprit for his death. If anything, the liberal white English subject is portrayed as the ideal ruler: Trefry can critique the situation but still “puts down” insurgents even if he may sympathize with them.

Like its predecessors, it finds in the *Oroonoko* narrative elements that fit its own ideologies. Southerne's recuperation of Surinam through the comic plot, Hawkesworth's colonial decline and Ferriar's abolitionist activism each found something in Behn's story that resonated with their particular audience. The issues of Behn's importance as a female author and her role in the development of the novel, as well as her choice to center her final work around the tragic execution of a slave in the colonies, continues to provoke debate over not only what she intended her text to mean but how each generation of readers attempts to come to terms with it within their own political and historical moments.

¹ This is attested to the causal association of Behn with the abolitionist movement that came into prominence in the century following her death. While late stage adaptations, such as John Ferriar's 1787 production, used the narrative as part of an anti-slavery movement, Behn's novel lacks this political stance. In the Norton Critical Edition of Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones*, editor Sheridan Baker treats the play version's stance on the slave trade as unquestionably the same as the novels in his footnote on her: “Fielding refers to her spicy romantic tales [which Tom reads in this scene], though her *Oroonoko* (1688), the first anti-slavery novel, has real merit” (341). His casual reference to it as the “first anti-slavery novel,”

without any further documentation, demonstrates his belief that it stands as an uncontested fact rather than the result of dramatic revisionism.

2 Locke, John. *Two Treatises of Government*. Ed. Peter Laslett. New York: New American Library, 1965.

3 The original prose version is divided into four sections. First, there is the description of the nearly pre-Lapsarian innocence of the Surinam natives that serves to critique London immorality; this theme becomes expanded upon in the subsequent play adaptations. Second, in the African kingdom of Coramantien, Oroonoko –the seventeen-year-old, heir to his centenarian grandfather’s throne -- falls in love with an old general’s beautiful daughter Imoinda, but shortly after they pledge themselves to each other, his grandfather forces her into his harem. Too impotent to rape her, the king is further enraged to discover her relationship with Oroonoko. The king informs his heir that Imoinda is dead when in fact she’s been sold into slavery. Third, Oroonoko’s intellectual curiosity allows him, his French tutor and about a hundred courtiers to be tricked onto an English slave ship headed to Surinam. There he meets the narrator and is reunited with Imoinda. In the last part, Imoinda’s pregnancy prompts him to rebel so that his children will not be slaves. The rebellion fails in part due to the other slaves’ passivity. Oroonoko kills Imoinda to prevent her from falling into enemy hands and afterwards, he is brutally executed by the colony’s provisional government.

4 “Well did Great Cæsar know,/ His Grandeur and Magnificence/To New-found Worlds He cou'd not shew / So greatly to His Fame, as now”(36-39).

5 Following the death of Elizabeth I, the House of Stuart gained the English throne in 1603. Besides inheriting disagreements with Parliament from his father, James I, Charles I also continually distanced himself from general populace through his religious practices that tended to favor Catholicism or high Anglicism rather than the plainer forms preferred by many of his subjects. His practices of making appointments based on personal favoritism as well as his disregard for Parliament reflected an older belief that kings ruled by divine right, placing him above reproof. Charles dissolved Parliament in March 1629, removing their power to advise him and enact taxes. This period of time was referred as the Eleven Years’ Tyranny. Eventually, Parliament joined by various political and protestant factions succeeded in arresting, trying and executing the king

6 Behn’s royalist beliefs can be seen in her pro-Stuart pieces, often timed to counter criticisms launched by political detractors at the throne. Her earlier work *Love-Letters Between a Nobleman and his Sister* is largely a critique of attacks on the Stuarts, especially those who opposed James II as his brother’s successor. In this narrative, Philander’s (modeled after Monmouth supporter Lord Grey of Werke) betrayal of his wife through his legally incestuous affair with his sister-in-law, Sylvia, parallels his betrayal of his king when he joins the ranks of the rebellious Prince Cesario. In the logic of the narrative, to betray one’s monarch is as unnatural a crime as bedding one’s sister. *Oroonoko* should be seen as another in a long list of examples in which Behn uses her work to voice an overtly political stance. As Janet Todd points out in *The Critical Fortunes of Aphra Behn*, Behn’s support of the crown was not simply a matter of following popular opinion: Stuart support reached its nadir when James’ second wife became pregnant, since if a son was born, the crown would pass to a Catholic king rather than his protestant daughter, Mary, from his first marriage. Behn’s poem not only eagerly anticipates the birth of a future Stuart prince, she is so insistent on her support and adamant that others make similar declarations, even other Royalists felt it was inappropriate: “A court poet, John Baber, thought that a remark – in her poem [on the queen’s pregnancy] – that very few poets were writing loyal verses was aimed at part at him, and he countered with an attack on her when he finally did produce his royal poem at the time of the actual birth of a boy” (16).

7 For this period in history, the Church and James II can be seen as one and the same, since one of the chief charges against the king was his support of the Roman Catholic Church.

8 By the time of Ferriar’s 1788 adaptation, the narrative was seen as primarily a sentimental attack on the brutality of the plantation slave system.

9 What Behn leaves out of her critique is that the Stuarts are one of many noble families in England. In Feudalism, the king ruled by consent of the other nobles; Charles I attempt at an absolute monarchy was in a way an attack on the rights of nobles.

10 In his examination of the Islam’s impact on English culture, *Islam in Britain 1558- 1685*, Nabil Matar reads Othello as reflecting England’s complex view of their powerful Muslim neighbors, the Persians and

the Turks. Reading *Othello* as a converted Muslim, he aligns the protagonist with a history of Islamic-Christian relations by seeing him as inspired both by the Moriscos forced to convert and then expelled from Spain after the Reconquista as well as Leo Africanus, who converted to Christianity during his stay in Rome, but later returned to North Africa reconverted to Islam (130) This interpretation highlights the ambiguous borders between Christian Europe and the Islamic world: through the Moriscos, the lack of geographical distinction between the two cultures and the mixing that occurred in Spain makes it difficult to define Islam as a different race geographically and the fluidity seen in the conversions of Leo Africanus make religion a fallible means of distinguishing between groups as well.

11 My translation. The French reads: <<ce vaillant homme, voyant bien qu'il ne pouvait plus se défendre, rendit son épée avec un air si noble et si hardi que Consalve ne douta point qu'il ne fût digne de la grande reputation qu'il avait acquise.>>

12 My translation. The French reads: <<toute la galanterie des Maures et tout la politesse d'Espagne.>>

13 My translation. The French reads: << Les connaissances récentes n'avaient pas éliminé la vieille image, qui avait survécu dans les textes avec tous ses éléments>> (209).

14 At this time, England had not established itself as an imperial force in the East. Instead, English readers would have view the Islamic world as just as cultured and more powerful – at least military – as their own society. Nabil Matar argues that “Because of its magnitude and civilization, this [Turkish] Empire played a significant role in the formation of British and European history and identity. . . . Islam projected an allure that promised a common Briton social and political power, and turned a poor European soldier into a well-paid *rais* (corsair captain): it was the allure of an empire that changed an Englishman’s hat into a turban – with all the symbolisms of strength associated with the Islamic headdress – a Christian ‘John’ into a Muslim ‘Ramadan,’ and allowed converts to Islam to fulfil themselves in worldly power and glory” (14, 15).

15 Behn separates the Caribs from her view of contemporary European politics by aligning them with animals and pre-civilization humans. The description of the native headdress Behn acquired in Surinam follows a listing of Surinam’s wildlife (39); by ending this passage with the image of natives covered in feathers, the boundary between dress and wearer blurs. These passive natives become bird-like, when tied to the romance imagery that follows, makes them into tractable, idealized subjects.

They are “like our first Parents before the Fall” and have retained an innocence found in romance tales where “a handsom young Indian, dying for Love of a very beautiful young Indian Maid . . . all his Courtship was, to fold his Arms, pursue her with his Eyes, and Signs were all his Language” (39-40). Their innocence is a means for the narrator to separate them from the European settlers and align them with the naturalist descriptions preceding them. They resemble Adam and Eve because of their lack of shame regarding their nakedness, continuing the casual linking of them with animals that also feel no need for clothing. The silent courtship emphasizes a lack of language, which early modern philosophers used as a means of differentiating humans from other animals. Keith Thomas argues that besides anatomy, “Three other human attributes were particularly stressed. The first was speech, a quality which John Ray described as ‘so peculiar to man that no beast could ever attain it’” (32). This wordless passivity also implies their potentially tractability as colonial subjects. If the men among the Caribs will silently suffer the passion of love, why would they not act with the same lack of self-assertion towards a colonial ruler?

16 Behn’s references to the Civil War and execution of Charles I connect her fears of anarchy in Surinam with the political upheavals leading up to the Restoration. The desire for an absolute ruler is not just tied to a belief in a noble race but also to seventeenth-century political theories aimed at preventing the chaos and bloodshed of the wars. While Thomas Hobbes did not present sovereigns as racially noble and argued that all men were essential equal (Hobbes 68), he advocated absolute rule as the best means of preserving life. During times of war, “every man is Enemy to every man . . . And the life of man, solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short” (70), and to prevent this a sovereign is appointed, from whom “none of his Subjects, by any pretence or forfeiture, can be freed from his Subjection” (97). The sovereign’s actions can neither be deemed unjust nor can he be punished by any subject. All this is “because the End of this Institution [the sovereign], is the Peace and Defense of . . . all” (98). The need for a strong sovereign to protect his subjects from themselves is compatible with Behn’s depiction of the disintegration of Surinam after the provisional government executes Oroonoko. The African Prince represents the rightfully sovereign, whose authority

should remain unchallenged, while the provisional government is a common mob unable to correctly rule themselves or the colony.

17 There is also the possibility that this is an accurate description of the Cormantines. Edward Long's 1774 *History of Jamaica, Volume 2* presents them in this light: "Their persons are well made, and their features are very different from the rest of the African Negroes, being smaller, and more of the European turn" (474). I believe that it is difficult to determine how factual Behn's representations are of actual Cormantines, since many later sources I have found seem to treat her as a historical source. In a recent study of the ethnic distinctions between groups of slaves, Douglas B. Chambers uses *Oroonoko* as evidence that the Cormantines identified themselves as an ethnic group distinct from the other slaves: "there is too much evidence of historical agency . . . for the major groups to have been socially meaningless to the great majority of enslaved Africans who found themselves identified in those meta-ethnic terms. Coromantee in Suriname are a good example. One of the earliest descriptions of 'Coramantien' as an African 'nation' was in the romantic novel *Oroonoko* by Aphra Behn (c.1640–89), written at least partly from her personal experience in Suriname (pre-1665), and widely read in English upon publication (1688)" (31). However, Chambers also points out that there is little evidence of the group in Africa, making the bulk of information on them come from colonial accounts such as Behn and Long:

Even the most famous diasporic African group, the Coromantee (Akan), were a group whose name was meaningful only in a limited sense on the Gold Coast and its hinterland in the slave-trade era. Jean Barbot, who had traded extensively on the Gold Coast in the 1680s, never referred to 'Coromantee' as a 'nation' even though he made frequent reference to the fort and associated coastal village of Cormantin. The general point that 'Coromantee' did not correspond to a known Akan ethnic led one pioneering historian to note in 1973 that, 'This can be confusing, since the records often speak of Koromantin blacks, despite the fact that no such tribe existed.'³⁸ And it is doubly curious that the supposed connection with the early English trade castle called 'Cormantin' (effective English occupation 1645/47–64) has been stressed so often in the secondary literature, since the term 'Coromantee' appears to have come into wide use only *after* the Dutch captured the fort (1665), and changed the site's name to Fort Amsterdam, though apparently the associated village was still called Cormantin. By this logic, one would expect that Gold Coast slaves, who were taken in much greater numbers by the English after c.1660, would have been called something like 'Cabocorsos', since after 1664 Cape Coast Castle was the most important English entrepôt in the region, and remained so for the balance of the slave-trade era (29-30).

Articles such as these have made me curious to learn how much of eighteenth-century accounts of Surinam and the Cormantine rely on Behn.

18 This language also is used to highlight the innocence of the native Caribs against the corruption of the European settlers.

19 This pattern can be seen throughout romances such as the *Lais of Marie de France*, as well as Renaissance texts such as Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameròn*. Another prominent example is Solomon's ascension to the throne when his father, David, can no longer perform sexually (1 Kings 1:1-4).

20 One of Oroonoko's subjects from his African kingdom, Tuscan, remains loyal; later play adaptations retain his original African name, Aboan.

21 His moral superiority also serves to condemn the behavior of Christian settlers. In Behn's novel, this points to the anti-Stuart movement's threat to both James II and his Catholic faith. Just as the provisional government refuses to recognize Oroonoko's innate superiority, they also abandon the Christian values of honesty, integrity and obedience. Southerne would expand on this theme in another way: the unchristian behavior of the antagonists would act as a way to heighten the tragic heroism of Oroonoko as well as the moral worth of the Welldon sisters, who represent the new colonial order at the end of the play. The theme of pagan honor against Christian hypocrisy would endure and help incorporate later abolitionist readings that sought to condemn slavery on religious grounds.

22 This bill limited the Sovereign's power; reaffirmed Parliament's control of taxation and legislation; provided guarantees against the abuses of power the Stuart Kings had committed; excluded James II, his heirs and all Catholics from the throne; required the Sovereign to swear to maintain the Protestant religion; forbid the Sovereign from suspending or dispensing with laws passed by Parliament; insisted that the

Sovereign summon Parliament frequently; allowed Parliament to further control the King's spending; and lastly, forbade the King from keeping a standing army in peacetime without the consent of Parliament. It did however allow the Sovereign to keep the right to summon and dissolve Parliament, appoint and dismiss Ministers, veto legislation and declare war (<http://www.royal.gov.uk>).

23 Though published anonymously in 1690, there is some debate over whether this text was written prior to 1688 calling for revolution or afterwards to justify the coup. This paper favors Peter Laslett's argument that given the number texts Locke published after the coup, it is unlikely that he researched, wrote and drafted all the texts prior to his return to England. See Laslett's introduction to *Two Treatises of Government*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1960. 59.

24 With in the *Second Treatise*, slave does not refer exclusively to the African slave trade, but can be applied both to it as well as some of the poorer laboring classes of England.

25 In fact, Coramantien is replaced with Angola as Oroonoko's country of origin and the court intrigues are only mentioned briefly in a dialogue to set up Imoinda's introduction into the plot.

26 "To think I could design to make those free/ Who were by nature slaves – wretches designed/ To be their masters' dogs and lick their feet" (IV.ii.60-62).

27 To accomplish this, a cross-dressed Charlotte woos and marries the widow. On the wedding night, our heroine takes a page from Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, the less genteel widow is tricked into marrying her appropriate spouse, when Jack Stanmore takes Charlotte's place. By the time all is revealed, Charlotte has gained a husband for a sister, a sizable amount of the widow's money and out of fear of social censure, the widow repents her initial rejection of Stanmore, gives up her stubborn resistance and submits to him as her lawful husband.

28 See Loomba 56-57: "There was a long tradition of speculating about the depth of skin colour. In the eleventh of Aesop's *fables*, a man buys an 'Aethopian slave' and attempts to wash him white, thinking that the dark colour indicates bodily filth."

29 See Jennifer B. Elmore's "'The Fair Imoinda': Domestic Ideology and Anti-Slavery on the Eighteenth-century slave" for an overview of theories on this change (37-38).

30 This novel not only carries the theme of the tragic mulatta, who despite her light skin and white ancestry (the heroine Clotel is Thomas Jefferson's daughter), cannot escape the evils of slavery. One chapter diverts from the main plots to describe the fate of an enslaved German immigrant, who is treated in the same brutal fashion as the slaves of African decent.

31 This coincides with Locke's analogy of marriage and state: rule "naturally falls to the Man's share, as the abler and stronger. But this reaching but to the things of their common Interest and Property, leaves the Wife in the full and free possession of what by Contract is her peculiar Right, and gives the Husband no more power over her Life, than she has over his" (364). This relationship is then mirrored in society, with the state protecting the people's "Interest and Property" as long as the social contract remains unviolated.

32 Behn describes the natives as being as innocent as "our first Parents before the fall" (39). Their lack of corruption is put in contrast to the colonial Governor, who the natives assume is dead when he does not arrive at an appointed time: "when they saw he was not dead, they ask'd him, what Name they had for a Man who promis'd a thing he did not do? The Governor told them, Such a man is a *Lyar* [sic] . . . Then one of 'em reply'd, *Governor you are a Lyar, and guilty of that Infamy*. They have a Native Justice, which knows no Fraud; and they understand no vice, or Cunning, but what they are taught by the *White Man*."

33 "Governor: Who did the bloody deed [killing Imoinda]? /Oroonoko: The deed was mine" (V.v.294-295). Imoinda "thought her husband killed her out of kindness" (Epilogue 23-25). Both instances contradict the actual staging of her death scene.

34 Once again, Southerne takes a less overtly political, secondary theme from the novel and develops it into a major portion of the play. Behn does use her *Oroonoko* as a platform for feminine modesty that differs from her more baud plays.

35 The changes made to Hotman's part also lend the play a more egalitarian view of the other slaves. In Southerne's play, Hotman's treachery seems due largely to his display of fear and his failure to follow the Royal Slave.³⁵ As long as Hotman's betrayal is linked to his own lack of bravery, the emphasis on nobility over a criticism of slavery exists as an ideological link between Behn's novel and the play. However, by making Hotman a spy for the colonial government from the beginning, Hawkesworth shows that the slaves

posed a threat to the plantations even without Oroonoko and unlike the previous versions, the revolt fails because of an individual's subterfuge rather than the common slaves' lack of valor.

36 For Eric Williams in *Capitalism and Slavery*, industries in England eventually outgrew the need for the monopolies of their Caribbean colonies: "When British capitalism depended on the West Indies, they ignored slavery or defended it. When British capitalism found the West Indian monopoly a nuisance, they destroyed West Indian slavery as the first step in the destruction of West Indian monopoly" (169). While industrialists became decreasingly disenchanted with their forced reliance upon their Caribbean colonies, Britain was also losing their dominance in the region, as illustrated in *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution* by David Brion Davis: "In 1700, British planters had supplied nearly half the sugar consumed in Western Europe; by 1789, St. Domingue alone was exporting more than all the British colonies combined" (53). This change was brought about by the fragility of the sugar industry, competition from India and the U.S. Revolution that broke the British West Indies' hold on the industry. While retaining speeches defending slavery, Hawkesworth's omission of the comedic happy ending disallows the colony a positive portrayal. Instead, it becomes a space of corruption and loss, which in turn mirrors the deterioration of Britain's position among the Caribbean plantation economies.

37 Hawkesworth relocates Oroonoko's kingdom to Angloa, and Susan B. Iwanisziw sees the move to Angloa as an attempt to make the characters more sympathetic to English audiences: it "changed Oroonoko from Akan to Bantu but, more importantly, deflected attention from violent Coramantien slaves who, as a cultural group, had in 1675 fomented a rebellion in Barbados" (162). Interestingly, according to Douglas B. Chambers, the presence of a Coramantien nation seems to come largely from Behn's own text: "Her account of the noble slave Oroonoko . . . may have had a germinal role in constructing, for literate Englishmen at least, the master 'recursive metaphor of Coramantee as a 'very warlike and brave' nation of noble savages. . . . In 1701, Christopher Cordrington, in a letter to the Board of Trade about a recent Coramantee-led uprising in Antigua, expanded this metaphor, nearly plagiarizing Behn" (31).

38 Breakdown of Nigerian population by religion: Muslim 50%, Christian 40%, indigenous beliefs 10% (Central Intelligence Agency).

39 When asked by Jessica Munns about Bandele's depiction of Surinam and the play's reliance on the Hawkesworth adaptation for its second act, Simon Reade, a RSC member who worked with director George Doran and Bandele on the play, told her that "after Bandele had written the African part . . . he did not produce a second part and explained that he was not interested in writing the Surinam section." As a result, Doran and Reade "edited [the Hawkesworth adaptation] down and Bandele added link passages" to the new first act. Reade added that he felt the stylistic contrast between the two acts worked to make the African scenes more vibrant, while the second half reflected "the drab world of slavery" making "audience register that they had left Africa and entered the world of a Restoration play." In doing so, Reade hoped they reverse what he implied was the orientalism of the original novel making it the "Surinams that are sordid, unjust and cruel, but which are also polished by the glamour of the exotic and the gloss of heroism" (190). Of note in this chapter's discussion of the play are the way the Restoration and romance values Behn uses are seen as archaic and corrupt in a way ironically similar to Hawkesworth's assessment of Southerne: though he sought to separate the play from its Restoration and romance roots, Hawkesworth emerges in this adaptation as emblematic of those very things. Also relevant is the implicit argument made by Reade and Bandele that the African scenes are more realistic than the ones in Surinam: considering Bandele's association of the first act with his vision of Nigeria, the killing of the Muslim messengers becomes more a more central, and in my opinion, disturbing aspect of this representation of Africa.

Chapter Two: Debating English Protestantism in

I. Tufayl's *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*, Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*

In his essay “On Cruelty”, Alexander Pope expresses the belief that kindness towards weaker animals is universally seen as a virtue. To support this claim, he refers to the Ottomans:

Every one knows how remarkable the Turks are for their humanity in this kind: I remember an Arabian author, who has written a treatise to show, how far a man supposed to have subsisted in a desert island, without any instruction, or so much as the sight of any other man, may, by the pure light of nature, attain the knowledge of philosophy and virtue. One of the first things he makes him observe is, that universal benevolence of nature in the protection and preservation of its creatures. In imitation of which the first act of virtue he thinks his self-taught philosopher would of course fall into is, to relieve and assist all the animals about him in their wants and distresses. (*Guardian* #61: May 21, 1713)

The “Arabian author[‘s]” narrative here is that of twelfth-century Andalusian scholar and philosopher Muhammad Ibn Tufayl’s *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*. This narrative which, when mentioned at all in English literary scholarship, is usually just a briefly cited as a precursor to Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*, while its use in understanding late seventeenth and early eighteenth century English culture through the translations produced from 1671 to 1708 lies relatively untapped.

The narrative centers around Hayy Ibn Yaqzan (literally, “Alive Son of Awake”), a man raised on an island by a doe. After his foster mother dies, the I. Yaqzan attempts to discover the nature and meaning of existence. He begins with the material – dissecting his foster mother’s body to find the source of life, observing the animals and plants around him – but, eventually, he turns away from the material to the spiritual through

fasting and meditation, where he is able to commune with God. Afterwards, he meets a “civilized” man, Asâl, who teaches him languages but is more impressed with this “natural” man’s understanding of the divine. They return to Asâl’s civilized island but eventually must retract their beliefs because the people cannot cope with this new spirituality that depends on individual searching and not hierarchal commands.

In forming his narrative, I. Tufayl drew on the works of Ibn Sīnā, better known to European scholars as Avicenna; an eleventh-century Persian physician, philosopher Aristotlean scholar and author two philosophical works which I. Tufayl adapted and expanded upon, *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan* and *Salāmān and Absāl*.¹ Lawrence I. Conrad points out that I. Sīnā’s influence on I. Tufayl’s work is not limited to superficial plot similarities, but helped shaped the philosophical foundations of the text. Showing I. Tufayl’s familiarity with I. Sīnā’s work and its effect on his own writing, Conrad points to the similar philosophical themes found in both men’s works, such as “themes of estrangement from the company of women, the rescue and nurturing of the vulnerable hero by a wild animal, and a personal disillusionment with society that resolves itself through retreat to solitude and contemplation of God” as well as “the notion of a sacred territory involved in some vital way with the quest of the hero, and the theme of the voyage in search of truths of the cosmos: a physical journey in Ibn Sīnā’s case, and an intellectual and mystical one with Ibn Tufayl” (“Intro.” 32). A striking difference between I. Sīnā and I. Tufayl’s work is the latter shift towards internal rather than external events. For I. Sīnā, the titular character Hayy I. Yaqzan represents an element of the spiritual journey of the story’s true protagonists, the author.² *Salāmān and Absāl* also posses a more active role than the more abstract philosophical debates of those two

characters engage in I. Tufayl's version: in the older version Absal is Salaman's younger brother, who must go to war "in order to avoid the immoral designs of the latter's wife;" the wife succeeds in having the army desert her brother-in-law and when he returns to save the kingdom, she poisons him; her husband becomes a hermit, and in this more spiritual vocation, receives a vision revealing his wife's machinations (Siddiqi 529-530).³

The quest narrative and royal entanglements of I. Sinia's works imply a romance context for I. Tufayl's narrative; adding to this, one of I. Yaqzan's two possible origin stories is based in the tradition of Alexandrian romance. In his discussion of the narrative in relation to I. Tufayl's other works, Bakhtyar Husain Siddiqi references "*Dhu al-Qarnain wa Qissat al-Sanam w-al-Malak wa Bintuhu*, a Greek tale translated into Arabic . . . [which] narratives how, under royal displeasures the daughter of a king threw away her natural daughter" just as I. Yaqzan's mother does with her son to prevent the king, her brother, from learning of her secret liaison with I. Yaqzan's father; thrown into the sea, he eventually lands on an "an uninhabited island where she was nourished by a roe. . . . later, Alexander the Great chanced to meet her in the island of Oreon" (531).⁴

In this chapter, I will look at how this romance-infused text was used in late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century discourses surrounding English identity, and how it can provide a context for reading the Islamic references within Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. When read with the knowledge that debates over the nature of English Protestantism was influenced by interactions with the Ottoman Empire as well as Arabic scholarship, Defoe's novel emerges as a text grappling with an unstable English identity, destabilized within England by Islamic influence and threatened from without by the cultural and military superiority of the Muslim held Mediterranean. Crusoe's actions on his island exile are not

emblematic Christian imperial success but symptomatic of English insecurities over their overseas endeavors.

Pope's casual reference to I. Tufayl's narrative provides an example of what G.A. Russell has termed the "'Arabick' interest" of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.⁵ This movement, according to G.A. Russell, "permeated English society at all levels, to include the court, the clergy the colleges of universities, diplomatic service as well as mercantile companies." At Cambridge and Oxford, knowledge of Arabic was a requirement for the Arts degree; increased scholarship in the field led to an increase in the collection, translation and publication of Arabic texts; theologians and political writers across the spectrum turned to these texts to support their arguments (*Intro 2*). While the influence of Islamic cultures can be seen throughout English society, the acceptance varied regarding this foreign presence in the national imagination. For some, it was a way of breaking away from old hierarchies of Church and State while maintaining some kind of link with the past; but for others, it challenged their definition of what it mean to be "English," threatening to dissolve this newly emerging identity.⁶

This chapter examines the expression of this tension between domestic identity and foreign influence in the castaway narratives of I. Tufayl and Daniel Defoe. The first section explores the way different sections of society read *Hayy* by analyzing the ideological context of each translation; the second, explores the way Crusoe's captivity in Sallee is central to understanding the ideological significance of Crusoe's later suffering, in both the instability of his religious-national identity and his relationships with his two servants, Xury and Friday. Both sections show the necessity of viewing English Protestant identity as being informed by its contact with the Islamic world. By examining

the I. Tufayl translations and the impact of Crusoe's Mediterranean captivity on the rest of the novel, we can see a larger debate at play over English identity and the role foreign, non-Christian influences should have in forming it and will argue for the necessity of viewing English Protestant identity as being informed by its contact with the Islamic world.

Debating English Protestantism: the translations of I. Tufayl

Given the fact that the Church of England was established as a sign of monarchical authority, the political and religious identities of the country remained firmly enmeshed in one another. As a result, both areas wrestled with issues of who had authority over whom in English society. On one hand, the Anglican Church had disavowed the foreign power of the Pope over English spirituality and made its own monarchs religious and political heads; in this light, obedience to the state could be conflated with obedience to God. On the other hand, more radical forms of Protestantism, such as the kind that helped fuel the English Civil War, advocated a non-hierarchical view of religion, where everyone could have an individual relationship with God; this individualist view spilled into the political arena, as members of these sects viewed political authorities as men like themselves rather than invested with divine authority.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, concepts of English sovereignty - over one's self and as a political structure - were deeply connected to other areas of study as well. John Locke embodies in many ways the post-Restoration views of man and government. His 1688 *Second Treatise on Government* offers a justification of William and Mary's coup and the expulsion of Mary's father James II. Locke's insistence that an infringement on individual rights results in a State of War bolsters the new government's

argument that the monarchy's power needed to be limited: "he who would get me into his Power without my consent, would use me as he pleased, when he had got me there, and destroy me too when he had a fancy to it: for no body can desire to *have me in his Absolute Power*, unless it be to compel me by force to that, which is against the Right of my Freedom, *i.e.* to make me a Slave" (III.17.5-11). Here, the rights of individuals – not the state – are of the utmost importance, with any threat to their freedom acting as a sign of future incursions. Without sovereignty over one's own self, one is reduced to being a slave.⁷

This emphasis on personal freedom is emphasized in political and religious writings following the coup, providing an atmosphere receptive to ideas outside of traditional sources. The early work of Daniel Defoe, for example, is heavily influenced by a Lockean perspective. In *Reflections on the Late Great Revolution*, Defoe argues that not only should monarchy be based on a social contract, but that it does not exist without one as a "*Compact and Agreement between the Prince and the People, is the very Cornerstone of Monarchy itself*"(28).⁸ He aligns this view of government with a bias towards a non-cosmopolitan, Protestant argument when he discusses how the "late King *James*" has "forfeited his Right [to rule]" and "that his Subjects are actually freed from their Allegiance to him" in part because of his association with the Catholic powers of France and the Vatican, in addition to charges that he wife's recent birth to an heir was the result of adultery, and that during his rule, James II flaunted national law (49-51). He frames the triumph of the 1688 coup in biblical terms, citing *Corinthians II* he declares, "*Behold, the day of salvation is at hand . . . We may all with one Heart and one Mouth bles God for*

his wonderful Deliverance, and pray for the Prosperity and long Life of King WILLIAM and Queen MARY” (68).

Defoe’s ideological stance – much like Locke and the post-1688 government’s - is the product of an England that needed to redefine itself against Catholic Europe and as a result turned to Eastern texts and models. As mentioned earlier, Arabic studies in England were prompt in large part by a desire to find a new source of religious authority: repudiating Catholic doctrines of apostolic succession, Protestantism’s “reassessment of the traditional concepts of religious authority” and in an attempt “to differentiate the Church of England from that of Rome, as well as from other reformed Churches in Europe,” using the Churches of the East a precursor and model. . . .[;]Arabic was seen as a means of establishing communication with these Christians” (Russell, *Intro* 3, 5). In the early days of the English reformation where, despite theological differences, English Protestants attempted to politically ally themselves with the Turks against its Catholic adversaries, especially Spain. In her letters to Sultan Murad III, Elizabeth I “emphasized the fact that as a Protestant Christian, she rejected the veneration of idolatrous images which the Pope and the Spanish king practiced” and “to confirm her anti-Catholic position, she included the raw materials and weapons that were sent to the Sultan, ‘fragments of broken images,’ which must have appealed to the iconoclastic Muslim potentate” (Matar 123).

This political alliance became theological weapon for Catholic powers wishing to discredit England’s break from Rome: “by 1589 there was such a deep conviction on the continent of an Anglo-Turkish alliance that central European Catholics were saying in Istanbul that ‘the English lack nothing to make them sound Mussulmans, and need only

stretch out a finger to become one with the Turks in outward appearance, in religious observance and in their whole character” (Matar 123, 124). While this comment is meant more a slur on Protestantism than any real theological analysis, it helps to clarify why some English subjects felt comfortable with the insertion of Islamic culture in their everyday lives.

However, this connection between Islam and English identity contained a conundrum. In order to establish a strong link between national and religious identity, English Protestants need to study Arabic in order to have the intellectual means and historic tradition to break away from the rest of Europe. Yet, the pursuit of this goal required the study of Islamic texts, which ran counter to the Christian belief that Islam was a counterfeit religion. It is important to remember that during the late seventeenth and into the eighteenth century, England was not a powerful, international force, but a small, isolated island when compared to more powerful, better organized world powers, such as the Ottomans.

Compounding the fears that Islamic influence was destabilizing English identity was the perception of “Muslim” as a racially and culturally instable category in and of itself. As illustrated by Pope’s reference to I. Tufayl, the various nations, tribes and cultural groups who practiced Islam, were often grouped into one undistinguished mass, referred to interchangeably as Moors, Turks, and Arabs. By not recognizing the cultural divisions between Muslims, many failed to distinguish a cohesive cultural identity in the religion at all. As Vitkus points out, the “Turks and their ‘nation’ were often depicted by European writers as a people without a deep-rooted, essential identity of their own. Instead of possessing a long-standing, ethnic position, they were characterized as

upstarts, thieves, or as expanding, dangerously absorptive nations of renegade that had come into existence by feeding off other nations” (16). The view of Islam as an unstable identity colors the views of those uncomfortable with its effects on English: in their eyes to mix their beliefs and identity with Islam’s not only threatened to change what it meant to be English (which as discussed earlier, was not that well defined to begin with), but it exchanged their current identity for one that was diverse, chaotic and rootless.

By examining the translations of *Hayy*, one can see the tensions being played out against each other, as one side seeks to contain I. Tufayl to a secular, academic world and the other seeks to use it to transform social hierarchies in a religious revolution. Both sides, however, drew upon the same scholarly source: Edward Pocock the younger’s 1671 *Philosophus Autodidactus* translated I. Tufayl’s Arabic into the international language of Europe’s educated readers, Latin.

Pocock’s translation signals the rediscovery of I. Tufayl by European audiences.⁹ Published in Oxford, the text includes both a copy of an Arabic edition as well as his own translation into Latin, which is widely regarded as meticulous to a fault¹⁰ - at least in the sections that it retains from the Arabic source material.¹¹ As Matar points out, the lack of emphasis on the Islamic passages is due in part to the reliance of translators such as Keith and Ashwell upon Pococke’s version, which “had been edited with the aim of reducing its Islamic content particularly in its allusions to the Prophet Mohammad” in the Latin translation (*Islam in Britain*, 100). Despite or perhaps because of these omissions, the neo-Platonic story of a man’s use of reason to comprehend the divine found a large readership throughout Europe, with Pocock-based versions emerging in Dutch, German and English. These subsequent translations show how Protestant identity, especially in

England where Protestants were further divided between the State and dissenting churches, was not formed merely as a reaction to Roman Catholicism, but was also shaped through its interactions with non-European and non-Christian cultures.

Following the scholarly success of Pocock's translation, three major translations would be made into English from 1674 to 1708. George Keith, a Quaker, used the text as a means to convey his own religious beliefs to an English public in 1674.¹² The editorial interventions of this version transplant *Hayy* from the realm of the scholarly into the religious identity of England. Keith's translation reflects the periods overlapping but still distinct readership than the one represented by Locke, that of the Dissenters and Non-conformists.¹³ At the time, the Quaker beliefs that Keith held were seen as compatible with I. Tufayl's work. During England's colonial expansion into the Americas in the seventeenth century, dissenting churches were sites of local power disconnected from the hierarchies in England. Michael J. Braddick contends that these non-conformist attitudes were directly connected in the general public with challenges to government authority: "throughout this period, to deny public gestures of respect was in effect to deny a claim to authority. For example, Quakers were notorious for refusing to remove their hats in the presence of 'superiors.' This has to be understood as a symbolic repudiation of this larger interaction order – the basis of authority recognized by the Quakers was quite different from the authority projected by patriarchal justices (Braddick 97).¹⁴ I. Tufayl's text appealed to dissenters because of its highly individualized stance on religion, particularly its emphasis on prophecy.

Interest in the *Hayy* also connects back to the early days of the English reformation where, despite theological differences, English Protestantism attempted to

politically ally itself with the Turks against its Catholic adversaries, especially Spain. The long standing political rhetoric between the Turks and the English helps to clarify why Dissenters such as Keith feels comfortable using I. Tufayl's text to bolster his own position. Both the tradition of English-Ottoman relations as well as the compatibility between I. Tufayl's and Dissenter presentations of individual religious authority, made the progression from Pocock's scholarly translation to Keith's religious and political driven version a logical transition.

In his 'Advertisement to the Reader,' Keith explains the specific relevance of this twelfth-century Islamic text to contemporary English audiences: "I found a great freedom in mind to put it into English for a more general service, as believing it might be profitable unto many; but my particular *motives* which engaged me hereunto was, that I found some good things in it, which were both very savoury and refreshing to me; and indeed there are some sentences in it that I highly approve [. . .] These with many other profitable things agreeable to Christian Principles are to be found here (ii-iii).¹⁵ Keith aligns I. Tufayl's text with a larger Protestant movement that aimed to educate and inform a literate population of believers about theological truths. His reference to "freedom" he gains in translating *Hayy* hits on one of his fundamental beliefs as a Quaker: the freedom of the individual to define his own relationship with the Divine outside of the authority of institutionalized hierarchies. His desire to translate the text is based on a faith in an individual reader's ability to discern what is and what is not useful to his religious growth, even if it is found in a non-Christian text. That Keith finds an older Islamic text "both very savoury and refreshing . . . with many other profitable things agreeable to Christian principles," signals part of the radicalism found in

dissenting movements in their willingness to go against traditional Church (both of England and of Rome) definitions of acceptable spiritual sources.

It is not just a break with the traditions of older religious Christian institutions but also a movement away from institutions in general, with the story of an individual independently finding divine knowledge being a prime source of interest for Keith and the dissenting movement of which he was part. I. Tufayl would exert a strong influence on Keith's future work, and through him, English Protestant belief. As discussed in the introduction, recent scholarship by G.A. Russell locates the translations as influential on prominent English political and religious philosophers during the seventeenth and early eighteenth century. Similar to her view of I. Tufayl's influence on John Locke, Russell connects the interest in I. Tufayl's text with Keith's later works: "For Keith, the *Philosophus autodidactus* represented precisely what he summarized as the Quaker 'common notion' [described in formal Quaker manifesto *Theses Theologiae*, which he co-wrote with Barclay in 1675]: 'the sufficiency of inner light'" (248). Indeed, I. Yaqzan's example of finding divine truth through "the sufficiency of inner light" is a path Keith advocates that his readers follow in their lives. His break with older Christian traditions signals how radically different Dissenter goals were from that of the State Church: for Keith, his translation forms part of an attempt to re-educate English Protestants to judge knowledge not by the cultural or historical context that produced them but by an intellectual and spiritual standard that transcends time, culture and even religion.

Keith's work differs from other translations in its insistence on readers viewing *Hayy* as directly applicable to their own religious lives. For example, George Ashwell's

1686 version, *The History of Hai Eb'n Yockdan, an Indian Prince: or, The Self-Taught Philosopher*, aligns itself with a more scholarly view of the text and the introduction makes it clear that the translation is not meant to be an attack on the established political and social hierarchies.¹⁶ The full title attempts to mediate the foreignness of the original author through the concept of universal reason: by making “Abi Jaafar Eb'n Tophail, a philosopher by profession, and a Mahometan by religion,” Ashwell privileges the philosopher as part of a universal tradition, separating from the cultural difference represented by his religion. Keith and the dissenting movement he represents saw I. Tufayl's text as a means for separating English Protestantism away from both the Roman Catholic Church as well as from the close bonds between the Anglican Church and its state.

Keith's work differs from other translations in its insistence on readers viewing *Hayy* as directly applicable to their own religious lives. Ashwell, on the other hand, was an Anglican clergyman, who throughout his life, expressed support for monarchical and state power: “During the civil war Ashwell preached before the royal court assembled at Oxford. . . .Ashwell was a convinced royalist, who owned a manuscript copy of Sir Robert Filmer's *Patriarcha*, and at whose suggestion Peter Heylin wrote Parliament's *Power in Laws for Religion*” (Dixon, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*).¹⁷ The introduction presents the text as part of a scholarly endeavor towards rational Enlightenment by categorizing his translation and I. Tufayl's work as concerned with moral philosophy rather than culture or theology: whereas some men live by “giddily following their own Phancies, or other Mens Opinions, . . .for the Guides of their Faith and Manners,” Ashwell holds I. Tufayl as transcending time and culture. For him, “the

Philosopher, whose life is here described, will instruct them in such principles of Morality and Reason . . . as the light of Nature discovers, and which must needs be acknowledged for True by all those, who will judge and act as Men, according to the Dictates of Reason, and the Conclusions of resulting from Experience” (iii). Ashwell defines universal truth as resulting from human rationality and empirical knowledge. All, he argues, may arrive at universal truth “agreed in such principles as humane Reason teacheth out of the Book of Nature, which sets forth to our view of Gods works of Creation and Providence” (iii-iv). He may give credit to God but he emphasizes Nature more than theology.

While Ashwell focuses on the universalism of I. Tufayl’s philosophy in his presentation of it to the reader, within his translation several changes were made to reduce the appearance of “foreignness.” Using Pocock’s Latin instead of the original Arabic, Ashwell’s text would lack several references to Islamic theology found in the original without any effort on his part; but, Ashwell added to these omissions, choosing to deemphasize cultural and theological differences between the text and his audience in order to present Christian and Muslim thought as sharing a common ground through reason. In his survey of translations of I. Tufayl’s work, Lawrence I. Conrad points out that this “translation by George Ashwell is noteworthy for his decision to drop Ibn Tufayl’s extremely important introduction (a grave error followed by several later translators), and to prune out material unlikely to appeal to seventeenth-century English audiences, e.g. the account of Hayy’s spontaneous generation and details on meteorology” (277). By eliminating references to the fanciful and fantastic, Ashwell is able to make place the text in the area of secular philosophy, without exposing the text to

scholarly critique for its less believable sections, or to religious critique for its elements that are less compatible with England's views on Christianity at the time.¹⁸

While both the Keith and the Ashwell help illustrate the importance I. Tufayl's text gained in both religious and scholarly circles, Keith's stands out as representing an alternative view of Arabic studies, not directly acknowledged by Pocock and Ashwell. This connection between English Protestant identity and Islam was not wholly accepted in mainstream English belief. In 1708, Simon Ockley, a member of the Anglican clergy and later a professor of Arabic at Cambridge, published his translation that holds the distinction of being the first English translation to use an Arabic source and of offering a direct rebuttal to Keith's claims.¹⁹ Reprinted again in London 1711 and Dublin 1731, this version would emerge as the English version used and respected by translators to the present day.²⁰

In the Ockley translation, the preface and appendix frame the text in dual sets of anxieties over English and Christian identity. The opening deals with Ockley's concerns that previous English translations have missed much of the original sense of the Arabic by relying on Pocock's Latin translation rather than the source material. However, this seemingly scholastic argument also signifies an assertion of English identity. First, it begs the question of why an English translation is necessary at all, considering Ockley's anxieties over its influence on English Protestant belief. Second, by circumventing the Latin and using a straight translation from Arabic to Latin, he is pushing forward the scholarliness of the language in relation to Latin. These moves are a direct attack on Keith's use of the text to forward his Dissenter agenda. Viewing such attempts as a danger to English social order, Ockley lumps Keith and I. Tufayl into what he

derogatorily refers to as Enthusiasts. This category of people, in his view, misapplies what knowledge they have, which is shown in their lack of scholarly and spiritual integrity. As the editorial material progresses, it becomes increasingly apparent that while I. Tufayl may be given this label, the true targets of Ockley's disdain are Dissenters like Keith.

Ockley opens his preface by positioning the text within the bounds of solid, English scholarship. Describing the success (academic not necessarily financial) of Pocock's 1671 Latin Translation, he positions his predecessor in the context of an ongoing scholarly project to translate other works by I. Tufayl. When he comes to the text itself – which he's rechristened *The Improvement of Human Reason* - the preface's tone becomes more reserved and Ockley's views more obscured:

The Design of the Author is to shew, how Human Capacity, unassisted by any External Help may, by due Application, attain to the Knowledge of Natural Things, and so by Degrees find out its Dependence upon a Superior Being, the Immortality of the Soul and all things necessary to Salvation. How well he has succeeded in this Attempt, I leave to the Reader to judge. (ix)

Unlike the preface's early accounts of English oriental scholarship, the place of I. Tufayl and his text in English culture is more ambiguous. Ockley distances himself from the argument by labeling it the "Design of the Author," placing even its success in question and a subject he will not offer judgment on. Nor will he comment here on the text's view of revelation as unnecessary for individuals to know God, the quality that prompted Keith's translation. Both argument and interpretation are responsibilities Ockley rejects.

The claims of the source material reinforce rationalist arguments for understanding the cosmos through abstraction but its claims of salvation through the

individual's mind run counter to the nation's mainstream religious views. Given that oriental texts were used both by and against deism, it is difficult to determine where Ockley falls and why – aside from his scholarly scruples with earlier translations – he feels the need for an accurate English translation of *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan* to be available for the English reading public. His views of the earlier translations and gestures towards an intended audience shed some light on his motivations. On Dr. Ashwell's translation, Ockley offers no commentary; but concerning Keith's, his criticism begins a theme that will continue in the Appendix: “the *Quakers* who imagin'd that there was something in it that favoured their Enthusistick [sic] Notions” (ix). The non-scholarly use of the text seems to raise Ockley's hackles. His deriding tone toward the religious translator's “imagin'd” belief that I. Tufayl offered him support for “Enthusistick [sic] Notions” sets up the critique of the quality of these translations. By leaving Ashwell's position unembellished, the Quakers become the focus of his comments that earlier translations failed to live up to his scholarly standards. Both “were not made out of the Original *Arabick*, but out of the *Latin*,” but since the Quakers have been singled out as less scholarly than Ashwell, his critique seems to fall more to them than to a potential colleague like Ashwell. Ockley goes on to argue that these earlier translation “had mistaken the Sense of the Author in many places” and since we do not know what “sense” Ashwell aimed for, this critique seems once again aimed at those who would incorporate oriental sources into religion. Ockley seems to be trying to carve a space for oriental studies separate from the actual beliefs of his English readers.

Indeed, increasing his readers' interest in oriental scholarship, specifically Arabic, is one of his stated purposes: “observing that a great many of my Friends whom I had a

desire to oblige, and other Persons whom I would willingly incline to a more favourable Opinion of *Arabick Learning*, had not seen the book” (ix-x). Under this motive, the Quaker’s motivation may run counter to Ockley’s scholarly mission. Fostering a “more favourable Opinion of *Arabick Learning*” includes outline the correct uses of oriental texts. The danger of misreading comes more apparent in the Preface’s closing lines: “And lest any Person should, through mistake, make any ill use of it [his new translation], I have subjoin’d an *Appendix*, the Design of which the Reader may see in its proper place” (x). While he may have left the success of I. Tufayl’s argument “to the Reader to judge,” the Reader’s own use of the text, it emerges, is restricted to the uses Ockley sees fit. The marginal anxieties over “ill use” and the “proper place” of the text, come to fruition in Ockley’s instructional Appendix.

While the preface leaves the success of I. Tufyal’s attempt to the reader’s discretion, in the Appendix, this Anglican Vicar from Cambridgeshire carefully instructs the reader on how to judge the foundation behind that attempt. The title lays out his preliminary goal: it is a space “In which the Author’s Notion concerning the Possibility of Man’s attaining to the true Knowledge of God, and the Things necessary to the Salvation, without the Use of external Means, is briefly consider’d” (163). For Ockley, the meat of the texts is in the authority an individual can have in making pronouncements on the divine without any outside, institutional instruction. In a time and space where the religious and political were deeply intertwined, it is not too far a stretch to argue that Ockley is concerned about independence from the Church of England leading to independence of the Crown. His citing of the Quakers supports this: his motivation for

writing comes from his desire to re-claim the text and its potential readers from dissenters.

That Ockley wants to save I. Tufayl's text in addition to Christian English readers is the claim with which the appendix opens. After a lengthy compound sentence on the merits of the text, the first line ends with a succinct admonishment of dissenting Christians: "So, as it [the text] contains several things co-incident with the errors of some Enthusiasts of these present Times, it deserves to be consider'd" (167). To a degree, this seems contradictory to the scholarly pursuit he placed the text in by dedicating to Pocock, but given that missionary interests were deeply intertwined with Oriental Studies, the slippage between academic and spiritual pursuits is not unconventional. What I do find interesting is his emphasis of the dangers of his "present time." As opposed to a twelfth-century past where crusades were fought and Spain was Islamic, Ockley locates the danger of a Muslim author's philosophical-religious treatise in the manner eighteenth-century English Christians use it.

At the time, the Quaker beliefs that Keith had seen as compatible with I. Tufayl's work represented a potential threat to state power. During England's colonial expansion into the Americas in the seventeenth century, dissenting churches were sites of local power disconnected from the hierarchies in England. These, according to Carla Gardina Pestana, "had the advantage of being localized, with powers that churches instead residing in the congregation. . . . The Society of Friends flourished in the New World" (75).²¹ This along with the history of political upheaval by radical Protestants (the Civil War, for instance) and their resistance of existing social hierarchies, made Quakers and other Dissenters a threat to civil order. This view permeates Ockley's presentation of

Tufayl's work and explains his disdain for "Enthusiasts" attempting to change the existing social hierarchies through *Hayy*.

As the supplementary material unfolds, it becomes apparent that Ockley is concerned with the potential power certain interpretations of the text would offer: Old Testament prophecy. Given that the biblical prophets were consistently at odds with the rulers of their communities and acted outside of human hierarchies of power, the role of prophet offer a real threat to the authority of the state and its church. Ockley is critical of I. Tufayl's own beliefs, but forgives them due to their cultural and historical distance from his own time: "There are a Great many Errors both in the *Philosophy* and *Divinity*: And it was impossible it should be otherwise, the one being a thorough *Aristotelian* and the other *Mahometen*" (168). However, while he will excuse a Muslim author, he uses Islam itself as a means to attack his true target – the Quaker "Enthusiasts." Closing his list of I. Tufayl's "errors," Ockley declares,

I need not insist upon this any longer; I shall only remark, that as a true Piety is same in all Ages and Climates, and good solid Sense too, so also is Enthusiasm. And I have sometimes wondered when I have read the Whimsies and Conceits of the Arab Enthusiast [. . .] to find such a Harmony between them and ours at present. [. . .] Let the *Enthusiast* have never such great Abilities, there is always something or other which proves his Pretensions to Revelation to be false; as they tell us, that, let the Devil change himself into what shape he will he can never conceal his Cloven Foot; so neither can the *Enthusiast* make himself pass for Inspired, with any Person of tolerable discerning (192-193).

Ockley uses Tufayl's Otherness as a Muslim to distance Quakers from "true" Christianity. By performing the simple take of disproving I. Tufayl's beliefs as non-Christian, he then conflates Quaker belief with Islam, drawing upon the early eighteenth century belief in Muhammad as a religious fraud. The emphasis on dishonesty portrays

the Quakers as intentionally using text such as *Hayy Ibn Yaqdhan* to deceive the English reading public, making it possible for Ockley to make the movement from Quakers to Islam to Satan.

However, after making the connection between dissenters and the devil, Ockley attempts to reclaim I. Tufayl, severing the connection between his work and Quakers such as Keith. He closes his Appendix by integrating I. Tufayl into mainstream English Christianity by reading *Hay Ibn Yaqzan* as a cautionary tale for the laity overstepping their intellectual boundaries, rather than a treatise in favor of increased religious independence for individuals: “It remains that we [. . .] heartily apply our selves to the diligent Use of those Means which he has appointed for our Instruction, in his Church. That we seek for the knowledge of him in his holy Word, and *approach* to him in his Ordinances, and by a holy pious conversation” (194). The focus on adherence to the Bible, church ritual and “holy pious conversation” mirrors the instructions a defeated Hayy Ibn Yaqzan gives to civilized island he visits. Asâl convinces I. Yaqzan to accompany him to civilization by arguing that the “Sect [living on Asâl’s island] was supreme to all other sorts of Men in Knowledge and Sagacity; and that if he [I. Yaqzan] could not work upon them, there was much lesser Hopes of doing nay Good upon the Vulgar” (154). This island is set up the true test of whether Yaqzan’s utopia can transfer itself to the rest of humanity. It cannot.

Disheartened by the island inhabitant’s inability to comprehend or even openly listen to new ideas based on rational thought and empiricism, I. Yaqzan gives them instructions similar to those Ockley gives to the reader:

he understood the Condition of Mankind, and that the greatest part of them were like Brute Beast, [. . .] he begg'd their Pardon for what he had said to them, and desir'd to be excus'd and told them he was of the same opinion with them, and [. . .] persuaded them to stick strictly to their Resolution of keeping in the Bounds of the Law, and the Performance of External Rites [. . .] they should abstain from novel Opinions, and from their Appetites, and follow the Examples of their pious Ancestors (158-159).

For Ockley to offer his readers in the British isles the same advice conflates them with the “Brute Beast[s]” of the civilized island. What he omits in the Appendix is that in the story some, such as Asâl, are capable of pursue the religious impudence outlined in the text. What separates him from his fellow islanders is his natural inclination towards contemplation and isolation (140). Placing this in the context of Ockley’s praise of Pocock and neutrality on Ashwell, it is plausible to see that an implicit argument concerning who are proper readers for Arabic texts: Ockley and his fellow scholars.

Ockley’s reinterpretation of I. Tufayl’s text makes his closing lines ambiguous: “These are the Ways [adhering the scripture and tradition] which he has chalk’d out no fitter Bearer than **Hai Ebn Yokdan**, with whose Character and Language you are so well acquainted, and to whom you have so long ago shown so great a Respect, that I have no reason to fear but he will be welcome” (194-195).²² Is the story useful because it reminds the reader to follow I. Yaqzan’s advice to stick with traditional beliefs or the natural man - and by extension his author - an example of someone who has gone beyond the prescribed boundaries of religious thought. The openness of this ending draws attention to the way the tensions of the supplementary material parallels the tensions in the narrative. Just as I. Yaqzan and Asâl endeavor to find a means to connect the knowledge of one island with the inhabitants of the other, Ockley wants to reconcile his interest and promotion of Islamic texts with his professed beliefs in Christianity.

Ockley's dual desires to keep I. Tufayl's works in his own life as an academic while preventing others from "misreading" or "misusing" it to the detriment of Protestant England can be seen as representing the larger debate over Islamic influence on English culture. Coming out of the Civil Wars, the Restoration and the 1688 coup, England was in the midst of a moment of self-definition: what kind of government, social hierarchies, and religious beliefs were "English"? How was Protestant England in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries different from its Catholic counterparts on the continent or for that matter, its past as a loyal nation to Rome? To properly understand these issues, we must keep in mind that for this period, England was not simply trying to position itself in regards to Catholics-Protestant continental conflicts or the exploration of potential colonial holdings in the Americas: Islam, too, existed as a palpable force that extended into the political, scholarly, cultural and spiritual lives of English subjects.

Robinson Crusoe and the Allure of Islam

Since its first publication in 1719, *Robinson Crusoe* has undergone a multitude of reinterpretations. One of its first reviewers, Charles Gildon, attacked the text's "faulty view of Church and State, the impiety of Crusoe's reflections, and, most significantly, 'making the Truths of the Bible of a piece with the fictitious Story of *Robinson Crusoe*'" (Bartoloemo 38). Gildon's concerns focus on Defoe himself and the tension between truth and fiction. These issues quickly fell to the wayside as the narrative took on a mythic quality independent of author or physical text.²³ Gildon also comments - with no small amount of disdain and trepidation - on the popularity of Defoe's novel and its acceptance as a solidly Protestant text: in an imaginary dialogue between Crusoe, Defoe and Friday, the author attempts to pacify his characters, flattering Crusoe that "there is

not an old Woman that can go the Price of it, but buys the Life and Adventures [of Robinson Crusoe], and leaves it as a Legacy, with *The Pilgrims Progress*, the *Practice of Piety*, and *God's Revenge against Murther*" (ix-x).²⁴ The association between *Robinson Crusoe* and English Protestant values, though satirical here, became second nature as the popularity of the text grew. Gildon was wary of the association of Defoe's book with Protestant values, viewing its popularity more as a source of discord than unity:

If his works should happen to live to the next Age, there would in all probability be a greater Strife among the several Parties whose he really was, than among the seven *Gracian* Cities, to which of them *Homer* belong'd: The *Dissenters* first would claim him as theirs, the *Whigs* in general as theirs, the *Tories* as theirs, the *Non-jurors* as theirs, the *Papists* as theirs, the *Atheists* as theirs, and so on to what Sub-divisions there may be among us (iv).

Despite the misgivings of critics like Gildon, *Robinson Crusoe's* popularity continued throughout the eighteenth century (and into the three centuries that followed). Paula Backscheider notes that not only did a fourth edition of *Robinson Crusoe* and its sequel *The Father Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* appear by the end of 1719, both "quickly appeared in pirated editions, imitations, and abridgements, and in a 164-part serialization in the *Original London Post*" (437),²⁵ and Samuel Johnson listed it as one the only three books he wished was longer.²⁶ Similar to my reading of the I. Tufayl translations, Gildon sees *Robinson Crusoe* as potentially being claimed by multiple sides in the feuds surrounding England's political and religious future. Also similar to my reading of Ockley's interpretation – or at least his translation – emerging as a dominant reading, the tug-of-war settled into preponderant view that Defoe's text exemplified a Protestant promotion of individual spiritual and commercial growth.

Soon, Defoe's novel came to exist as more than a book in the minds of many in England and the rest of Europe: it became a sort of mythical narrative, to explain alternatively, individual, English and European mastery of the self and world.²⁷ Treating *Robinson Crusoe* almost as an anonymous folk tale, Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Emile* (1762) placed a heavily abridged version of the text at the heart of his educational program. As Louis James points out:

Rousseau's advocacy placed *Crusoe* at the centre of the rapid expansion of children's literature that followed the Enlightenment in Europe, and influenced the changing concept of the child – particularly of the boy – during the period. In Germany the term 'Robinsonalter' came to be used to describe the point at which the twelve-year-old boy discovers himself on the island of responsible life. . . . Through the nineteenth century, the *Crusoe* story in England developed from practical instruction, to a celebration of colonialism. Leslie Stephen's [1909] essay on Defoe sees *Crusoe* as the representative of the men who "were building up vast systems of commerce and manufacture; shoving their intrusive persons into every quarter on the globe", from America to Australia and the Far East. The *Crusoe* myth became inscribed not only in the reading, but in the actual lives of nineteenth-century Britons. (James 2-3)

Recent criticism has attempted to return criticism of the text to the eighteenth-century context that produced it. Twentieth-century critics such as Ian Watt and Brian Fitzgerald read *Crusoe*'s religious and economic salvation as intertwined: much like nineteenth-century pro-colonial interpretations, *Crusoe*'s ability to make money was seen as the result of his Protestant values. Countering this trend, Maximillian E. Novak argues in "Robinson *Crusoe*'s 'Original Sin'" that *Crusoe*'s sin is more concerned with economics and class than morality and religious piety: "any view of *Crusoe* as the embodiment of the capitalistic spirit must take into account his penchant for traveling and hatred of a steady life. *Crusoe* does not disobey his parents in the name of free enterprise or economic freedom but for a strangely adventurous, romantic and unprofitable desire to

see foreign lands” (29). In response to Novak’s deemphasizing of Crusoe’s religious motivations, J. Paul Hunter’s *The Reluctant Pilgrim* contests readings that view religion as incidental to the plot by pointing to textual evidence of Defoe’s thorough knowledge of Puritanism as well as the text’s pattern of disobedience, repentance and redemption.

Srivinivas Aravamudan’s *Tropicopolitans* compares the text’s colonial narratives to contemporary accounts of mercantilism and piracy, with the latter working as an alterative world to the colonial rules that dictate the former. Roxann Wheeler’s *The Complexion of Race* reads Defoe’s novel as illustrating the racial theory behind colonial portraits of native subjects. While touched upon by some of the critics, particularly the latter two, little attention has been spent on the trans-Mediterranean context that provides the religious, racial and economic history shaping Crusoe’s Atlantic world.

The influence *Robinson Crusoe* exerts on how future generations viewed English national, religious and imperial identity helped to position the “rise of the novel” as part of an assertion of a uniquely English Protestant identity. Ian Watt positions it as an origin point for a new genre that articulated a new era: “it is appropriate that the tradition of the novel should begin with a work that annihilated the relationships of the traditional social order . . . the terms of the problem of the novel and of modern thought alike were established when the old order of moral and social relationships was shipwrecked, with Robinson Crusoe, by the rising tide of individualism” (92). Rather than looking forward to English imperial domination, this chapter will look backwards at the cultural environment that produced the novel. In this context, the Ottomans not the English are the major imperial power, and Crusoe’s efforts to rule his island expose national insecurities over the cultural and colonial influence of the Islamic Mediterranean.

Reading Defoe's famous novel through the lens of Islam's shaping of English Protestant identity, I argue that *Robinson Crusoe* is deeply imbedded in the instability of English identity, especially in its relationship with Catholic Europe and the Islamic Mediterranean. While the act of domination most readers probably remember and that has generated the most controversy in *Robinson Crusoe* is the hero's subjection of Friday, this, like the novel's popularity, needs to be seen in a larger context that includes perceptions of Islam in eighteenth-century England. By doing so, an alternative interpretation emerges to earlier readings that focused on English colonial power: rather, the text presents an Englishman's, and through him England's, failed attempts at colonization and loss of identity against a backdrop of potent imperial success and superiority in the Ottoman's Regencies in North Africa.²⁸

Under the power of "That evil influence which carried me first away from my father's house, that hurried me into the wild and indigested notion of raising my fortune," Robinson Crusoe goes "on board a vessel bound to the coast of *Africa*; or, as our sailors vulgarly call it, a voyage to *Guinea* (15).²⁹ In the full version of this sentence, compound clauses build, magnifying his sin of disobedience as well as stressing his inability to control the "impulse" that drives him to what he presents as its inevitable conclusion of his voyage to West Africa:

That evil influence which carried me first away from my father's house, that hurried me into the wild and indigested notion of raising my fortune; and that imprest those conceits so forcibly upon me, as to make me deaf to all good advice, and to the entreaties and even command of my father: I say the same influence, whatever it was, presented the most unfortunate of all enterprises to my view; and I went on board a vessel bound to the coast of *Africa*; or, as our sailors vulgarly call it, a voyage to *Guinea*.

By beginning with a voyage in Africa instead of the Americas, the text places Robinson into a space imbued with centuries of interactions between Christian Europeans, Muslims and tribal Africans. The island, on the contrary, represents a blank space – its emptiness and lack of that history between religious and racial groups is necessary to create a potentially utopian space for the protagonist.

Why does Defoe then to begin Robinson's adventures on the old side of the Atlantic rather than the new? I believe that he does so in order to set up the text's ideology of master-servant relations, placing his power over the island and Friday in an older and more complex context. Rather than "civilized" man extending benevolent paternalism towards a "natural," the earlier African sequence leads the reader through a series of different kinds of master-servant relationships in order to discard some in favor of those that position Christian (Protestant) Europeans as more fit to rule than their Muslim Oriental counterparts.

Robinson's first voyage to West Africa goes well under the guidance of a captain he met in London. The Captain plays a paternalistic role with the green adventurer, kindly guiding him in his new life. Their relationship is described in terms of mutual reciprocity: "For, as he took delight to introduce me, I took delight to learn" (16). That he is under the guidance of the captain and possibly still under the financial protection of his father³⁰ signals that he remains in training to enter the realms of European mastery. However, as both free English Protestants, Robinson's relationship with the Captain differs from those he will have with his servants: as an apprentice, he is being trained to one day become the Captain's peer, but in Robinson's future relationships as a master, the future independence of his charges remain ambiguous at best.

On the second voyage, the Captain is dead and replaced by his Mate, who proves an ineffectual father-figure. Near Morocco, their ship is taken by pirates and Robinson forever exits the world of fathers training sons and enters a world of masters and slaves. Robinson's enslavement draws parallels with his first voyage by placing him under the command of the pirates' Captain, placing him in circumstances "not so dreadful as at first I apprehended" (17). However, what differentiates the two situations is the shift from son/apprentice to slave. There, the English Captain had focused on training him; here, the Muslim Captain only values his ability to perform labor: "as his proper prize . . . being young and nimble, and fit for his business" (17). Robinson moves from a man learning to create capital to a means of producing that capital for someone else. His shift "from a merchant to a miserable slave" immediately puts him in mind of the loss of his father: "now I look'd back upon my father's prophetick discourse to me."

This smooth movement from the change in status to his disobedience to his father at this point, I argue, signals his knowledge that he has – perhaps forever – left the old apprentice/son system of power: while the term "son" will be used in Friday's ambiguous and slightly perverse fashion, from here on, Robinson views his possible roles as either master or slave, and dedicates himself to asserting his authority over his own body and those of others. That this is a prelude to his relationship with Friday is signaled at the end of the passage where he bemoans his slavery and father's prophecy: "But alas! This was but a taste of misery I was to go thro', as will appear in the sequel to the story" (17). In the "sequel" to his captivity, he focuses obsessively on the concept of property. To be without property in the text is to be property: Robinson prevents this by attempting to secure self ownership and then moves on to gain possession of others. The role of master

becomes the central motivation of his actions following his enslavement: to relinquish his domination of another will be to risk losing power over himself.

In addition, the description of the pirates as Turkish and the taking of their prisoners to “a port belonging to the *Moors*” immediately places the adventure into a discourse of power involved in eighteenth-century oriental studies and the political reality of English interactions with the Mediterranean (17). Crusoe’s first “taste of misery” as a slave to a Muslim master would have been familiar to English readers during the early eighteenth century. During the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries, audiences of English print and stage were exposed repeatedly to representations of Christian slaves, Muslim masters and the ever-present possibility of apostasy. As discussed in the Introduction of this dissertation, English captives in the Barbary would have been a familiar concept to Crusoe’s readers; and moreover, it would represent a challenge to the idea of an essentialist national Protestant identity as captivity narratives were often fraught with the reality of English nationals converting to Islam out of a sense of cultural, financial and military inferiority to Islamic culture, often represented by the Ottoman empire. Throughout the Stuart reign, numerous English ships were taken by Turkish pirates at Algiers, Tunis, and Salee, with the crown (along with the Commonwealth and Protectorate) was frequently petitioned by these prisoners and their relatives for relief. These attacks affected communities across ranks and throughout the British Isles:

The Britons who were captured in these attacks came from . . . Liverpool to Dover, from Dundee to Hull, and from Edinburgh to Barnstaple, although the highest number came from London. . . .[Families] endured poverty as a result of the abduction of their wage-earning relatives and of the losses incurred by the traders who paid the salaries of those relatives. . . .Parallel to these strains on parishes [due to the Poor Relief Acts of 1598 and 1601] was the strain on trade which witnessed a major crisis from

1616 on as a result of England's failure to reorganize its cloth export and to compete effectively with the Dutch. (Matar 9-10)³¹

Published in 1719 and set in the mid-seventeenth-century, Defoe's text would have naturally resonated with the economic uncertainty on the individual, family, community and national levels created by the abductions. Crusoe's predicament is a believable scenario in the early eighteenth century and places it into an older tradition of English portrayals of Islam that should have been familiar to its first readers.

The narrative tradition of English captives of Muslim masters concerns fears of domination and a desire for power, which resonates throughout Defoe's novel. Crusoe's intense desire to have sovereignty over himself and others in the face of his own lack of power reflects a common English attitude towards the Islamic world. According to Matar, writing from the Renaissance through the Restoration offered a means to create a world that empowered England and Christianity while denigrating the Ottomans and Islam:

The way that English dramatists, preachers, theologians and others confronted Islam and Muslims was by fabricating images about them – by arranging protagonists and geography in a manner that was disembodied from history and cultural surroundings. In the imaginatively controlled environments of the theater and the pulpit, Britons convert the unbelievers, punished the renegades, and condemned the Saracens. As long as the sphere of action was fabrication, the victory was won by Christians. Outside that sphere, however, Englishmen and other Britons treated Islam as a powerful civilization which they could neither possess nor ignore (20).

This need to create an alternative world view for audience, Matar argues, existed because Islamic societies held a strong attraction for English Christians, particularly the poor and illiterate. The desire to emulate what they perceived as a more powerful, imperial power reinforces the argument that "Orientalism" as we define it now did not apply in pre-

nineteenth-century England: Matar's argument that most converted "either because their poor social conditions forced them toward such a choice, or because they sought to identify with a powerful empire" aligns them with the colonized converts of the nineteenth century, "like the converts to Christianity in nineteenth-century Africa" Matar (15). The desirability for conversion came from the image of Islamic societies as richer, holding more promise of upward mobility (included the belief that a converted slave might be freed sooner than a Christian one) and being viewed as culturally close to Christianity.

Similar to the way Keith felt comfortable applying an Islamic text to his Quaker argument, the ease of conversion of captives and other English subjects in the Barbary was facilitated by the belief that Protestantism and Islam possessed many similarities: "for many Christians, especially the poor and illiterate, conversion to Islam did not entail a traumatic change from one religion into another," instead, it was perceived as a move from one sect to another within the same religion similar to the "way that Greek Orthodox Christians viewed their 'conversion' to Anglicanism and Presbyterianism in the nineteenth-century Middle East: as an adoption of a religion which provided them with a sense of imperial power and with prospects for success" (Matar 16). In this light, there was a trend of cultural imperialism between North Africa and England, where the latter was in danger of losing the cultural identity of many of subjects to the former.

Responding to the phenomenon of English conversions to Islam, a sense of anxiety permeated English pulpits and communities. The seventeenth-century English Church voiced wariness about embracing apostates – or even those suspected of it – returning after living in predominately Islamic countries. Matar argues that the "reason

why the Church and the preachers were so firm against renegades was that the parents of a returning convert willingly adopted the distinction of inner faith and outer dissimulation in order to forgive their kinsman” (68). Since converts were known to return to England without disclosing their conversions (65), this opens up the possibility that English readers would have seen Crusoe’s identity as a Christian at least tested during his captivity and then seen the tension between his outward non-English appearance and his inner spiritual conformity as connected to that captivity. Renouncing one’s religion, Matar points out, represented more than just change of religious identity, but was also deeply connected to national identity: “In English seventeenth-century thought, the renegade shared the infamy of the Machiavellian, Faustian and Moorish villains because he threatened not just the faith but the idea of England. He was renouncing all that defined England to Englishmen, and he was doing so by adopting the religiously different culture of Islam” (71). Though the possibility of Crusoe’s conversion to Islam is not explicitly stated in the text, the historical context that produced it surrounds his actions during his enslavement with the sense that his identity as English Protestant is in danger, making his escape more urgent.

Later, as a castaway on the island, Crusoe will fear turning into a savage; this theme is foreshadowed in the Morocco episode when seen as a descendant of earlier narratives of English captives “turning Turk.” As Matar points out, “[English] writers soon found that they had to address the phenomenon of apostasy carefully: that Christians, both native-born to the Ottoman Empire and migrants from England, Scotland and Ireland and from other parts of European Christendom, were converting to Islam was widely evident” (22). In an early attempt to understand and prevent apostasy, late

sixteenth-century writer, Sir Anthony Shirley, divided Christian converts to Islam into four categories, all of which hold relevance for Crusoe. First, the child converts are held as both innocent and dangerous. Due to their youth, they “did not bear any responsibility for their renunciation of Christianity, and as a result, they were pitied by the travelers [from Christian Europe]” (Matar 23). For these English writers, children could also be transformed by their environment.³² Reflecting a belief in the initial innocence and pliability of youth, Crusoe’s alliance with the boy Xury over an adult Muslim becomes a logical choice, especially given Crusoe’s belief in the possibility of Xury’s later conversion. Second, and perhaps most obviously applicable to Defoe’s narrative, are “men who converted to Islam in order to end their slavery”(Matar 25). While this belief was challenged by accounts of freed captives who had not converted, several “Christian soldiers coming from areas as far apart as Sicily and the British Isles, once captured and enslaved, renounced their faith because it was commonly believed that, while a Muslim master would keep a Christian slave indefinitely, he might change his mind about a Christian-turned-Muslim, and in accordance with Qur’anic teaching, might free him” (Matar 25-26).³³ The belief in conversion leading to freedom makes it possible that eighteenth-century audiences read Crusoe’s adherence to his faith as heroic as well as another reason to plan his escape – since it was believed that a Christian captive would not simply be set free. The connection between conversion and freedom is strengthened by Crusoe’s own stipulation that Xury be freed if he converts to Christianity.

The last two categories are less explicitly connected to *Robinson Crusoe*, but nonetheless provide a better understanding of the cultural environment that produced Defoe’s text, as well as a context for Crusoe’s fears of losing his English Protestant

identity. The third category of conversion Shirley sees in narratives of English captivity consists of acculturation. The close connections between religious law and civil life in the Ottoman Empire made the distinction between cultural markers such as dress and religious markers such as the Witness³⁴ difficult to determine, for after hearing “the Witness so frequently from Muslim friends and associates, a Christian might repeat it inadvertently” (Matar 30). While there is not any record of this nor the last category of those forcibly coerced into apostasy (31), the threat of Crusoe losing his Protestant English identity becomes a reality when he becomes a castaway. The lack of others to identify with nationally and religiously, leads to a destabilization of his own sense of self, and causes him to reach back to a similar moment of cultural isolation: his enslavement. As a result, his stay in captivity, I argue, shapes his view of himself and his actions on the island.

As a gardener in his master’s home (foreshadowing his experience as gardener of his own island), Robinson looks for a kind of solidarity with other slaves that would maintain his difference from the non-European, Muslim majority surrounding him. However, he finds “no-fellow slave, no *English, Irishman, or Scotsman*” (18). Instead, he compromises on his choice of ally: a fellow slave who while Muslim is European – the Morisco Xury. Robinson’s actions after his escape are intended to change his position in relation to the Islamic system without actually changing the system: desiring to be a master, he must obtain a slave.

Xury’s background as a Morisco is one that challenges boundaries between Europeans and their neighbors, between Christians and Muslims. His connection to Spain supports my argument that there is an implied danger of apostasy during Crusoe’s

confinement. Beginning in 1585 and continuing into the nineteenth-century, “renegade” came to mean an “An apostate from any form of religious faith, *esp.* a Christian who becomes a Muslim” (OED); descended linguistically from the Spanish “renegado,” Matar argues that the origin of the term “suggests that the first converts were associated in English imagination with Spain” (22). Having been under Islamic rule during the medieval era, Spain became associated with conversion from Christianity to Islam as well as the reverse. Xury’s Morsico background represents the intermixing of Christians and Muslims in European history. Between the fall of Toledo in 1085 and taking of Granada 1492, Christian forces began the reconquest of Islamic Spain. A Muslim living under Christian rule was referred to as a Mudejar, or “the one allowed to remain.” According to Middle Eastern and Hispano-Arabic scholar Anwar G. Chejne, while living in separate communities and allowed a degree of self-governance, “Mudejars served as intermediaries between Islamic and Christian societies, contributing to the integration of many Arabic elements” (4).³⁵ However in 1501, a revolt in Granada led to a change in policy: all Muslims in Granada faced either conversion or expulsion. It is at this point that the term Morisco emerged:

After the forced conversion of 1501, the neophytes – whether baptized by force or free will – came to be called Moriscos (little Moors), placing them in a special category within the Christian faith. They were differentiated from Old Christians not only by the recency of their conversions, but also by race. The label “Moriscos,” or sometimes “Christian Mudejars,” placed them at a greater disadvantage vis-à-vis their Christian fellows in that they were considered Arabs or Berbers and, thus, inferior to “Old Christians,” who enjoyed “purity of blood” (*limpieza de sangre*) (7).³⁶

In addition to the racial separation, Moriscos were viewed by their Christian rulers as a threat to Spanish security: during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, they

“were considered a fifth column, not only an obstacle to the unity of Spain but also potentially a force colluding with North Africans, Egyptians, French, Turks, pirates, Lutherans, and other Christian heretics” (8). This continued suspicion illustrates that while Moriscos may have publicly converted to Catholicism, they were not accepted as true Christians by either the Church or State. This inability to lose the Muslim label explains why Defoe’s text appears to present Xury as Muslim and later makes his conversion to Christianity a stipulation for his potential freedom.

When reading *Robinson Crusoe*, the connection between Turkey, piracy and Protestantism’s emergence as a political power in Europe and its redefinition of English identity holds particular interest. The novel aligns Xury with these destabilizing elements while keeping him distinct. He shares the same space as Turks and pirates, but as their slave.³⁷ He shares the same enslaved status as the Protestant hero, but ultimately this bond is trumped by their religious differences. Historically, Moriscos were also conflated with Protestantism in the minds of the Church and Crown in Spain, which viewed the growing Protestant population as a potential ally to the Morisco community, reasoning that the two groups shared “certain elements that conformed with some of their religious thinking – such as the denial of the supremacy of the pope, the frowning on images, and the freedom of the individual to scrutinize the Scriptures” (Chejne 9). In response to fears of religious and therefore political unrest, by 1614, an order to expel the Moriscos from Spain neared completion and those exiled “were scattered throughout the Mediterranean basin: the Balearic Islands, France, Sicily, Italy, Constantinople and other Eastern cities, but with the greatest concentration in Morocco, Algeria, and Tunis” (Chejne 14). *Robinson Crusoe* is set in the mid-seventeenth century, just subsequent to the expulsion.

Xury could have been taken from any of the above places or could have been the grandchild of exiled Moriscos who settled in Morocco. In either case, by creating this background for the character as well as ending the episode with a Spanish Catholic captain, Defoe evokes a history of displacement and religious conflict that sets up the themes and power dynamics of Crusoe's adventures on the island.

When Crusoe escapes from captivity, he has a choice between a moor and a Morisco as his traveling companion. On a fishing boat with these two potential allies, Crusoe pushes the Moor, who has served as an easily manipulated companion for the protagonist for the majority of the captivity episode, overboard. The moor, his master's brother Ismael, demonstrates his physical strength while verbally expresses his willingness to serve Crusoe: "he rose immediately, for he swam like a cork, and call'd to me begg'd to be taken in, told me he would go all over the world with me; he swam so strong after the boat that he would have reach'd me very quickly, there being but little wind" (20). In response, Crusoe threatens to shoot Ismael if he continues to follow the ship. Despite their past congeniality, Ismael's physical prowess and his professed submission, Crusoe instead chooses Xury, of whom the narrative has made little mention up to this point.³⁸

In his one brief mention preceding this scene, little evidence is given of how Xury might surpass his Muslim masters as a companion. First, Crusoe mentions that Ismael "always took me and a young *Maresco* with him to row the boat, we made him very merry, and I prov'd very dexterous in catching fish" (18). Here, the emphasis of the narrative on Crusoe's own abilities. "Me" precedes "young *Maresco*," making Xury

almost an afterthought; Xury only rows the boat, while Crusoe shows extreme skill in making the fishing expeditions a success.

Crusoe's justification of his choice lies in an unexplained belief that Xury is trustworthy while Ismael is not. He even goes so far as to imply that he could have been happier – “content” – in Ismael's companionship: “I could,” Crusoe's explains after threatening violence against the moor, “have been content to ha' taken this *Moor* with me, and ha' drown'd the boy, but there was no venturing to trust him” (20). In this alternative, Xury would have met with a much more violent fate than what actually befalls Ismael. Given the choice of death or retreat, Ismael retreats to the shore. The ease at which he can get back to land due to his strength as a swimmer is repeated four times in the paragraph describing Crusoe's betrayal of him. It even closes with Crusoe's reassurance – perhaps to himself or to the reader – that he “make[s] no doubt but he [Ismael] reach'd it [the shore] with ease, for he was an excellent swimmer” (20). The alternative scenario, in contrast, involves Crusoe and Ismael inaugurating their voyage by drowning Xury, with the description emphasizing his youth and vulnerability as “the boy” surrounded by two physically strong men.

While perhaps implicitly based upon their companionship in captivity or on a shared religious bond, Crusoe explicitly bases his trust of Xury on an outward display of submission when he makes Xury “swear by Mahomet and his father's beard” to serve him (20). The difference between Ismael and Xury could lie partially in their age difference, with a boy being presumably easier to control and submitting to the older Crusoe as a father-figure. However, while youth plays a factor, I believe that by Crusoe specifying that Xury is of Spanish descent, he is making claims, though limited, about a

European identity that supersedes non-religious bonds. Roxann Wheeler points out that, in “the context of Moroccan slavery, Xury and Crusoe resemble each other more than they differ. . . . their common difference from the Moors; their shared European origin counts most in this respect. Once out of the context of slavery, a different configuration is formed – first in relation to black Africans and then in relation to Europeans” (59). When compared to the black Africans, Xury is seen as “neither as powerful as Crusoe nor as abject as the Africans on the west coast”: “The potential danger of the “wild mans” and the resulting fear of being eaten lead Crusoe to notice that which most clearly separates Xury and himself from the West Africans: their light skin and clothed bodies” (60).³⁹

While in the description of the “*Negroes*” and Xury, no mention is made of physical description or skin color, what is emphasized with the West Africans is their lack of civilization signified by their lack of clothes and darker skin. Their cannibalism at first frightens Crusoe, but later, when he encounters another group of natives and realizes that they lack effective weapons such as his gun, he is willing to accept help and food from them (25-27). His bond with Xury is due largely to a shared, generalized definition of civilization laid out by Wheeler, but I believe that the belief in shared values is also due in part to cultural assumptions in England of a past connection between Moriscos and Protestants in Spain and the early eighteenth-century Quaker interest in an Andalusian Muslim scholar. With the lack of physical or personality description for Xury, his distinguishing feature lies in what Defoe and his readers assumed they had in common with Moriscos.

However, *Robinson Crusoe* is a narrative that often resolves potential instabilities of English Protestant identity. In a pattern that will be repeated with Friday, Xury’s

mixed background puts Crusoe's own position of colonial and individual power into question. Xury is often the more capable of the two, with frequent references to Xury's good advice as his master's "better councillor [sic]" (25). Relying on a non-Christian makes Crusoe's – and by extension European – identity unclear. Crusoe's own national and ethnic heritage is already in question in the narrative's opening: as the son of a German immigrant, Kreutznaer, Crusoe's family has endeavored to make themselves appear more English: "we are now call'd, nay we call our selves, and write our name *Crusoe*, and so my companions always call'd me" (5). Wheeler argues that the "importance of Christianity as a significant bond between Europeans overrides even historical differences between the Church of England and Catholics by representing the greater difference as that between Christian and Islam. It is clearly not Xury's Spanish national origin that casts him as a slave but his Islamic religion" (60). I add to this that the text is not only resolving the blurring of religious categories under a general European banner, but also rearticulating Protestantism as closer to Catholicism than the Islamic sects with which the Inquisition once associated it.

While at times England associated itself with Islam against Catholicism, a sense of shared identity through Christianity and an emerging biological view of race made it possible for English society to construct a hierarchy of worth based on religious and national affiliations. As Matar points out, "Although some Britons adopted customs, texts and ideas from the Muslims, others reacted with a pride that inspired poets and theologians to think of God as English and to see the nation as an 'English Zion,' [a pride which] ... sometimes extend to notions of religious-racial superiority as can be seen in the popular saying that one Protestant Englishman was worth three Catholic Portuguese, and

one Portuguese was worth three Muslim Moors” (120). Crusoe’s choice of the Captain over Xury reinforces this hierarchy and reasserts his identity as an Englishman, superior to those around him and therefore desire of having more power than them.

By selling Xury to a Catholic Portuguese captain, the novel comes closes to allegorically rewriting history. Spain, a traditional enemy of England, is not transformed into a Protestant ally but instead the Catholic presence is displaced to another Iberian space: rather than Morsicos and Protestants jointly persecuted by a Catholic power in Spain, the Protestant Englishman aligns himself with Catholic Portuguese against a Spanish and Muslim Other.⁴⁰ However, even this resolution does not erase all the ambiguities Xury brings to the text. He is sold in a manner similar to the African slaves Crusoe traffics, but with a crucial difference. Seeing that Crusoe is conflicted on whether or not selling the boy is a betrayal of their previous companionship, the Portuguese captain offers an alternative: “he [the captain] would give the boy an obligation to set him free in ten years, if he turn’d Christian; upon this, and *Xury* saying he was willing to go to him, I let the Captain have him” (29). Unlike other slaves, Xury enters consensually into indentured servitude, placing him in a position of privilege compared to the African slaves.

However, this situation also mirrors the historical situation of the Moriscos with the Portuguese captain standing in for the Catholic Church and Spanish Crown that also demanded conversion in exchange for the Moriscos receiving acceptance into the Reconquista’s new political order. But this promise of freedom through social citizenship did not materialize. What then are readers to make of the Xury’s chances of future freedom? The ambiguous status of Xury throughout the episode and the uncertainty of his

future are based upon the complicated history of Muslim, Catholic and Protestant relations and sets up the complex relationship at the heart of the novel: the paternal and imperial interactions between Crusoe and Friday.

Empty Signs of Sovereignty

While he physically leaves the Mediterranean world of his captivity, Crusoe continues to operate under the same systems of values and hierarchies of power when he arrives on his island in the New World. After being shipwrecked while on a slave trading expedition and having established himself and secured his survival on the island, the narrator's description evokes an edenic state with Crusoe reborn as natural, pre-lapsarian man; however, this description is consistently undermined throughout the narrative, acting as a counter to the philosophies of property, man and contentment found that characterized the post-1688 ideology which Defoe ardently supported as well as in his literary predecessor I. Tufayl's *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*. Given the familiarity that Pope assumes four years before the publication of *Robinson Crusoe* and the number of warring translations of the Arabic text, it is plausible that readers would be familiar at least with the basic outline of I. Tufayl's narrative and as a result, the text needs to be read in the context of the I. Tufayl translation and a tradition of captivity narratives, with all the implied anxieties of conversion and loss of identity surrounding them. In this light, what emerges is a study on the instability of English Protestant identity, in which the Islamic Ottoman Empire becomes the symbol for civilization against the threat of barbarism offered by the island.

Crusoe's term on the island forces him into a sinless state.⁴¹ His material body "removed from all the wickedness of the world," sin is removed from his spiritual self: in

being taken out of a fallen world, he has neither “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, or the pride of life” (102). Here the material and spiritual are deeply connected: removing temptation seems at first to remove sin. This aligns him with the original state of I. Yaqzan on his island. Just as Hayy I. Yaqzan eventually grows into not just an inhabitant but a ruler of the island – so does Crusoe: “I was lord of the whole manor; or if I pleas’d, I might call myself king, or emperor of the whole country which I had possession of” (102-103). The remains inline with I. Tufyal and Locke’s vision of man’s sovereignty over nature as his natural state discussed earlier.

For them the point is to have rule over oneself with only God as a higher authority. However, Crusoe’s discontent quickly begins to shine through in ways not experienced by either I. Tufyal’s natural man.⁴² Though he seems to control the island, Crusoe finds his reign constricted by the way his isolation alters his sense of need and use. Defoe’s predecessor does not envisage a man who desires more property than needed; Crusoe is oppressed by an excess of property without the social contract to make its ownership meaningful. Images of thwarted imperial potential come out as Crusoe emphasizes the inability to trade or build a fleet. Following his declaration of himself as the sovereign, his power is quickly undercut: “There were no rivals. I had no competitor, none to dispute sovereignty or command with me. I might have rais’d a ship loadings of corn; but I had no use for it; ... I had timber enough to have built a fleet of ships. I had grapes enough to have made wine, or to have cur’d into raisins, to have loaded that fleet when they have been built. But all I could make use of, was, all that was valuable” (103). The seemingly positive connotation of the lack of rivals to his dominance is undercut by the repeated declarations of his possessions, power and potential followed with a “but”

for the emptiness produced. All these images require other people with whom to interact.⁴³

In contrast, Crusoe's sense of need is redefined by the lack of use to which he can put his goods. His physical needs met, he considers his surplus goods a burden and not a blessing. He has access to goods frequently traded between the Old and New worlds, the profit of which partly motivated him to travel to this area. In this context, the earlier lines about competition also foreshadow the conflicts he will fantasize over and seek out with the other islanders as well as some of the European sailors he meets at the end. Just as possessions are worthless if they carry no value, power loses its allure without subjects to rule and rivals to subdue. Being forced to a life of subsistence instead of one of profit devalues what he does rule and for Defoe's protagonist, sovereignty is valuable when it includes dominion over another.

In fact, he is fettered by the abundance he possesses and the lack of population (or consumers) to share, trade or sell it to:

If I kill'd more flesh than I could eat, the dog must eat it, or the vermin. If I sow'd more corn than I could eat, it must be spoil'd. The trees that I cut down, were lying to rot on the ground. I could make no more use of them than for fewel [sic]; and that I had no occasion for, but to dress my food. In a word, the nature and experience of things dictated to me upon just reflections, that all good things of this world, are no further good to us, than they are for our use, and that whatever we may heap up indeed to give others, we enjoy as much as we can use, and no more (103).

While Crusoe may rule the island, Nature, especially that of his own physical body (with its limited capacity to consume) oppresses him. He lacks the ability to use much of what he possesses, because without others to recognize his wealth and potentially share in it, property has no real value to its owner. The plentiful island turns utopian conventions on

its head: removing strife and want from a man's life leads to virtually sinless life in Defoe's text but it is also an oppressive and sterile existence. Removal from the world leads to the removal of sin but in a darker tone than I. Tufayl's story, which presents the inability to exceed one's needs and to be surrounded by a world of plenty as positive not negative aspects.⁴⁴

Unlike I. Tufayl's natural man, Crusoe needs companionship for his property or his authority to have any meaning. It is not enough to gain mastery over himself as it was for Hayy I. Yaqzan; Crusoe must have other humans to rule for his "kingdom" to satisfy him. When Tufyal's protagonist tires of his subjection of the animal and plant world, he turns away from the material towards a spiritual contemplation, leading him to a direct experience with God. Through his own use of reason, I. Yaqzan determines not only how to survive, but how to rule his island ethically. Eventually, "confining himself to his Cave, with his head bow'd down, and his Eyes shut, and turning himself altogether from all sensible Things and Corporal Faculties, and bending all his Thoughts and Meditations upon the *necessarily self-existing Being*," he frees himself –with the exception of his reduced basic physical needs – from any desires of the material world (Ockley 121-122). In these meditations, "all dissappear'd and vanish'd and were as they had never been, and amongst these his own Being dissappear'd too, and there remain'd nothing but this ONE, TRUE, Perpetually Self-existant Being" (123). Though I. Yaqzan arguably has less to desire than Crusoe because he lacks the latter's knowledge of the material world, it is thorough his isolation that I. Tufyal's mystic castaway experiences a much more radical and individual relationship with God than Defoe's. As will be discussed in his relationship with Friday, Crusoe views his religion not as an isolated relationship

between himself and God, but a social one among other men. Material associations such as culture, nation or race do not fetter the conversion of Yaqzan: it is a conversion not to a religion but to a mode of existence independent of the human world.

Crusoe lacks this view of God. Though he reads his Bible regularly, it only helps to stem his discontent and teaches him a gratitude that he would otherwise lack,⁴⁵ his religious identity always associated with others: his identity as an Englishman, as a Protestant, as civilized, as European. In other words, his relationship to God is shaped by his relationship to others. He desires others to share in his labor and life in a way Hai I. Yaqzan with his isolation from infancy cannot imagine. As a result, Crusoe tries to develop human-like relationships with his animals to a limited amount of success. With his parrot, he is able to simulate human companionship while remaining aware of the superficiality of the parrot's "concern" for him. After returning from scouting the island's coast, the parrot "greet[s]" Crusoe with the phrases he taught it to mimic: "*Poll*, the sociable creature came to me, and sat upon my thumb as he used to do, and continued talking to me; *Poor Robin Crusoe*, and *how did I come here?* and *where had I been?* Just as if he had been overjoy'd to see me again; and so I carry'd him home along with me" (114). Poll's noises simulate concern, which give Crusoe the sense that his presence does matter to his subjects by this illusion that he was missed. That Crusoe chose to teach this "bemoaning language" to the bird demonstrates his desire to feel needed and wanted by someone else (113).

Through his animals, Crusoe tries to bring meaning to his sovereignty of the island by making them further mimic not simply human companionship in general, but specifically a life at court. In terms of power, he sees himself as clearly superior to the

animals, having “the lives of my subjects at my absolute command.” While he makes his daily routines into a performance of his sovereignty, the power of his position rings as hollow as Poll’s empty words: “like a King I dined too all alone, attended by my servants, *Poll*, as if he had been my favourite, was the only person permitted to talk to me” (118). Poll’s ability to mimic human emotions grant him a favored position in Crusoe’s “court” and the parrot’s centrality in Crusoe’s kingdom points out the emptiness of the castaway’s own life. Just like Poll, Crusoe is parroting sovereignty.

The dialogue between Poll and Crusoe mirrors passages of Defoe’s earlier political writing and points to a potential critique of the monarchy and Dissenter movements. Paula R. Backscheider points out parallels with the emotional state Defoe presents himself in *A New Test of the Church of England’s Honesty* (1704). Similar to Poll’s empty consolation to Crusoe, Defoe writes “‘Alas, *Poor De Foe!* What hast thou been doing, and for what hast thou suffer’d?’ . . . At this point both Defoe [writing from Newgate] and Robinson Crusoe feel sorry for themselves and puzzle endlessly over why they have been ‘singl’d out’ for suffering” (131). And while he produced numerous defenses of Dissenter rights and Post-1688 monarchs, William, Anne and George I, these efforts often had negative effects on his personal life. While he supported William’s ascension, the new king’s military policies helped bankrupt Defoe (51); and though he went to prison for writing dissenter propaganda,⁴⁶ the experience at Newgate left him less enthusiastic: “Prison and its aftermath left Defoe with an uneasy peace with the Dissenters. He never trusted them again, never felt himself truly one of them, and they returned the feeling. Although he continued to write in their interest, he often slipped into making wry, slightly bitter comment and consistently recognized that he could expect no

gratitude” (Backshceider 134). Given this bitterness his prison experience lent toward Dissenter positions, I think it is arguable that his financial, legal and employment difficulties he found in politics could extend to his view of the monarchy as well. The emotional desolation Crusoe finds in his paradise could be an example of his “wry, slightly bitter” commentary on Protestant beliefs in self-reliance and the individual’s relationship with God.

Not only is Crusoe always aware that the bird is not truly expressing joy at seeing him, the companionship he does manage to find with Poll and the other animals degenerates along with the goods he forced himself to see as divine blessings. His sovereignty is a hollow parody of colonial power. Crusoe’s perfect kingdom where he can “hang, draw, give liberty, and take it away, and [have] no rebels” is undercut through the narratives ironic description. He has the power to favor some subjects over others. But Poll’s words have already been established as empty of real meaning, and while that might on its own fulfill a satiric view of a courtier, the descriptions uses this pretense of companionship to point to the intimacy Crusoe lacks. Poll is described as “the only person permitted to talk,” which carries the depressing limits of his power: “permitted” implies Crusoe’s power, but is undercut by the knowledge that the parrot is the only one of his subjects with this ability. Similarly, that Poll is “the only person” points to the thing Crusoe desires most at this point – another *person*. Poll, despite his verbal tricks, will never be a true companion because he can only mimic the language of devotion without feeling that devotion himself. Similarly, Crusoe is sovereign of the island, but the lack of real subjects makes his performance of kingship empty.

The passage continues to undercut Crusoe's courtly display of power. His dog may sit "always at my right hand" like a privileged companion, but he degenerated and "grown very old and crazy. Even this comfort is finite since the dog "had found no species to multiply his kind upon" and will be the last of his kind on the island (118). This theme of degeneration continues in the passages leading up to his encounter with Friday. These courtier animals die and are replaced with new, less companionable ones: "My dog was a very pleasant and loving companion to me . . . [he] dy'd of meer old age" (143). The cats - that in the early passage sat "one on one side the table, and one on the other, expecting now and then a bit from my hand, as a mark of special favor" (118) - "multiply'd . . . to that degree, that I was oblig'd to shoot several of them at first to keep them from devouring me and all I had" (143).

Earlier, he described a kingdom without rebellion against his authority, but the cats alter this already compromised utopia through attacks on his power and property. He may consider a few of the cats' descendants as "part of my family" but he must exert a considerable amount of control over them to prevent further threats to his rule: the "two or three favorites [of the cats], which I kept tame and whose young, when they had any, I always drown'd" (143). That the need to squash potential rebellion among his subjects even exists points to the impotency of his rule. Even Poll's successors are found lacking: "I had two more parrots which talk'd pretty well, and would all call *Robin Crusoe*; but none like my first; nor did I take the pains with any of them that I had done with him" (143). This final image of Crusoe ruling over the animals is one of a tired monarch barely holding onto his authority over his subjects.

The devolution of his relationship with the animals does not lead him like Hayy I. Yaqzan to a deeper contemplation of God; instead, the decline of his material kingdom leads to the symbolic deterioration of his faith. Initially, he thanks Providence for the material blessings he receives: a “reflection [that] was of great use to me [in keeping faith in God and positive view of his isolation] . . . [was] to compare my present condition with what I at first expected it should be; nay, with what it would certainly have been, if the good Providence of God had not wonderfully ordered the ship to be cast up nearer to the shore” supplying him with tools, weapons, and ammunition to ease his life there.

However, like the animal court, these too are represented with images of increasing decay. Within a few paragraphs, his ink “had been gone for some time, all but a very little;” this item played an important role in his spiritual meditation as he used it to record “the various Providences which befell me.” It is through these observations that he concludes the island represents a spiritual rebirth from his past sins since arrives on the island on the same day as his birth (106). Along with the ink, his bread – reminiscent of both the manna God gives the Israelites in the wilderness as well as the communion host – runs out before he can grow corn to make it on his own (106). His clothes “decay too mightily” (106). He cannot go naked because he “could not bear the heat of the sun” and must make new, and he admits badly made, clothes out of animal skins (107). For Robinson Crusoe, true contentment is not found purely in property or in divine revelation; it is firmly placed in interaction of a companion similar enough for him to relate to but different enough so he may still subjugate him as an Other.

Shortly before this list of decaying blessing, he thanks Providence for the shipwreck since it prevents him from living as a “meer savage” (104), but the decay of

these remainders of civilization further blur the line between civilized and savage. Specifically, he views it as the loss of his identity as an Englishman: “had any one in *England* met such a man as I was, it must either have frightened them, or rais’d a great deal of laughter” (118).⁴⁷ While he feels he has not devolved into a “savage,” he recognizes that his outer appearance no longer reads as “English,” and interestingly, he connects his Otherness to his captivity in Sallee.

After improvising an outfit of mostly goat-skin and remnants from the shipwreck, he chooses to style his facial hair after the Turks he saw while in captivity. This is seen as a step towards civilization from the “beard I had once suffer’d to grow till it was about a quarter of a yard long,” especially since he stresses the need for tools – “both scissars and razors.” Yet, the turn away from natural disarray does not make him more recognizably English: “I had cut it [the beard] pretty short, except what grew on my upper lip, which I had trimm’d into a large pair of *Mahometan* whiskers, such as I had seen worn by some *Turks*, who I saw at *Sallee*; for the *Moors* did not wear such, tho’ the *Turks* did . . . they [the whiskers] were of a length and shape monstrous enough, and such as in *England* would have pass’d for frightful” (119). While he makes a point that he is not imitating his captors, he needs a means to explain his status as neither savage nor Englishman and accomplishes this by using Islam as an alternative mode. The reference back to his servitude in Sallee at this point where he feels a loss of identity may connect to the tradition of captivity narratives the earlier episode draws upon.

Placing this scene within the seventeenth-century context of English anxieties of reintegrating apostates back into society after their experience in Barbary, Crusoe’s anxieties take on a new dimension. The loss of the outward appearance of Englishness

would carry a deeper reference to apostasy for Defoe's readers. Since converts were known to return to England without disclosing their conversions (Matar 65), this opens up the possibility that English readers would have seen Crusoe's identity as a Christian at least tested during his captivity and then seen the tension between his outward non-English appearance and his inner spiritual conformity as connected to that captivity. Following this logic, the narrative's movement from no longer being recognizable as English to adopting "*Mahometan* whiskers" illuminates the connection between Crusoe's adventures on both side of the Atlantic. Here, there may not be the possibility of conversion, but there is both the fear of losing signs of his cultural identity as well as the insistence – similar to those Englishmen who claimed to have only outwardly converted to Islam – that his outward appearance does not signify a lasting inward change. His adventures in the Mediterranean world draw on an existing tradition of captivity narratives, where English identity is threatened by the specter of conversion, and provide a prism for reading his experiences in the New World.

His fall from English standards of civility makes it so the only noticeable thing separating him from the "savages" of the other island is his distaste for cannibalism and his belief in Christianity. This sets up the conditions that cause him to bring Friday into his service. As with Xury, Friday begins as a tool and servant to facilitate his escape with little or no future plans to keep him once free of his imprisonment. However, Friday's conversion to Protestantism alters the power dynamics of the relationship. Friday's religion, while it does not supersede his cultural and racial difference with Crusoe, changes the triangulation between Friday, his master and the Europeans they later encounter. Xury's otherness is greater than that of the Catholic Portuguese captain, but

Friday's Protestantism trumps the Catholicism of the Spaniard they later save. I argue that Friday's conversion represents a more complete and intimate submission to Crusoe's authority than any other character offers him: Xury and the Catholics are religiously rebellious even as they serve him through their actions, and the Englishmen cannot offer a similar sacrifice of self due to their pre-existing Protestantism. From Crusoe's subordination to his father, apprenticeship to the first captain, slavery to the Turk, and enslavement of Xury, Crusoe's relationship with Friday represents a completion of the cycle of domination experienced throughout the novel: Friday moves from the role of a slave, to an apprentice both in labor and spirituality, to finally the role of a filial companion.

Friday's changing relationship with Crusoe results from the destabilization of Crusoe's identity leading up to their first meeting: finding his own self-conception in flux allows for a flexibility in his relationship with the Carib that was not possible with Xury. Arriving on the island, Crusoe longs for companionship but fears a loss of self that would involve putting himself at the mercy of the other islanders. Even before he discovers the existence of the other islanders, he fears the deterioration of his identity as an Englishman. When he does realize the existence of others, seen in the traumatizing footprint scene, his desire for society evaporates: "To day we love what to morrow [sic] we hate . . . for I whose only affliction was, that I seem'd banish'd from human society, that I was alone . . . [and believed] that to see one of my own species, would have seem'd to me a raising me from the death to life, and the greatest blessing that Heaven it self, next to the supreme blessing of salvation could bestow; . . . that I should now tremble at the very apprehensions of seeing a man" (124). The idea of encountering other humans shakes the

basic tenants of his hierarchy to the point of doubting his faith in God. He thought his isolation was because “Heaven thought [him] not worthy to be number’d among the living” (124), tying into his “ORIGINAL SIN” of defying his father (154). The footprint unhinges this cosmography so his special – if partly punitive – place in the universe is disrupted. The society he once saw as not only a physical but spiritual comfort terrifies him. When he does actually see the other inhabitants, he vows to keep himself “entirely concealed where I was, unless I found a better sort of creatures than cannibals to make my self known to” (131). I argue that his desire for society is not just bound up in binaries between civilized European Christian and savage American pagan; instead, the greater factor for Crusoe is the power dynamics he would enter into with other humans.

His encounter with Xury already destabilizes the idea that his terror at the footprint and cannibals comes from their status as an Other in Said’s sense. In the earlier episode, Crusoe demonstrates his willingness to work with non-Christian, racialized Others and to take joy in their companionship. Even his encounters with the Africans he and Xury encounter show that he can squelch any racial hysteria enough to interact with another people. What has changed on this island is his position of power. With the Africans and Xury, he could dominate respectively with guns and the experience of age. The numbers of these cannibals and their overtly warlike ways makes it nearly impossible for him to suppress them on his own. He would have to either submit to their way of life like the European prisoners or be eaten. Besides death as an obvious loss of identity, the act of being eaten – incorporated into another person – symbolizes a loss of power and control he will not permit. As in Sallee, Crusoe is in danger of becoming a captive once again and facing the possibility of losing himself to a non-English identity.

However, they also offer the possibility of becoming the “rivals” to his power that he earlier fantasized about (103), and their presence gives his possessions and later Friday, more value – making them worth defending.⁴⁸ Their existence provides him with an avenue to finally act out his sovereignty in meaningful ways: through the physical and spiritual acts of “saving” Friday from them as well as his eventual, violent, subduing of the other islanders. Crusoe’s contemplation of these other island rulers has a galvanizing effect on him. As he bolsters his defenses, including adding a cave to his residences, Crusoe reaches the conclusion that though his daily precautions and the “vigour of [his] design” kept his “spirits . . . all the while in a suitable form for so outrageous an execution as the killing of twenty or thirty naked savages” (135),⁴⁹ he needs another to help him successfully conquer the other islanders.

Initially, his desire for another human does not entail companionship, but more of a means to complete a task. Just as Xury was the human tool that enabled his escape, he needs a subject of his own to preserve his own sovereignty. Following a dream of liberating and subjecting one of the natives, he concludes that “only way to go about an attempt for an escape, was, if possible, to get a savage into my possession; and, if possible, it should be one of their prisoners, who they had condemn’d to be eaten, and should bring thither to kill” (157). In this initial plan, Crusoe is not seeking human companionship but a source of labor. Culturally, he desires a subject that is culturally different from him – “a savage” – but not so alien that Crusoe would need to confront his distaste at cannibalism. The desire to save a victim is not put in the context of a benevolent deed, but presented as a matter of practicality.

Beneath these practical desires for labor are Crusoe's other desires for companionship which he has failed to fulfill in his dealings with animals or even God. When he puts his plan to capture "a savage" into effect, he is immediately drawn to Friday as a human being. Upon first examining his new find, Crusoe describes Friday in tender terms of admiration: "He was a comely handsome fellow, perfectly well made, with straight strong limps, not too large; tall and well shap'd . . . [he] seem'd to have something very manly in his face, and yet he had all the sweetness and softness of an *European* in his countenance too, especially when he smiled" (161).⁵⁰ That European features are associated with "sweetness and softness" and opposed to a "manly" appearance demonstrates that Crusoe does not align himself as a European with a sense of imperial potency; by seeing Friday as similar to a European, he does not associate his companion with a threat to his identity as he does with the Ottomans and other natives.

Little description is provided of what Xury looked like or the traits Crusoe admired him; perhaps due to his decades of isolation, Crusoe is much more impressed with his new slave than his old one. With Friday, Crusoe now possesses a subject to make his rule over the island meaningful. Friday's presence allows Crusoe to expand his farms and increase his cultivation with the added labor, whose added needs prevent the waste that earlier oppressed him. Yet the pleasure he gains from Friday's presence is not aligned with Friday's role as a servant, but in one of companionship. When he describes his first year with Friday as "the pleasantest year of all" his time on the island, the narrative breaks from a description of labor to one of education: "Friday began to talk pretty well . . . I began now to have some use for my tongue again." By teaching Friday English, Crusoe enjoys the mutual benefit of regaining speech himself. This elevates their

bond, with Crusoe declaring that he “began really to love the creature” and “believe he lov’d me more than it was possible for him to ever love any thing before” (168). The intensity of Crusoe’s pleasure in Friday’s company elevates the Carib from the roll of a servant or slave to an apprentice or son to be educated.

Despite this elevation, though, Crusoe still maintains a hierarchy where he is sovereign over his companion. Friday, for his part, perfectly performs his role of subject: “for never man had a more faithful, loving, sincere servant . . . without passions, sullenness, or designs, perfectly oblig’d and engag’d; his very affections were ty’d to me, like those of a child to a father, and I dare say, he would have sacrific’d his life for saving mine” (165). This conception of Friday makes him the perfect subject to finally give meaning to Crusoe’s sovereignty over the island. Poll only mimics the language of faithfulness, obedience and love; Friday embodies these traits.

Reassuring his position of power, Crusoe begins to regard the other natives as less of a threat to his power and more as unknowing subjects to be subdued or destroyed. The desire for power with the natives is seen in his desire to play god over them – to judge and execute them. His belief in Friday’s goodness makes him ponder God’s own choices in ruling Earth:

however it had pleas’d God . . . in the government of the works of his hands, to take from so great a part of the world of his creatures, the best uses to which their faculties, and the powers of their souls . . . And this made me very melancholy sometimes, in reflecting as the several occasions presented, how mean a use we make of all these [as Christian Europeans] . . . and why it has pleas’d God to hid the like saving knowledge from so many millions of souls, who if I might judge by this poor savage [Friday], Would make a much better use of it than we did (165).

While the Crusoe shifts his critique mainly to the misuse of divine gifts by Christian Europe, the critique is strangely framed in a critique of God's governances of his creation – His own mismanagement of properties of virtue and scriptural knowledge. The concept of use also relates back to Crusoe's negative views of his property when he first arrives on the island. Knowledge, like goods, only carries value if it can be put to use. Despite already possessing the "saving knowledge" of God, Crusoe cannot put it to use when he arrives on the island because he is pre-conditioned to see the world through the material lens of human interaction.

From this Crusoe comes very close in his own estimation to challenging God as supreme ruler of the islands. He admits, "I sometimes was led to far to invade the sovereignty of *Providence*, and as it were arraign the justice of so arbitrary a disposition of things, that should hid that light from some, and reveal it to others" (165-166).⁵¹ Yet, this mismanagement he charges God with is also close to his own. He makes no attempts to convert the other natives, and the religious teaching he provides Friday points to both his own inadequacies as well as an implicit critique of God. Crusoe finds it difficult to explain the existence of evil in the world because he himself does not understand it: "I found it was not so easy to imprint right notions in his [Friday's] mind about the Devil, as it was about the being of a God." When Friday asks, "*if God much strong, much might as the Devil, why God no kill the Devil, so make him no more do wicked?*," Crusoe is at a loss to answer. He tries to place his inability to answer as one of his own not God's flaws – much as he does in the scene discussed above: "tho' I was now an old man, yet I was but a young doctor, and ill enough qualify'd for a casuist, or solver of difficulties." However, this reasoning is perhaps undermined by the frequent references to his daily

Bible devotions and almost constant reflections on God, especially the reasoning behind Crusoe's exile on the island, which is explicitly discussed in terms of why God would allow a seemingly evil act to occur. His initial response to Friday's question is avoidance: "at first I could not tell what to say, so I pretended not to hear him" (172). After a brief, failed attempt to answer the question, Crusoe successfully distracts his companion from the issue (173).⁵² While containing a critique of God, it also shows Crusoe's own lack of authority.

As the education of Friday progresses, Crusoe is frequently shown to be either lacking or soon to be surpassed by his companion, making their relationship less one of Friday's permanent servitude but more one of apprenticeship where Friday may one day become independent. This is bolstered by Crusoe's identification with Friday as being more similar than Other to him. Much like the Europeanized description of Behn's Oroonoko in the previous chapter, which separated the main character racially from the other slaves, Crusoe's description of Friday differentiates him from the other natives. Besides his European countenance, his description is dominated by how his is not like non-Europeans: "hair was long and black, not curl'd like wool . . . The colour of his skin was not quite black, but very tawny; and yet not of an ugly yellow nauseous tawny, as the *Brasilians* and *Virginians*, and other natives of *America* are . . . his nose small, not flat like the Negroes, a very good mouth, thin lips, and his fine teeth well set, and white as ivory" (162).⁵³ Being able to racially identify with Friday, followed by his cultural and religious education, forges a strong bond of identification between master and servant. This bond undoes the Christian European alliances that allowed Crusoe to sell his

previous companion, Xury; instead, when Crusoe gains other subjects, Friday becomes elevated not just over the Caribs in the group, but over the Europeans as well.

Crusoe's earlier relationship with Xury serves as a mirror and counters to his more prominent relationship with Friday. By having a similar relationship with a young, culturally different man foreshadow the events on the island, the texts begs the question of why Crusoe parts with one with a callous ease while he jealously clings to the other. As discussed earlier, Xury can be gifted to the Portuguese captain, because Crusoe views the boy as a tool and slave in comparison to the bond he shares with the captains as fellow Christians. The only acknowledgement of a sense of kinship on Crusoe's part as he leaves his Morisco companion is the stipulation that if Xury converts the Christianity his time in bondage will be limited. In other words, Christianity holds significance beyond a supernatural belief system for Crusoe – it is the sign of equality and when we define it as the ability to be free and self-governing, full humanity for him.

Within a framework that equates Christianity with free man, Friday's conversion to Christianity explains his rise in Crusoe's estimation, but it also complicates the existing system of racial, cultural and religious alliances. With Xury, Crusoe's similarities with the Catholic Europeans trumped any similarities with Xury, but Friday's conversion changes the situation.

Gaining other subjects after he and Friday rescue a Spainard and Friday's father from the cannibals, Crusoe revels in his increased sovereignty: "My island was now peopled, and I thought my self very rich in subjects; and it was a merry reflection which I frequently made, how like a king I look'd. First of all, the whole country was my own meer property; so that I had an undoubted right of dominion." This joy in his undisputed

authority over the island is increased because of his growing population. Throughout the text, there has been little or no threat to his control of the island itself, so the change in his attitude towards it comes from others recognizing his dominion. Like Friday, these new subjects “were perfectly subjected: I was absolute lord and lawgiver; they all ow’d their lives to me, and were ready to lay down their lives, *if there had been occasion of it, for me*” (190). This echoes his earlier description of Friday ideal submission: when Crusoe asked if his companion will defend and obey him, Friday goes even further by pledging, “*me die, when you bid die*” (182).⁵⁴

Nevertheless, while these new subjects are similar to Friday, Crusoe does not trust or identify as much with them. His two new subjects represent the binary of European and Other set up in the Xury episode, but unlike his predecessor, Friday is able to supersede the European Christian in Crusoe’s eyes. In describing the diversity of his subjects, Crusoe defines them by religion: “My man *Friday* was a Protestant, his father was a pagan and a *cannibal*, and the *Spaniard* was a Papist” (190). This triangulation echoes Crusoe’s reintroduction to Europeans with Xury: then, he had Xury the Morisco, a load of pagan, African slaves, and a Portuguese Captain. The crucial difference this time is that Friday’s religious conversion has shifted his allegiances so that he values this inward quality more than the outward markers of race and culture. Earlier, he welcomed the Portuguese captain, but at the end of the novel he is filled with suspicion for these Catholic Others:

I fear’d mostly their treachery and ill usage of me . . . I told him, it would be very hard, that I should be the instrument of their deliverance, and tht they should after wards make me their prisoner in *New Spain*, where an *English* man was certain to be made a sacrifice . . . I had rather be deliver’d

up to the *savages* and be devour'd alive, than fall into the merciless claws of the priests, and be carry'd into the *Inquisition*(192).

After Friday's conversion, older models of alliance and similarity fall to the wayside.

Friday is aligned with Englishness through his Protestant education, while the Catholic Europeans are seen as worse than savages.

Because of this deeper bond, Friday is able to transcend the servant role. Like an apprentice or son, he becomes increasingly self-reliant and enters into kinds of self-hood recognized by Crusoe (and readers). This is demonstrated by his ability to enter into Europe. Going away together changes their bond. In Europe, Friday is no longer really a servant, since they hire someone else to take care of these needs (227). The ease with which Friday is able to adapt to Europe reinforces the power of his conversion. While occasionally comical, Friday shows no fear or lack of adeptness in his new surroundings. Crusoe, by contrast, expresses fear at his new surroundings: "the howling of the wolves run much in my head; and indeed, except the noise I once heard on the shore of *Africa*, . . . I never heard any thing that filled me with so much horror" (233). The novel's last account of Friday's action involves him wanting to confront the wolves but obeying Crusoe's fearful hesitancy (234).

Crusoe does not manage to reintegrate himself in Europe or England, and the novel ends with his return to the New World to re-subdue his island. At least in this novel,⁵⁵ the last image of Friday is of a Protestant youth, seemingly at home in the civilized, European world. Friday successfully crosses the boundary between Old and New Worlds, with which Crusoe has such difficulty coping. Like Friday, Defoe's novel also acts as a bridge between old and new as it incorporates the older order of a world

dominated by Mediterranean empires alongside a new one, still intimidated by the legacies of the Old World and unsure of what the future held.

1 I have found some online sources that point to some controversy surrounding I. Tufayl's use of I. Sīnā's work, but as these sites do not cite sources for the alleged debate, I am looking for a more solid source before considering its integration into my argument.

2 J. Christoph Bürgel contrasts the two versions, commenting "that in the case of Ibn Sīnā the development of the soul with its various stages is symbolized by a journey, the pilgrimage of the soul, whereas Ibn Tufayl shows the development of his hero's intellect through his life on an island." He also points out that in the former, I. Yaqzan's journey becomes more abstract because it "is not put into practice by the narrator, who only hears the description from Hayy" whereas "Ibn Tufayl's island is realistically conceived and his hero experiences and achieves his ascension by passing through a Crusoe-like period in practical life before he reaches the pure spiritual stages." "'Symbols and Hints': Some Considerations Concerning the Meaning of Ibn Tufayl's *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*." *The World of Ibn Tufayl: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*. Ed. Lawrence I. Conrad. New York: E.J. Brill, 1996, 130.

3 Siddiqi, Bakhtyar Husain. "Ibn Tufayl." *A History of Muslim Philosophy*. Ed. M. M. Sharif. Pakistan Philosophical Congress. <http://www.muslimphilosophy.com>

4 Similar to the romance's Persian-Greek origins, this story too may have Persian roots, as Siddiqi goes on to mention Persian versions.

5 Russell, G.A. "Introduction: The Seventeenth Century: The Age of 'Arabick.'" *The 'Arabick' Interest of the Natural Philosophers in Seventeenth-Century England*. Ed. G.A. Russell. (New York: E.J. Brill, 1994). 1-19.

6 While it is debatable when the concepts of "English" or "British" identity emerged, I am defining English identity here as coming out of a progressive movement away from older connections, namely to the Catholic continent. This trend includes the break made by Henry VIII and Elizabeth I with the Catholic Church; the emergence of England as part of an empire through both its colonial holdings as well as its creation of a United Kingdom beginning with Acts of Union between England and Scotland in 1706 and 1707; and the limitations of monarchical power through the Civil War and the creation of a constitutionally limited monarchy in 1688. Through these events, "Englishness" began to take on a religious and political meaning distinct from the populace's view of the rest of Europe.

7 James' conflicts with Parliament and the appearance that he favored the Catholic minority over the Protestant majority, in this light, become the first steps in the enslavement of the Commonwealth. A good monarch uses his power to maintain the freedom of the Commonwealth, not to exert authority over his subjects. Therefore, Locke writes "to establish the Throne of our Great Restorer, Our present King William," but he places power over the state in the hands of "the People of England, whose love of their Just and Natural Rights, with their Resolution to preserve them, saved the Nation when it was the very brink of Slavery and Ruine" (*Preface*, lines 5-6, 10-14). In this treatise as well as other texts such as the *Essay on Human Understanding* in 1671, Locke bases his view of governmental power on a concept of individual self-sovereignty. Society is formed to protect individually owned property. In a way, each man's property is a state over which he is supreme sovereign; the literal government exists to protect a man's rights over his property/kingdom and to prevent a state of war from arising between individuals.

8 London: Printed for Ric. Chiswell ..., 1689.

9 Giovanni Pico della Mirandola made a medieval Latin translation from a Hebrew commentary as part of his larger humanist project which intermingled Islamic, Christian and Jewish theology.

10 Twentieth-century scholar, A. S. Fulton, outlines the translating dilemma of persevering the letter or the spirit of an original. Comparing Pocock and Ockley's versions: "Pocock's Latin version has all the merits and defects of a slavish adherence to the letter of Arabic. Ockley's tendency is very much to the other extreme. His keen relish of the spirit of the original and his aversion from pedantry reveal themselves repeatedly in the renderings of singular neatness. On the other hand he often takes liberties with his original which are quite unwarranted" (36).

11 There is evidence that the text was relatively well-known in England outside of Arabic-reading circles, and that Pocock was meeting an existing demand for an accessible version of the text: “The first reference to *Hayy* in seventeenth-century England appeared in a letter by Samuel Hartlib to John Worthington on January 30, 1659 . . . he wrote that ‘The ingenious Arabick Fiction doth neither delectare nor prodesse, because it is not yet in Englis’” (Matar 98).

12 *An Account of the Oriental Philosophy* . . . , trans. George Keith (London, 1674).

13 These labels once included Catholics as well as any one else who did not subscribe to the state religion, but evolved to be synonymous with Protestantism (*OED*). Despite the prejudice of the Anglican Church towards other Protestant sects, the Dissenters chose to side with the State religion, rather than the Roman Catholic/Dissenter alliance for which James II had hoped. See J.R. Jones’s *Country and Court*, 236-246, for more on religious alliances surrounding the 1688 coup. In Defoe’s *An Appeal to Honour and Justice*, the popular reasoning behind choice of State Church over the Vatican is illustrated: “I told the *Dissenters* I had rather the Church of *England* should pull our Cloaths off by Fines and Forfeitures, than the Papists should fall both upon the *Church* and the *Dissenters*, and pull our Skins off by Fire and Fagot” (233).

14 “Civility and Authority.” *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800*. Ed. David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002. 93-112.

15 Keith does add a warning readers not to “receive for certain, everything in this Book,” but maintains his stance that “whatever may otherwise be in it, doth not hinder to make good use of the things which are both good and profitable contained therein” (iii).

16 The title’s reference to I. Yaqzan as an “Indian prince” comes from the opening lines of the narrative, which in Ashwell’s translation reads: “We have received from our pious ancestors, that amongst the *Indian* islands lies an uninhabited one.” *The History of Hai Eb’n Yockdan* . . . , trans. George Ashwell (London: Richard Chiswell, 1686), 1.

17 Ashwell’s translation is dedicated to the man who commissioned it, Philip Wenman, Baron of Kilmaynhan and Viscount Tuam. I believe this is the third Viscount Wenman of Tuam (b 17 October 1610, d 29 April 1686). While I have been able to find little information, his holdings in the predominately Catholic Ireland offer some interesting possibilities. Was Ashwell’s commission part of an attempt to offer an Anglican alternative to Keith’s potentially politically incendiary translation? Or, is its emphasis on universal reason perhaps part of larger project to ease religious conflict?

18 “Resources on Ibn Tufayl and *Hayy ibn Yaqzan*.” *The World of Ibn Tufayl: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Hayy ibn Yaqzan*. Ed. Lawrence I. Conrad (New York: E.J. Brill, 1996), 267-294.

19 *The Improvement of Human Reason* . . . , trans. George Keith (London: E. Powell, 1708).

20 Later translations, such as A. S. Fulton’s, still heavily rely on Ockley’s work. Fulton justifies his use of the Ockley version, arguing that Ockley’s “keen relish of the spirit of the original and his aversion from pedantry reveal themselves repeatedly in the renderings of singular neatness.” Fulton admits there are flaws in the Ockley: “he often takes liberties with his original which are quite unwarranted.” However, the occasional correction of “such lapses” are done out of the desire to maintain the original integrity not of the Arabic original but of Ockley’s: Fulton attempts to accomplish this “without offering any unnecessary violence to Ockley’s work.” Fulton also implies that these corrections are probably only necessary because he has access to better materials than Ockley, such as “the dictation of Gauthier’s Arabic text, which is our best authority and much superior to the text upon which Ockley depended” (36-37). For a comprehensive annotated bibliography of translations of *Hayy*, see Conrad, Lawrence I. “Resources on Ibn Tufayl and Hayy Ibn Yaqzan.” *The World of Ibn Tufayl: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*. Ed. Lawrence I. Conrad. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996. 267-293. English translations are listed on pages 276-279.

21 Pestana adds that this trend also extended to “Muslims among the enslaved population . . . had to manage with a highly simplified, even attenuated version of their faiths, living without Qur’anic schools” (75). “Religion.” *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800*. Ed. David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 69-89.

22 Whether due to a discrepancy between editions or a transcription mistake on my part, the last part of this passage which I took from a copy from the Don Cameron Allen collection at Geisel differs from the last

page found on *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. In the latter, it merely goes on to exhort readers to repent their mistaken ways to find salvation.

23 Charles Gildon (c.1665-1724) was born into a Roman Catholic, Royalist family. Later in life he turned away from Catholicism to Deism before converting to Anglicanism. He made a living as a writer of multiple genres, including translations, plays, poems, and what is he now more famous for pamphlets. His attempts at politics in the Tory party ended when he was charged with libel by the government for allegedly attempt to cause discord between Queen Anne and her then successor, the electress Sophie. By 1719, he was impoverished, a condition in which he remained the rest of his life: "He was also probably the intended beneficiary of a performance of Thomas Southerne's *Oroonoko* at Lincoln's Inn Fields on 12 December 1723 for the 'Benefit of a Gentleman under Misfortune' (Avery, 1.469). If so, his respite from misfortune was brief: Gildon died in London on 12 January 1724" (*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*). I interpret his comments on Defoe's work as originating in part out of financial need as well as a response for earlier personal attacks by Defoe (prior to Gildon's conversion to Anglicanism, Defoe wrote in 1703 that "Gildon 'Lampoons the Deity' and is 'a First Rate Rake', who 'keeps six whores and starves his modest wife'" (*ODNB*)), but his response bears a resemblance to Ockley's anxieties toward multiple readings of a text that could potentially lead to the subordination of the current social order.

24 Gildon, Charles. *The life and strange surprizing adventures of Mr. D--- de F--, of London, hosier, who has liv'd above fifty years by himself, in the Kingdoms of North and South Britain*. ... London : printed for J. Roberts, 1719.

25 Some debate exists over how "popular" the text was at the time: K.I.D. Maslen argues that our "notion of the 'sensational' publishing success of *Robinson Crusoe* in 1719 has hitherto depended on literary gossip and on knowledge of the number and frequency of editions," but that by studying publisher accounts, it does seem that there was a sizable demand that was took the publishers by surprise in the first four months (145). "Bibliographical Notes: Edition Quantities for *Robinson Crusoe*, 1719." Library, 1969.145-150.

26 "Was there ever yet anything written by mere man that was wished longer by its readers, excepting Don Quixote, Crusoe, and the Pilgrim's Progress?" (qtd. 190). Rogers, Shef. "Crusoe Among the Maori Translation and Colonial Acculturation in Victorian New Zealand." *Book History* 1.1 (1998) 182-195

27 For a study on the declining publication of the *Crusoe* sequels see Melissa Free's "Un-erasing Crusoe: *Farther Adventures* in the Nineteenth Century." *Book History* 9 (2006) 89-130.

28 This unified view of the Ottoman empire's power was mainly a European illusion. Ann Tomlinson points out that these "Regencies, under the nominal control of the Sultan in Constantinople, were ruled by the Turkish militia, which was completely separate from the rest of the population, who had no influence or say in the government. The policy of these states was largely independent of their nominal overlord and they heaved to a certain extent as independent state, which cased the Europeans difficulties in their relations with them" (11). In addition to the lack of uniform rule throughout the Barbary, Matar adds that by the seventeenth century "there were already infrastructural and economic weaknesses in the Ottomans' Empire, [but] they were not yet widely evident to the average Christian/Briton" (16).

29 Defoe, Daniel. *Robinson Crusoe*. 1719. Ed. John Richetti. New York: Penguin, 2003.

30 "I had mustered it [the funds necessary to undertake the first voyage] by the assistance of some relations whom I corresponded with, and who, I believe, got my father, or at least my mother, to contribute so much as that to my first adventure" (16).

31 Matar, Nabil. *Islam in Britain 1558-1685*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998.

32 "A fact well-known among travelers was that those children grew into one of the most fearsome orders within the Turkish army: The Janizzaries (the New Soldiers)" (Matar 24),

33 Matar goes on to point out that this belief demonstrates a lack of knowledge of Islam or the societies that adhered to it: "The Qur'an, however, had not forbidden slavery: it had encouraged (but not commanded) Muslims to free enslaved co-religionists (Qur'an 4:36) – a distinction that converts may not have known" (26). Also, the desire of a Muslim master for his slaves to convert "varied according individual sensibilities and geographies: some Muslims, particularly among the embittered Moriscos of North Africa, were not unwilling to apply both pressure and sometimes force for conversion; but other Muslims scrutinized converts and refused to accept them when they suspected ulterior motives for their adoption of Islam – such as freedom from enslavement." Other masters might discourage conversion for

more material reasons: “captives could either be ransomed by their co-religionists or exchanged with Muslim prisoners in Christendom or put to hard labor on the galleys, while converts could not” (Matar 31-32).

34 “Shahadah” or “the Witness,” declaring aloud before witnesses that “there is no god but God and Mohammad is his Prophet,” is the only requirement for conversion and is one of the five Pillars of Islam. According to the *OED*, “The Muslim profession of faith, ‘Lāilāha illā Allāh, Muhammad rasūl Allāh’ (‘there is only one God, and Muhammad is his prophet’). 1885 T. P. HUGHES *Dict. Islam* 571/1 *Shahdah*., ‘evidence’. 1929 E. D. ROSS tr. *Lammens's Islam* iii. 56 The customary offering of prayer, of which the *shahada* forms an integral part, takes the place of this obligation. 1970 *New Yorker* 29 Aug. 45/1 A European who repented the error of his faith and proclaimed the *shahada*—“There is but one God and Mohammed is His Prophet”—before dying would always go directly to Heaven. 1981 *Daily Tel.* 19 June 15/8 Everything in Islamic art and thought should be seen in the light of the *shahada*, or profession of faith.”

35 *Islam and the West: The Moriscos – A Cultural and Social History*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983.

36 Chejne adds that despite these claim of racial purity, “it was almost impossible to distinguish one form the other at this juncture of history . . . The Arab conquest of Spain had been achieved by a small band of Berbers and Arabs who intermingled with the overwhelmingly larger native population steeped in Christianity and Latin culture. Subsequent to the conquest, this native population underwent linguistic, religious, and cultural changes and hardly an ethnic or racial transformation. The neo-Muslims, mostly of Spanish stock and know as Muladíes (Ar. Muwalladūn), constituted the bulk of the Muslim population of the Peninsula preserving Islamic values and culture” (7).

37 After a 1526 revolt, some provisions were made to guarantee Moriscos’ rights. “However, the agreement was soon revoked on charges that some Moriscos were flirting with Lutherans, while other were aiding and abetting pirates in the Levant, led by the brothers Barbarossa. Piracy remained rampant for decades in the Mediterranean, on eastern shores of Spain inflicting enormous damage and taking Christian and Morisco captives for slave as slaves in Algeria” (Chejne 10).

38 One of Gildon’s complaints against Defoe is the broken English spoken by Friday and Xury. His response to Xury’s use of the language critiques the idea of that those in the Barbary would assimilate to English practices: “it had been more natural to have made *Robinson* speak broken *Arabick*, which Language he must be forc’d in some measure to learn; whereas *Xury* had no Motive in the World to study so much *English* as he makes him speak; but this is a Peccadillo and not worth dwelling upon” (13). While he does not invest much meaning in this criticism and is using it mainly to point to the lack of logic in the narrative, Gildon’s comment points to a world view at the time which assumed that an English subject would conform to Ottoman culture; Xury belonging fully to neither Europe or the Barbary would have gone with the more dominant, powerful culture, as there was no incentive for assimilating to the weaker position of the English.

39 While I disagree on this small point, overall in the reception of *Robinson Crusoe* throughout the eighteenth century, Wheeler’s argument holds true. In later versions, it becomes more common to find an editor “Negroizes Xury by intensifying his pidgin English to approximate stereotypes of slave speech common on the stage.” This connects to a general cultural shift in the racial depiction of Morsicos: in “A Collection of the Dresses of Different Nations, Antient [sic] and Modern (1757), there are several picture s of people from Egypt and other North African states, including . . . a Morsico slave . . . Of all these people, the Morisco slave’s features are the most stereotypically Negro” (62).

40 In other places, *Crusoe* aligns himself against Catholicism. For example, he decides against Brazil since living there would require either conversion or persecution: to be “resolv’d to be a sacrifice to my principles, [or] be a martyr for religion, and die in the Inquisition; so I resov’d to stay at home” (238).

41 His arrival on the island is positioned as both a punishment for his “ORIGINAL SIN” of disobeying his father (154), as well as a place of rebirth: “The same day of the year I was born on (viz.) the 30th of September, the same day I had my life so miraculously saved 26 years after, when I was cast on the shore in this island; so that my wicked life and my solitary life, began both on a day” (106).

42 Natural man should have few needs. For Locke, men already possess what they need most: in *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*, he explains that however short men may fall from an universal or perfect comprehension of whatsoever is, it yet secures their great concerns, that they have light enough to lead them to the knowledge of their Maker, and the sight of their own duties. Men may find matter sufficient to busy their heads and employ their hands with variety, delight, and satisfaction, if they will not boldly quarrel with their own constitution, and throw away the blessings their hands are filled with, because they are not big enough to grasp everything (I.i.5).

Hayy I. Yaqzan complies with this view of humanity in his contentment on the island, as the only need he expresses is a desire for a greater knowledge of God and he is untroubled by the abundance that meets his material needs on the island.

43 In addition, his desires for trade involve a wish to exchange his American goods for English ones: "I would have given it [the money he found in the shipwreck] all for a six-penny-worth of turnip and carrot seed out of England, or for a handful of pease and beans, and a bottle of ink" (103). This wish reflects both the existing triangular trade thriving in the British empire – without trade, his labor on his little colony carries little meaning in the greater economics of the Atlantic – as well as his desire to stay attached to his native identity, which destabilized by his time on the island.

44 . Locke, too, presents property as not only positive but as the main cause for forming a society; the "only way whereby any one divests himself of his Natural Liberty, and puts on the bonds of Society is by agreeing with other Men to joyn and unite into a Community . . . in a secure Enjoyment of their Properties" (*Second Treatise* VIII.95.4-9). Crusoe's negative view of property in some ways anticipates Rousseau's depictions of natural man and the corruptive force of civilization. Rousseau views natural man as "deprived of any sort of enlightenment . . . [and] his desires do not go beyond his physical needs; the only good things he knows in the universe are food, a female and repose, and the only evils he fears are pain and hunger" (89). Though Defoe is less negative of society, Crusoe's discontent on the island seems to come from the fact that is not a natural man, that his needs and fears go far beyond the simple, physicality Rousseau describes. The idea of property as a burden and potentially corruptive force to mankind is also mirrored in Rousseau, who famously declared that the "first man who, having enclosed a piece of land, thought of saying 'This is mine' and found people simple enough believe him, was the true founder of civil society" (109). The product of such a society, Crusoe cannot contentedly count his blessings as Locke and I. Tufayl instruct; instead, he is driven by needs born out of a materialistic world view.

45 Crusoe describes his contemplations of God as exercises in gratitude: "I learned to look more upon the bright side of my condition, and less upon the dark side; and to consider what I enjoy'd, rather than what I wanted; and this gave me sometimes such secret comforts, that I cannot express them" (104). However, while the difficulties he has expressing the "comforts" he "sometimes" experiences, he has little problem spending long passages expressing his discontent despite the abundance surrounding him.

46 Prior to his imprisonment, Defoe was deeply involved with the Dissenter movement. He had even "begun preparation for a career as a Nonconformist minister" (Backscheider 85). However, his incendiary pamphlet *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters* (1702) satirically attacks a proposed bill to prevent Dissenters from occasionally conforming to Anglicanism in order to hold government offices. When his authorship became known, Defoe was charged with seditious libel and held until June of 1703.

47 These anxieties of losing his identity as a civilized Englishman may also be tied to his own immigrant background. As he points out in the opening paragraph of the novel, "I was born . . . in the city of York, of a good family, tho' not of that country, my father being a foreigner of Bremen, who settled first at Hull" (5). The qualified praise of his family – they are "good" but "not of that country" – along with the migrations of his father point to the son's insecurities over his identity as a member of a geographical community. For Robinson, being English is defined by a set of actions, such as dress, demeanor, diet, more than simply a claim to be born in England. His name also signifies a performance of Englishness: Robinson being the name of his mother's family, presumably long-time residents of England, while Crusoe is a Anglization of his father's original family name Kreutznaer.

48 Nina Zhiri has made the intriguing suggestion that the choice of "Friday" for Crusoe's companion may be a reference to the Muslim Holy day.

49 To which he adds that his desire to kill them is not based in any real cause: instead, it is “for an offense which I had not at all entered into a discussion of in my thoughts, any farther than my passions were at first fir’d by the horror I conceiv’d” at their cannibalism (135). Even when he does enter into a debate about the merits of cannibalism, his conclusion seems secondary to his desire to engage and defeat the other islanders.

⁵⁰50 Crusoe’s association of femininity with European identity seems to strengthen the ties between his time on the island and the captivity episode. The association of power and therefore masculinity with a non-European culture (the Ottoman Empire) influences his overall view of Europe in the world: Crusoe transfers the feminized position Christian Europe holds in the Old World into his encounters in the New. This may explain his overwhelming fear of the natives, even when they seem to pose no real threat to him. 51 Crusoe catches himself challenging God’s sovereignty when he debates whether or not he had the right to “condemn” the Caribs beliefs and lifestyle: “What authority or call I had to pretend to be judge and executioner upon these men as criminals, whom Heaven had thought fit for so many ages to suffer unpunish’d[?]” (135).

52 This weakness in the spiritual education of Friday forms, I argue, part of a larger critique of religion – in particular, the vision of a just and well-ordered universe – in the text.

53 As Roxann Wheeler points out, Friday’s racial difference from natives and Africans becomes obscured as centuries pass. Much like the effect of abolitionist movement on the racialization of Oroonoko I describe in chapter one, Friday becomes seen as an African slave: “Changes in the laboring population [of the West Indies] were not the only factor resulting in confusion between Carib and African. Friday’s Negroization in eighteenth-century illustrations is also connected to the makeup of the colonial population . . . [which] gave rise to many blended identities” (83).

54 This statement carries a degree more loyalty than what Crusoe believes his other subjects capable of: they would die if necessity called for it, but Friday phrases his sacrifice as a request from Crusoe and does not stipulate that any danger be present.

55 I am not including Defoe’s sequel in this analysis. In *The Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*, Friday accompanies Crusoe on his return to the island, where Friday is killed but Poll the parrot is set free.

Chapter Three: Universalism and History **in Johnson's *Rasselas* and Lennox's *Female Quixote***

The preceding chapter dealt with anxieties over a foreign element mixing with national and religious identity; this chapter will address texts that in their embracing the foreign as part of a larger statement on the universality of human experience. As touched on in chapter one, what a “universal” concept of humanity meant varied throughout the eighteenth century. For Behn, it referred to solidarity within an international race of nobles, while for her adaptors it alternated between bonds based in sensibility and political concepts based upon property-ownership. In this chapter, two mid eighteenth-century novels - Samuel Johnson's *The History of Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia* (1759) and Charlotte Lennox's *The Female Quixote, or the Adventures of Arabella* (1752) – draw upon the old universalism of romance use it to argue against the period's assertions of nationalism and patriarchy.

“Universalism” carried different associations during eighteenth century. Often, when associated with Enlightenment thought, it designates a method for analyzing the world. In *A Philosophical and Political History of the Settlements and Trade of the Europeans in the East and West Indies*, the Abbé Raynal tries to approach the question of the slave trade from an unbiased perspective in order to discover an essential, or universal truth, without being hindered by his historical and cultural position: in reading his works, he hopes future readers will “be ignorant of the kingdom which gave me birth, of the government under which I lived, of the profession I followed in my country, and of the religious faith I professed: it is my wish, that they should only consider me as their

fellow-citizen and their friend” (3).¹ Immanuel Kant saw a belief in universalism as the only valid foundation for ethics, arguing that one’s behavior should be based upon three categorical imperatives building off of the first with that one should act “only according to that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law” (no. 421).² In England, Alexander Pope expresses similar sentiments in his *Essay on Criticism* and *Essay on Man*. In the former, he sees the world as possessing an essential order that transcend our cultural and historical perspectives: “Those RULES of old *discover’d*, not *devis’d* / . . . / *Nature*, like *Liberty*, is but restrain’d / By the same Laws which first *herself* ordain’d” (88-91). As an essentialized, universal order exists in the world, Pope differs from the previous authors in that he seems to instruct his readers to cease struggling against the natural way of the world:

Cease then, nor **Order** *Imperfection* name:
 Our proper bliss depends on what we blame.

 Submit---in this, or any other sphere,

 All nature is but art, unknown to thee;
 All chance, direction which thou canst not see:
 All discord, harmony not understood:
 All partial evil, universal good:
 And spight of pride, in erring reason's spight,
 One truth is clear; Whatever *Is*, is **Right**. (I., 273-274, 277, 281-286)

An acceptance of “Whatever *Is*, is Right,” lends it self to an acceptance of the social status quo.³ Those who are oppressed through patriarchy, poverty or colonialism are so because that is their natural place in the Order of the universe.

Samuel Johnson and Charlotte Lennox represent an alternative to this definition of the universal; instead, they modify the romance racial model to argue for a form of universality that transcends national, class and gender boundaries. Johnson, in particular,

strongly opposed what he reads as Pope's "System of Morality" in *Essay on Man* (158), which he attacks in his discussion of *Essay on Man* in *Prefaces, Biographical and Critical, to the Works of the English Poets* (1779-1781): "Never were penury of knowledge and vulgarity of sentiment so happily disguised" (317).⁴ He rejects the world view "that self-interest, well understood, will produce social concord; that men are mutual gainers by mutual benefits; that evil is sometimes balanced by good; that human advantages are unstable and fallacious, of uncertain duration, and doubtful effects; that our true honour is not to have a great part, but to act it well; that virtue only is our own; and that happiness is always in our power" (318).

In many ways, his philosophical romance *The History of Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia* (1759)⁵ runs counter to the views he accuses Pope of holding: the narrative traces the characters failed quest for happiness, and constantly thwarting their goal, what "is" in the world is certainly not "RIGHT." Working from within the same literary circle as Johnson, Charlotte Lennox offered a critique of the current order of the world in *The Female Quixote, or the Adventures of Arabella* (1752):⁶ the heroine's romance values may be satirized and she does find a seemingly happy ending by marrying her cousin, but Arabella's misreadings of the world point out what is precisely wrong with it in its perceptions on morals, women and other cultures.

Johnson and Lennox definition of universalism challenges the ideology that an existing order by which the world operates or that reveals an essential truth, they argue that a common humanity exists between sexes, classes and cultures, and based upon this premise, refute concepts of European, specifically English, superiority to other, specifically Oriental, cultures. Their ideology aligns them with the philosophies of

writers such as Voltaire, who in *Candide* tests and finds wanting the belief that this is “the best of all possible worlds,” and presents the majority of all people as being miserable despite their social position or geographic location.⁷ So compatible did he find *Candide* with *Rasselas*, Johnson declared to Boswell that “had not [the two works] been published so closely one after the other that there was no time for imitation, it would have been in vain to deny that the schene which came the latest [*Rasselas* in April 1759] was taken from the other [*Candide* in January 1759]” (qtd. Kolb xlii).⁸ In order to promote this particular definition of universalism, *The Female Quixote* and *Rasselas* both reference an older form of history writing that dates back to the Classical world of the Mediterranean; through this historical lens, the boundaries between romance and fact are porous, raising questions over what constitutes a “true” history. Using the ambiguity between genres of history and romance, fact and fiction, the texts raise questions about history in order to critique English concepts of difference, especially those of gender or culture, in favor of a more universalized view of the world.

Romance and Historiography

The status of historiography underwent a series of radical changes from the sixteenth through the nineteenth century. When viewed in this context, *The Female Quixote* and *Rasselas* are shown to be actively engaged in debates over what sources are historically valid and how that should shape the reader’s view of herself and nation in relation to the rest of the world. In his overview of changes in British historiography, J.R. Hale points to shift in focus from the primary cause of God to secondary causes of history, namely individual free will: “during the sixteenth century, the emphasis on what history taught shifted from morals to wisdom, and in particular, political-wisdom. From

being a repertory of sins punished, it became a storehouse of historical parallels.” This change required closer attention to the individuals involved in past events; “it expressed a desire to see historical characters as true to life as possible so that lessons could be learned from their actions that were relevant to life rather than to the hereafter” (10).

While Hale focuses more on the literary techniques and sources of historians, his portrayal of trends in historiography also implies a belief in universalism: that despite differences in time and location, a common essence exists that allows readers to apply these past examples to their own lives.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, this movement to “realistically” portray past figures included an increased reliance on archival research and a reassessment of sources, but it also continued to emphasize ability of readers to relate to and be entertained by these histories. While an increased interest in English national history and archives occurred from the fifteenth century onward, Hale points out that the most influential historians of the time looked outside of their own national boundaries for perspective: “History can be written, and written vigorously with the experience of a single nation, but to advance in technique and purpose it must look outside, outside time – as the Italian humanists looked back to the ancients” (21). Rather than restraining a history’s scope to one nation’s point of view, that national history takes on significance through its connections to the histories of other nations and eras. Such an approach is consistent with the conventions of the romance genre.

For example, in the works of Madeleine de Scudéry, figures of Classical Greece and Rome speak in a manner and express ideas that could be found in Early Modern salons. In the *Histoire de Sapho* from her *Aratamène; our, Le grand Cyrus* (1656),

Scudéry's characters are not marked by any difference occurring from the gap in time and space between them and Scudéry's readers. As Karen Newman points out in the introduction to her translation, Scudéry projected values of the mid-seventeenth-century France elite onto her characters: "Self-restraint, the regulation and control of drives, and the pursuit of activities requiring such restraint, including reading and writing, were part of this civilizing process. Scudéry's *Histoire de Sapho* can be read as one articulation of that process in its valuation of conversation, *letters*, and love over heroic action, politics, and marriage" (7). Sapho's pronouncements on conversations, women's education and love are meant to be taken as good advice to any reader from any place or period.⁹ Her work in particular acts as a literary predecessor for Johnson and Lennox. As in *Rasselas*, her texts use historic and foreign settings in order to stage philosophical discourses meant to be offer universal concepts to the reader. Her connection to Lennox is even more explicit: throughout *The Female Quixote*, Scudéry's romances are held up as literary and historical models, and are used as a critique of eighteenth-century English society.

Scudéry's romances fit the description of history of the time with its attention to the psychological realism of its characters. Citing the Earl of Claredon as an example of this trend, Hale points out that what is remarkable about the historical figures in *History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England Begun in the Year 1641* is that it provides "for the first time a story [in English historiography] that is really credible in terms of its actors. . . . Claredon is at once more casual and more inward, and the range of his sympathies is wide. He employs a tone of musing retrospect, a rapid informality that presents the man and explains his actions and his influence with an effect of far greater realism than any measured obituary could achieve" (21). In her portrayals of historical

figures, especially women she feels have been misrepresented, Scudéry is concerned with their character both in the sense of their reputation as well as their personal traits. Speeches and dialogues were frequently introduced into other histories, and Scudéry's histories such as *Les femmes illustres, ou, Les harangues héroïques, de Mr de Scudéry* (1665) promises on the title page to give "true portraits of these heroines" ["les veritables Portraits de ces Heroïnes"]. These speeches by women such as Mariam before she is murdered by her husband Herod or Zenobia upon her defeat by the Romans are eloquent arguments in self-defense meant to display the reason and virtue of the speaker by focusing on creating a realistic character with whom her readers could relate. Her romances, like other histories at the time, operate as both factual accounts and fictional entertainment in order to present an argument for the readers' – and by extension, society's – moral and ethical education.

The blurred boundaries between romance and history continued into the eighteenth century, as demand for histories and prose fiction increased with the rise of print culture. Devoney Looser points out that, at this time, there "were few professional historians in the current sense" (13), dividing eighteenth-century historians into two camps: antiquarians, who "collected history for the sake of history, often without moral purpose or attention to narrative form" and "literary historians," who viewed history "as an art form and literary genre – as 'belles lettres' rather than as a scholarly pursuit" (12). Rather than a purely scholarly or regulated discipline, histories existed also to entertain the reading public. It is important to keep in mind that historical writing at this time lack an ideological or methodical focal point, and were largely driven by what a non-scholarly audience wished to read: "At the end of the eighteenth and at the beginning of the

nineteenth centuries historians were still influenced by the law of supply and demand. Historical studies did not center on the universities until after the middle of the nineteenth century, and only then did history begin to be written for a narrowing circle of professional colleagues. Before that, historians wanted to be popular” (Hale 35).

Just as what we now define as romance genre was influenced from the outside by trends in historiography, it was also being changed from within in romances from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries through the critiques of the violence glorified in chivalric romance both on and off the battlefield. Medieval romance’s presentation of rape is often overlaps with chivalric conquest. Kathryn Gravdal points out that “Old French relies heavily on the representation of sexual violence, [since] no word for “rape” (*viol* in modern French) exists in twelfth-century Old French.” Instead, the actual act is obscured in metaphors and symbols that operate as descriptions and frequently result in morally ambiguous meanings: “The most frequent medieval locution for rape is ‘to force a woman’ . . . [which] derived from the classical Latin adjective *fortis*: strong, powerful, mighty. *Fortis* bore distinctly positive connotations of military heroism: courageous, manly, brave, bold, impetuous” (564-565). In this way, violence against women is conflated with the already positively viewed military violence which the knight needs to complete in order to realize his heroic potential.

Countering this trend, some romance writers, especially in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, began to offer alternative codes of behavior. Cervantes’ *Don Quixote* (1605) has been presented as a satire on the romance and according to some critics, the first piece long prose fiction that can qualify as a novel. E.C. Graf points out that the hero’s delusions often center around military violence, leading Quixote’s

encounters with conventional “enemies” from Crusade romances – and Spain’s own national identity as a defender of Christendom - to form an anti-militaristic argument: “the Moor, the Basque, the Arab, and the Morisco contain the Castilian (protagonist, second narrator, and reader) and force him to examine the violence both at the beginning, middle, and present of his national history. . . Cervantes. . . subtly invites his reader to laugh along with both the Morisco translator and the original Arabic author at the ingenuous antics of the medieval Castilian nationalist” (77).

Marguerite de Navarre’s *Heptameron des nouvelles* (1559) repeatedly involves women of all ranks escaping some form of violence, especially rape, which in the preceding romance tradition is often associated with male valor and prowess. The view Navarre struggles against, according to Patricia Cholakian, viewed masculine love as “military conquest whose success or failure determines the man’s honor” (236). Similarly, Scudéry’s romances attempted to create a world where physical violence – both militarily and sexual – is replaced with a valorization of platonic relationships. For example, in *Histoire de Sapho*, she refutes the account of Sapho killing herself when rejected by her younger lover Phaon, replacing it with the lovers retreat to a peaceful utopia in Sarmatia, where “Sapho made people understand skillfully that to love always, with an equal ardor, one must never marry” (156). Her retreat from Greece is also a retreat from her role there – or in seventeenth-century Europe – as a wife and mother. Only by denying her lover marriage - given the chasteness of all the characters’ behaviors, this implicitly excludes sex as well – can Sapho live a happy life that emotionally, spiritually and intellectually fulfills her.

Following this trend of romances reassessing the genre from within it, Marie-Madeleine Pioche de La Vergne, Comtesse de Lafayette uses romance conventions but subverts them. In *Zayde* (1670-1671), for example, her characters misread their situations by judging others by romance standards: both Consalve and Zaïde disbelieve the other's love for them because they assume an imaginary rival.¹⁰ Nicholas D. Paige notes that "Everything in *Zayde* indicate that twists like these are the result of astonishingly canny reflection on the devices of romance, whose tropes the novel systematically subverts" (19). He argues that the text should be viewed as "a pastiche of romance" straddling the transition from this old genre to the new one found in the novel: "all the elements of the old genre are there, and they are recognizable as such, but they no longer function as they once did" (21). Also, *La Princesse de Clèves* (1678) takes the conventional courtly romance and undermines it by focus on a woman's internal struggle against her own emotions and her eventual rejection of court life and the military adventures that originate from it. This internal shift towards self-critique within the romance genre influenced how eighteenth-century readers viewed it.

The compatibility between French and English forms of history and romance emerges out of a long history of intellectual exchanges between the British Isles and continental Europe. In her study of intersections between Early Modern French, Italian and English women's literary circles and their responses to the *querelle des femmes*, Julie Campbell points out that "such trends stem from courts and other centers of learning and spread from country to country through the journeys and literary activities of courtiers and other travelers is a given" (127).¹¹ For example, Campbell demonstrates a connection between the romances produced by English and French literary circles: when

“romances [from English circles] are read in tandem, intertextual dialogues that relate to popular debates and literary circle ritual arise . . . These dialogues may be construed as intertextual debates that mirror those popular in salon society [in France] throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries” (168).

Rather than rejecting the romance, *The Female Quixote* and *Rasselas* build off of trends existing within the genre. Lennox and Johnson, writing at this turning point in both history and romance, both maintain the literariness of historiography and reject the dehumanization of others based on sex, class or race within eighteenth-century English culture; instead, they turn towards a sense of universalism that included non-European and non-Christian cultures. The evocation of romance in both their works harkens back to the internationalism found in works such as *Oroonoko*, discussed in the first chapter. Through this older genre along with a fading concept of history, *Rasselas* and *The Female Quixote* use their universalism to critique the domestic assumptions of English/European and male superiority.

Johnson as historian

Like *The Female Quixote*, Johnson’s mixture of fantastical romance, social satire and oriental scholarship in *Rasselas* uses the ambiguities between historic fact and romantic fiction to offer critique of a Eurocentric morality and gendering of knowledge. The episodic nature of the adventures his characters experience mirrors the romance tradition of which Johnson was so fond.¹² The futility of the main quest to find a “choice in life” and the hypocrisy and corruption found in all the book’s locales argues that human happiness is impossible even in the best of environments. At the heart of Johnson’s pessimistic moral is a critique of European exploitation of other cultures and of

European women. To accomplish this goal, Johnson aligns his philosophical romance with a tradition of theologically-motivated history writing, in which he had participated in his translation *Voyage to Abyssinia* (1735).

In *Dr. Johnson's Women*, an analysis of Johnson's interactions with Lennox and other female members of their circle, Norma Clarke makes the argument that *Rasselas* is a contradictory text in its evocation of history and its narrative content: despite the solemn opening lines warning those who "listen with credulity to the whispers of fancy, and pursue with eagerness the phantoms of hope . . . [should] attend to the history of Rasselas prince of Abissinia" (*Rasselas* 7), she argues that the narrative itself makes "no pretence to any factual basis" (Clarke 102). To support this, she quotes the second paragraph of the narrative: "Rasselas was the fourth son of the mighty emperour, in whose dominions the Father of waters begins his course; whose bounty pours down the streams of plenty, and scatters over half the world the harvests of Egypt" (*Rasselas* 7). The lack of analysis that following the quotation in Clarke's argument points to the late twentieth-century view that such a flowery passage cannot constitute a serious history. But when examined in the context of other historical accounts leading up to the 1750s, Johnson's narrative style is not that different.

In particular, both the content and style of Johnson's 1759 philosophical tale mirrors his first book, *Voyage to Abyssinia* nearly three decades earlier. On the surface the similarities are striking, inviting immediate comparisons between Johnson's two texts: both share setting of Abyssinia, also known as Ethiopia; like *Rasselas*, *Voyage* has an episodic structure; and emphasis in Johnson's translation on the futility of seventeenth-century Jesuit missionary Jerome Lobo's attempts to spread Catholicism in

an already Christian nation anticipates pessimism of *Rasselas*.¹³ As Gwin J. Kolb points out, Johnson's version of the *Voyage* includes the imprisonment of the Emperor's children, "Rassela Christos lieutenant general to Sultan Sequed" is one of the historic figures discussed (*Voyage* 167), and a number of phrases, spellings and descriptions in *Rassales* match those found in *Voyage* (Kolb, *Rasselas* xxvii). Kolb also points to other scholarly research that informed Johnson's composition of his narrative: in particular, Hiob Ludolf's *Historia Aethiopica* (1681), of which Johnson owned a translation, contains histories of "Rassela Christos" as well as a fourteenth-century prince named "Icon-Imlac," records the escape of an Abyssinian prince from his royal prison, and provides an origin for incidental passages in Johnson's text (xxviii).¹⁴ By using names and locations that would put readers in mind of Johnson's historical work, *Rasselas* invites its readers to question what constitutes fact or fiction within the romance.

Viewing it as overtly raising questions over what constitutes romance or history, I believe *Rasselas* should be read as a response to the debates over European Christian identity found in the Lobo's narrative and its translations. When viewed as a continuation of the history of translations behind *Voyage*, *Rasselas* can – like Lennox's *Female Quixote* – be viewed as responding to socially constructed differences of culture and gender. The role of romance in *Rassales* as well as Lennox's *Female Quixote* stands in for the superficial sense of empowerment and false hope of escape offered to the texts' protagonists. Similarly, the fantasy of an independent, meaningful existence found in romance is extended to the female characters through new forms of knowledge emerging in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: scientific enquiry and the reformation of historical studies. This parallel between the old genre of romance and eighteenth-century

new knowledge provide a critique of a progressive view of the world as well as the belief in European – especially English – superiority.

Johnson's *Voyage* is a translation of Joachim Le Grand's 1728 version of the *Voyage* – which is itself a French translation of Jerome Lobo's Portuguese original. Lobo's *Itinerário* relates the Jesuits travels from 1621 to 1635 beginning on the West Coast of India in Goa and after several delays, ending in Ethiopia on a mission to convert Abyssinian Christians from their national church to Roman Catholicism. Much like the translations of I. Tufayl's *Hai Ibn Yaqzan* at the end of the seventeenth century, Lobo's original manuscript as well as Le Grand and Johnson's translations of it reflect how existing tensions in Western Europe over definitions of Christian identity were projected onto non-European spaces.¹⁵

Lobo's narrative and its translations emerge out of the fissures in the concept of the west as a uniformly Christian space. During the Jesuit missions to Abyssinia in the seventeenth century, Europe was experiencing the religious schism of the Reformation. The mission was ostensibly in response to military threat of Islamic forces surrounding Abyssinia, however, it can be argued that some motivation could have lain in the appeal of spreading Catholic influence in African as it as being threatened in Western Europe. Soon, Lobo's account became embroiled in Protestant-Catholic debates: Hiob Ludolf was a German Lutheran gathering information from an Abyssinian cleric, both inclined in the time of this 1682 account to hold a hostile view of the Catholic Church. Later Catholic writers, including Le Grand, would view Ludolf's work as an attack against Catholicism (Gold, note 4, xxxi).

Written during a nadir in Catholic-Abyssinian relations¹⁶ and while Protestant churches gained political power in Europe, Lobo's narrative portrays his experiences as a series of missionary failures and mortal dangers. He spends a year attempting to enter Abyssinia, and it seems that when he joins the new Patriarch, Mendes, on his way to the Jesuit House in Fremona, he has finally succeeded in reaching his goal four years after he had departed from Lisbon. But both on his way to and once inside Abyssinia, he finds a hostile populace and faces difficulties ranging from merchants who will not sell food to Jesuits,¹⁷ numerous conflicts with Muslims to multiple attempts on his life. The narrative ends after his escape from Abyssinia after he and his fellow Jesuits are ransomed, he travels to Diou on a Muslim trading vessel: "Our condition here was not much better than that of the illustrious captives [Mendes and other Jesuits], whom we left behind. We were in an Arabian ship, with a crew of pilgrims of Mecca, with whom it was a point of religion to insult us" (*Voyage* 111). His mistreatment, his illness and the death of one of their Abyssinian converts on the ship is not the end of his troubles. Arriving in India, he meets with the Portuguese Viceroy of the Indies in order to be allowed by his own Church to continue home to Europe. The Viceroy listens to Lobo's list of complaints and plan to take and fortify Mazua with Portuguese troops, but is disappointed when the Viceroy only seems to see an opportunity to gain a greater reputation and make his son commander and chief of the attack, but has no further plans other than plunder (116).

The hope Lobo holds at the end of the narrative of rallying forces in Portugal rings hollow when it is preceded by the Jesuit failures in Abyssinia and his own failures with the Viceroy and followed by another list of misfortunes he encounters in his narrative's final lines: "I was shipreck'd on the coast of Natal; I was taken by the

Hollanders, and it is not easy to mention the danger which I was exposed to both by land and sea, before I arrived in Portugal” (117). The impression of the narrative is one of a man besieged at all sides by Abyssian Christians, Muslims, Protestants from Holland and ineffective Catholic representatives. An attempt to expand Catholicism beyond Europe ends instead with an inglorious return to Lisbon. The subsequent translations by both Le Grand and Johnson use Lobo’s account of Christian nation predating European Christianity to respond to European tensions between Catholics and Protestants. However, while Le Grand’s translation is in a many ways a refutation of Protestant accounts of Catholic failures in Abyssinia, Johnson’s engagement of political and religious issues is secondary. The source material of the *Voyage* uses the African nation as a foil for European religious debates, in which Muslim characters become conflated with their Protestant adversaries. Johnson, however, uses their religious debate as a platform for his view of a universal humanity over racial and cultural differences, which anticipates his later stance against the African slave trade as well as his portrayal – or lack thereof – of difference between Europe and Africa in *Rasselas*.

Le Grand’s 1728 *Relation historique d’Abissinie* takes the failure of the Jesuit mission in Abyssinia and transforms it into a narrative of persecution at the hands of heretic churches as the French Catholic and secretary to the ambassador to Portugal subtly conflates the Abyssinian Christians and Muslims with European Protestants. In addition to a translation of Lobo’s *Itinerário* into French, Le Grand supplements the narrative with “The Sequel to the Account of Abyssinia” and fifteen dissertations on various subjects connected to Abyssinia. The “Sequel” takes the ostensible failure of the

Jesuit mission in Ethiopia and transforms it into a history of the “True Church” of Roman Catholicism at the hands of heretics and unbelievers.¹⁸

The *Sequel* presents various non-Catholic groups as equally dangerous and part of a seemingly unified threat, a conflation that Le Grand will use to attack Protestant historians, represented by Ludolf, who critique the Roman Church. Differing greatly from the actual demographic complexities of the term, the label of Christian becomes interchangeable with the Jesuit presence and the Catholic Church.¹⁹ This includes the marginalization of the indigenous church and its conflation with Islam,²⁰ a trend that will appear in a less hostile form in Johnson’s blending of religious and cultural distinctions in *Rasselas*. Accompanying the marginalization of the Abyssinian Christians, the *Sequel* also emphasizes the Muslim presence and its hostility towards the Jesuits, which places the narrative within a larger tradition of Catholic-Muslim conflicts, such as Crusade narratives. But while Lobo represents the occasional Muslim attacker as part of an overall hostile landscape, Le Grand makes a connection between those who thwarted the Jesuit mission in Abyssinia to the Catholic Church’s adversaries in Europe. Lutheran historian Hiob Ludolf becomes a symbol of Protestant attacks through Le Grand references to and refutations of Ludolf’s *Historia Aethiopica* (1681). More than Lobo, Le Grand emphasizes Muslim connections to the ruling powers in Abyssinia. In doing so, he is able to make an attack on what he views as the main adversary of Catholicism, European Protestantism.

Each group sought to bring the Abyssinians within their own sphere of influence: the Catholic through conversion, and the Protestants through shared theology.²¹ Ludolf’s history was a deliberate argument for Abyssinian – Protestant alliance: “Whereas the Jesuits had asserted that the Abyssinians Church, with its rites of purification,

circumcision, and others borrowed from the Jews, was immersed in heresy, Ludolf, drawing much first-hand information from the Abba Gregory, an Abyssinian, saw nothing heretical in such practices.” He presented the Church in Ethiopia as “untainted by Rome” and as a source of “further justification for the Protestant Reformation.” In this light, Ludolf argued that accounts such as Lobo’s that criticized the Abyssinians “offered Protestants one more example of the wrongheadedness of the Church of Rome” (Gold xliii). In many ways, Le Grand’s translation plays on the larger battleground between sects: it reasserts Jesuit veracity and refutation of Protestant charges, and given his position in the embassy to Portugal, potentially reinforced the bond between it and France as Catholic countries. His caustic tone towards Ludolf as one who makes unsubstantiated arguments that damage the image of the Catholic Church is found through the supplementary material of the Sequel and into the Dissertations, recontextualizes Lobo’s narrative within Catholic-Protestant debates.²²

Johnson’s translation superficially seems to act as a response to Le Grand’s counter-attack. In his preface, this Anglican writer aligns himself with Ludolf and against the Catholic Church: “The Portuguese, to make their mission seem more necessary, endeavour’d to place in the strongest light the differences between the Abyssinian and Roman Church, but the great Ludolfus laying hold on the advantage, reduced these later writers to prove their conformity” (5). He asserts that any man, no matter how unlearned, having read the Gospels “would not look for the *True Church* in the Church of Rome” (5). He even instructs English readers who find the account too popish, to turn to another account of Abyssinia by the Protestant Michael Geddes (4).

Despite this seemingly anti-Catholic stance, Johnson is actually moving the text away from Catholic-Protestant tensions towards an universalized view of mankind that will permeate *Rasselas*. Le Grand and Lobo, for example, are praised as individuals throughout the Preface.²³ Lobo's account "is so curious and entertaining" and "contrary to the general vein of his countrymen, [he] has amused his reader with no romantick absurdities or incredible fictions" (3), implicitly countering Ludolf's attacks on its veracity; Le Grand's dissertations are "so judicious and instructive" (3), but Johnson tempers his praise of the supplements, writing that though one in particular is "an example of great moderation, in deviating from the temper of his religion, but in the others [he] has left proofs, that learning and honesty are often too weak to oppose prejudice" (5). By judging his Catholic predecessors as individuals not representatives of an ideology, Johnson emphasizes a common humanity rather than the theological debates between Catholic and Protestant that lie behind these European accounts of Ethiopia

While Johnson admittedly takes "great liberties" in his translation by paraphrasing, omitting and altering Le Grand's version of the narrative, I do not believe these changes are in service to the Protestant cause as much as they are to a humanist one.²⁴ For example, in a passage where the Jesuits have trouble with dishonest Moor in their service, Le Grand's translation has him returning the stolen cords but striking the Portuguese soldiers, leading them to retaliate (55). In Johnson's version, "none reciev'd nay hurt but the Moor . . . He was knock'd down by one of our solider, who had cut his throat, but that the fathers prevented it, he then restor'd the cords, and was more tractable ever after" (34). This omission negatively depicts the Portuguese soldiers' actions and Lobo's later comment that Moors are naturally bad and need to be treated with a heavy

hand (35). Johnson's omission is not necessarily an attempt to make the Jesuits look cruel as it can be read more as a critique of Portuguese colonialism, not of Catholicism. As an opponent of the slave-trade, Johnson would have connected the Portuguese attempts to penetrate Ethiopia with their other African ventures.²⁵

Johnson's opposition to slavery was part of his overall view that cultural and racial differences should matter little in people's interactions with one another. The Protestant stance that the Abyssinian Church was compatible with Christianity fits into this view, but is more a means of supporting his argument for a universal view of humanity than a rejection of Catholicism. In other omissions, he leaves out most of the details of religious debates, whether between Emperor Basilides Muslim and Christian envoys or the correspondence of Ludolf and Piques. He praises Lobo's narrative as realistically presenting the Abyssinian as not very different from Europeans. Johnson rejects stereotypes that place non-Europeans on the extreme of civilization, arguing that Lobo's history is admirable for portraying a culture that does not seem too alien to the reader: "here are no Hottentots without religion, poilty, or articulate language, no Chinese perfectly polite, and completely skill'd in all sciences." In Lobo's text, Johnson argues:

"[the reader] will discover what will always be discover'd by a diligent and impartial enquirer, that wherever human nature is to be found, there is a mixture of vice and virtue, a contrast of passion and reason, and that the Creator doth not appear partial in his distribution, but has balanced in most countries their particular inconveniences by particular favours" (3-4).

In another omission of Le Grand's text, Johnson subtly emphasizes the basic sameness between nations. The section describing the physical appearance of the Abyssinians he leaves out Le Grand's comment that other Ethiopian groups have "complexions [that] are

very black” (200),²⁶ focusing instead on the similarities between Abyssinians and Europeans:

The Abyssins are well shap’d, their features are commonly sufficiently regular, their eyes large and lively, their colour rather olive than black, and their hair long which they have a thousand d ways of dressing. The women of distinction are tolerably white. The other Ethiopians have nose big and wide, thick lips, [here Le Grand comments on their black complexions] and hair curled like wool (161).

In Le Grand’s text, the contrast serves an argument that the Abyssins are more like Europeans because they are actually of Persian origin; Johnson undercuts this by making the other Ethiopians less distinct from the Abyssins and by doing so, more alike with Europeans. This treatment of the two African groups is similar to the way of Behn’s Oroonoko or Defoe’s Friday are discussed in the earlier chapters, and such is the image we should have in mind when reading *Rasselas*. Though the reduction of non-whites to a white model of beauty is in itself an assertion of European dominance, the end to which these authors positively describe their subjects in terms of “whiteness” is done in large part to make the reader relate to those they would normally view as alien. The racial difference in that narrative is deemphasized for a similar reason as it is in *Voyage*, Johnson is questioning categories of difference as he asserts his own universalist position. In *Rasselas*, the concept of a common humanity will serve to critique not only racial and cultural but sexual distinctions, as his narrative leads the reader to first identify with its non-European hero and then moves to a critique of the oppression of women in multiple societies.

Johnson and Romance

To show the insufficiency of European progress and superiority, *Rasselas* first breaks up the binary of a European Self and an Oriental Other, which was beginning to emerge in the mid-eighteenth century. This first occurs when Rasselas is imprisoned in the Happy Valley and implores his servant Imlac to describe the outside world, which later prompts Rasselas, and through him his companions, to leave the Happy Valley so that he can find happiness through his own “choice of life.” At one point in the servant’s narrative,²⁷ Europeans enter into this oriental romance. This interlude disassociates the reader from her own European identity in much the same way I argue Arabella’s choices in role model break up a European self/ Oriental Other binary.²⁸ In this chapter, the reader’s subject position is in flux. On one side, she is aligned with Imlac and Rasselas, the latter because his point of view as protagonist dominates the first volume and the former because of the first person narration shaping this section of the romance. Also, their dialogue is much more in the Platonic philosophical tradition, where it less two equal points of view; instead, the questions of one exist mainly to prod along the logic of the other to a forgone conclusion the reader is meant to agree with. The reader is meant, like Rasselas, to follow along and agree with Imlac’s argument.

On the other hand, for Imlac and Rasselas, the Europeans are an exotic Other. The reader surely recognizes herself in these descriptions. The initial descriptions seem to present a flattering view of Europe, that reinforces the reader’s assumed view of European Self/Oriental Other binary: Imlac describes how in Palestine he “conversed with great numbers of northern and western nations of Europe; the nations which are now in possession of all power and all knowledge; whose armies are irresistible, and whose

fleets command the remotest parts of the globe” (46). These hyperbolic descriptions reinforce the Self-Other binary with knowledge, power and mobility fall to the Europeans, while the oriental, Muslim exists as an Other.²⁹ While Ethiopia, as Johnson would have been aware, is one of the oldest Christian nations in the world and specific religions are only obliquely referred to in the text, the decadent exoticism of the Happy Valley and the lack of any distinction through culture or religion between the travels and the Egyptians, and Pekuah’s discovery of Christianity after her kidnapping, leads me to categorize the characters as religiously the same as the majority of the Cairo characters, Muslim. As I argued in chapter one, placing Eastern, especially Islamic imagery, on a non-Muslim African character or locale was a means for seventeenth and eighteenth-century writers to elevate that person or place in a European reader’s mind as being part of a foreign but nevertheless developed civilization.

The decadence of the earlier scenes describing Rasselas’ indolent existence provides sharp contrast to the activity of the Europeans: besides their movement through trade and military endeavors, their technology is described in terms of movement. Europeans proactively “cure wounds and diseases” while the Oriental Others “languish and perish;” the former’s communication technology makes it so “that one friend can hardly be said to be absent from another” as they “have roads cut through their mountains, and bridges laid upon their rivers” (50). Even Imlac, whose travel and activity might have provided a counter to Rasselas’ stereotypical inactivity, reinforces the traditional binary because his judgments, when they align with positive, active traits are categorized by Rasselas as European. When Imlac offers a rational dismissal of pilgrimages as superstitious, Rasselas counters that his logic relies on “European

distinctions” (48).³⁰ Here, the English reader finds her alignment with Imlac as narrator, reinforcing her identity as a European self, but since the question is on happiness and not simply technological and cultural advancement, she begins to find herself distanced from the narrative because as a European, she recognizes that her environment is no more an utopia than Rasselas’s Happy Valley.

This distancing from the grandiose view of European selfhood places the reader in an ambiguous position. On one hand, the narrator is describing Europeans, which she identifies with, but the description also defamiliarizes it for her through its utopist imagery. By breaking up this the identification of the reader and her European identity, she is set up to identify with Imlac’s critique of this utopist image. When he declares that the “Europeans . . . are less unhappy than we, but they are not happy. Human life is every where a state in which much is to be endured, and little to be enjoyed” (50), the text has conditioned the reader to be in agreement with this assessment. While the assumption of European superiority is not squelched – they are, after all, “less unhappy” – the reader’s identification with this vision of Europe has be destabilized and is willing to accept not only what she perhaps already agreed with – that Europeans are not happy – but with the additional point Imlac adds to his argument: humanity shares an universal condition. Rather than a division between nationalities and religions, the text has set up a borderless critique of human life.

Through the multiple subject positions the reader must experience in this short exchange between Rasselas and Imlac, her own subject position is in flux as the line between European and Oriental, Christian and Muslim becomes increasingly blurred. When they travel to Cairo, there is no mention of the physical or cultural differences

between Abyssinians and Egyptians. Similar to Johnson's truncated translation of the appearance of Abyssinians in *Voyage*, difference upon the travelers' entrance to is discussed only in terms of clothes and behavior marking rank, all of which Imlac attempts to remove from them: "Their dress was such as might not bring upon them the suspicion of having any thing to conceal . . . Imlac was forced to observe them [Rasselas and Nekayah] with great vigilance, lest they should betray their rank by their unusual behaviour" (62). Throughout their encounters, people will be divided up by class and life philosophy, not religion or race. By not commenting on these other differences between peoples, the text also de-emphasizes the foreignness of the setting and people from the readers. As Leyburn points out, "it is a commonplace of criticism that the scenes of human life displayed are not really linked to the scene of Abyssinia and that the Cairo of *Rasselas* is as actually London as the sage of the story is Johnson himself" (1059); however, as Leyburn and I both argue, the settings are deliberate and refer to factual accounts of the locations. To this I add that Johnson's use of historiography makes the connection between the English reader and the texts' characters more significant: projecting London onto a purely fictional space allows for a critique of English society, but by integrating factual narratives into the presentation of Abyssinia a larger point is made for universalism. The initial distance found in an oriental romance begins to serve a greater argument of a shared condition. This blurring of cultural distinctions will later be replicated at the end of the volume as Johnson's text moves from breaking up European/Muslim distinction to the divisions made between the sexes.

This technique is most notably used again at the end of the volume, when the male domination of the narrative through Rasselas, Imlac and the men they encounter

switches to one where the female characters. Nekayah and Pekuah take on increasingly assertive roles in the text, changing not only the reader's identification with characters in the text, but also the way knowledge and the search for it is defined within the text.

Women and New Forms of Knowledge

In the outside world, the Rasselas and the rest of his party enter into a fluctuating power dynamic between the four characters. Whereas Rasselas, though also a prisoner, occupied the highest spot in their former hierarchy, his initial lack of knowledge of the outside world and his later inability to break out of old forms of knowledge tip the balance of power towards his servant Imlac and, eventually, his sister and her attendant. When the companions first enter Cairo, the royal siblings must adjust to their own social demotions: "they wondered to see themselves pass undistinguished along the street, and met by the lowest of the people without reverence or notice" (64).³¹ Even though they were prisoners in the Happy Valley, they still enjoyed some sovereignty over their servants; however, outside of the palace, they are forced to recognize their lack of power in this new setting. Imlac, instead of Rasselas, becomes the group's leader: he "understood traffick, [and] sold part of the jewels [belonging to Nekayah and Rasselas] the next day, and hired a house, which he adorned with such magnificence, that he was immediately considered as a merchant of great wealth" (64).

Imlac is not simply acting as a servant – he is taking on the role of sovereign for the four. His knowledge allows him to provide for his subjects' needs and he alone receives the public recognition for the wealth provided by the former royals. The guests that fill their house come to see Imlac, not Rasselas; they arrive there because Imlac's own qualities, his "politeness" and "generosity," have drawn them there (64). Rasselas is

relegated from a male position of power to a subordinate female one as he becomes grouped with the women: all three are “not able to mix in the conversation” and must be “gradually initiated in the world as they gained knowledge of the language” (64).

Rasselas is soon able to explore the various philosophical schools of thought found in Cairo, and gains the ability to “mix in the conversation”; however, he remains reliant on Imlac’s guidance and rarely questions the wise men he encounters. Through this dependence on others, he never truly gains the power associated with his royal status or the sovereign power of which he fantasizes.

His sister, however, faces larger barriers to her quest but is able to rebel against them. Unlike her brother, her position as a woman limits where she can go and with whom she may converse. For the most part, she can only interact with other women, and is appalled by ignorance and vulgarity found in both Cairo and the countryside. Her inability to move freely in society, or even find a social niche among other women, forces her to remain more a spectator than a participant. Nevertheless, the text presents another upheaval of the group’s social hierarchy as Nekayah and Pekuah take on progressively more assertive roles and pay less heed to the male authorities they encounter. At first, the princess Nekayah seems less able to adapt than her brother does. She in particular “could not at first bear the thought of being leveled with the vulgar” leading her to recreate the conditions she had been eager to leave by “for some days, continued in her chamber where she was served by her favourite Pekuah as in the palace of the valley” (64).

In addition, her education in the Happy Valley prepared her even less for the outside world than her brother, as the “prince had, by frequent lectures, been taught the use and nature of money; but the ladies could not, for a long time, comprehend what the

merchants did with small pieces of gold and silver, or why things of so little use should be received as equivalent to the necessities of life” (64-65). Here, the theme of two separate spheres of knowledge is solidified along gender lines. Rasselas has enjoyed a formal, masculine schooling involving lectures and abstract concepts – it is knowledge that is passed from man to man in a scholarly tradition. This is similar to the kinds of knowledge he seeks out from wise men, schools, libertines, etc. The two women represent a different form of knowledge:³² they base theirs on their own experiences and observations. This empirical knowledge, I argue, represents the closest thing to an endorsement within the text: it is compatible with Imlac’s praise of travel and his own critiques of Rasselas’ conclusions and it allows the group access to the world of scientific inquiry in the form of the astronomer. Given the eighteenth-century’s increasing acceptance of the scientific method’s empirical view of the world, the women’s ability to adjust to new technology places their form of knowledge in a positive light.

Nekayah and her attendant, Pekuah, stay in the background for much of the first volume, but as the text progresses they take on a more prominent role and are more rebellious toward their male companions. Nekayah first begins to emerge as a more important character when the group leaves the city for the countryside. Free from the implied restrictions placed upon her in Cairo (she does not seem able to really participate in the inquiries made in the city by Rasselas and Imlac), her opinions and reactions to her environment receives more attention from the narrative. This adventure outside the city marks a turning point in the women’s plot line. For instance, when they follow the received wisdom that the “felicity, which publick life could not afford, was to be found in solitude” and Imlac suggests they spend the day with shepherds, whose lifestyle is

“celebrated for its innocence and quiet” (76), Nekayah is the one that points out the difference between this ideal and the reality they encounter (77). This is the first time in the narrative that she expresses her own assessment of their journey. The pastoral episode is also the first time Nekayah is presented to one of the wise men her brother consults. Earlier episode had either Imlac presenting Rasselas or Rasselas himself approaching a wise man, but in this case, the princess is explicitly included as Imlac explains that “this young man and maiden [are on a journey to discover their] . . . *choice of life*”(81). The quest now belongs to both of them.

In this light, Nekayah becomes much more proactive in their quest. At the end of the first volume, Nekayah convinces her brother to, albeit benignly, rebel against Imlac’s guidance and conduct an empirical experiment with her. The language of her proposal emphasizes the equality she feels with her brother: “‘We have hitherto,’ said she, ‘known but little of the world: . . . Imlac favours not our search, lest we should in time find him mistaken. We will divide the task between us: you shall try what is to be found in the splendour of courts, and I will range the shades of humbler life’”(89). Her proposal puts them on equal footing in terms of background and a lack of knowledge of the world. The repetition of “we” demonstrates her belief that the quest belongs to both of them and her decision on how the labor should be divided between them contrasts the lack of influence she possessed over the journey in the first half of the text. Her rejection of Imlac’s authority also foreshadows her eventual rejection of other male authority figures in favor of her own experiences. The volume ends with the two siblings’ experiencing the two extremes of the social hierarchy, and while Nekayah will observe how little power and

knowledge common women possess, she will use her experience there to assert her own intellectual authority during the rest of their journey.

Her increasingly assertive role in the text does not go unopposed within and outside of her circle. With the exception of her servant, Pekuah, she is socially isolated from other women and finds there is not an existing place in society for an educated woman: she finds the “daughters of many houses [during her observations] . . . airy and cheerful, but Nekayah had been too long accustomed to the conversations of Imlac and her brother to be much pleased with childish levity and prattle which had no meaning.” When she compares herself with these other women, she views them like a separate species, treating them as “inoffensive animals,” while the women in turn, do not accept her as one of their own and are instead “proud of her countenance, and weary of her company” (92). However, the feminine, domestic sphere is the only social space she can enter into without her brother or Imlac’s patronage.

At the same time, she finds attempts to exert her own experience-based authority refuted within her circle by her brother. The second volume opens with three chapters repeating the same pattern as each other: Nekayah relates her observations and Rasselas attacks her methods and analysis. These sections individually touch on the limited choices facing women and on a larger level, represent her rebellion from the scholarly tradition of knowledge represented by her brother. For instance, when she discusses intergenerational conflicts within families, her brother interrupts her by questioning her choice of subjects: “Surely . . . you must have been unfortunate in your choice of acquaintance: I am unwilling to believe, that the most tender of all relations is thus impeded in its effects by natural necessity” (97). With Imlac and other male authorities,

Rasselas largely accepts their pronouncements as truth without questioning their basis; but with his sister, he frequently interrupts her narration to question her methods and conclusions. However, Nekayah seems to be following the lessons set out earlier in the text that experience and knowledge increases one's power over oneself and others. Imlac's experience allowed him power over Rasselas; Nekayah's gives her the confidence to challenge her brother's authority over the nature of truth and the results of her quest.

Her rebellion against male knowledge shows up again at the pyramids, which she dismisses as part of a (male) history unattached to her, but is only convinced to participate when Imlac describes it in terms of experience. When Imlac first proposes a trip to the pyramids, he appeals to their connection to the past, which Nekayah rejects, insisting instead that the "things that are now before us . . . require attention and deserve it. What have I to do with the heroes or the monuments of ancient times? with times which never can return, and heroes, whose form of life was different from all that the present condition of mankind requires or allows" (111-112). Her objection challenges the authority Imlac has held over the group since the beginning of their journey and forces him to justify his plans to her in ways that are clearly relevant to her own goals.

Pekuah, too, gains her independence through the knowledge she gains on her own adventures. She is kidnapped by Arabs and to those outside of her little group, comes to represent a new and more appealing kind of woman. The authority she gains over her kidnappers is based on her conscious decision to act assertively as the social equal – if not superior – to the men around her. The division of labor is clear within the kidnappers' camp: men command and women serve. As soon as Pekuah observes this, she

immediately identifies herself as one who should be served by ordering that she be waited upon (133). Her actions convince the leader of her captors, referred to only as “the Arab,” that she must be of high status and should be treated with respect. By imitating the example set up by Nekayah, Pekuah is able to assert herself as a mistress instead of a servant.

Having thrown off the old superstition that frightened her away from experiencing the pyramids, Pekuah now opens her up to fully exploit the knowledge available to her in this adventure. As a result, the Arab first prefers her over his seraglio because of the ransom she represents but she eventually wins his heart and mind. Like Nekayah, she finds she cannot easily socialize with other women, since she finds domestic tasks intellectually stifling. Instead, the Arab teaches her astronomy (138). Through this display of intellectual curiosity, Pekuah distinguishes herself from the women in the seraglio and becomes more highly valued: “to a man like the Arab such beauty [as possessed by his women] was only a flower casually plucked and carelessly thrown away. . . .When they were playing about him he looked on them with inattentive superiority” (140). But Pekuah holds his attention, and he delays in asking for her ransom. At the end of his excursions, he “returned [to her and not the other women] always courteous, related his adventures, delighted to hear . . .[her] observations, and endeavored to advance . . .[her] acquaintance with the stars” (140-141). Her release only comes when one of Imlac’s agents finds her. Similar to Nekayah’s experience observing the poorer households of Cairo, Pekuah’s captivity gives her the experience to establish herself within their group as an equal.

The princess and her maid's growing knowledge and lack of submission to male authority is presented in an increasing positive light when Pekuah's new knowledge of astronomy makes her and Nekayah the means of meeting - and improving - a new source of knowledge, the Astronomer. After hearing of Pekuah's adventure, Rasselas declares his intention "to devote himself to science,³³ and pass the rest of his days in literary solitude" (141). Imlac counters this with a warning anecdote of the Astronomer, whose intellectual pursuit and isolation led him to the mad belief that he controls the movement of the heavens (144-145). While Rasselas and Imlac are serious and fatalistic in their assessment of the Astronomer, the women respond with laughter.³⁴ Imlac's chastisement of them emphasizes their intellectual inferiority to the man: "Few can attain this man's knowledge, and few practise his virtues; but all may suffer his calamity" (149). His stressing of the Astronomer's knowledge and virtue implies that this too is a reason the women should not make light of his condition. However, the women insist on meeting him, a plan of which their companions are unhelpful and dismissive.

By this point in the novel, the women no longer need their male companions to grant them permission or help them accomplish their goals. Instead, they realize that unlike the majority of their previous encounters, they do not need the men to form this acquaintance—Pekuah, as a student of astrology, can approach him as a student (159). The company cures the Astronomer of his delusions, for which the Astronomer credits the women equally as the men: "If I am accidentally left alone for a few hours. . . my inveterate persuasion rushes upon my soul, and my thoughts are chained down by some irresistible violence, but they are soon disentangled by the prince's conversation, and instantaneously released at the entrance of Pekuah" (162). If anything, Pekuah has a

greater effect on the Astronomer than Rasselas, and her inclusion as an acting agent in her own right demonstrates how she and her mistress used their experience as a means to elevate their position in their group.

In this light, it seems that the text is advocating a new source of knowledge (experience and through it science) as a means of breaking with past hierarchies and traditions. Clarke argues that Johnson in “*Rasselas* raised the question of the choice of life as an issue for women as well as men. It depicted an exceptional woman as a curious enquirer, a scientific observer going out to question, take notes and draw conclusions” (104). To this I would add that by making the servant Pekuah and not the princess Nekayah the more scientifically inclined, the text moves away from ideas of exceptionalism towards universalism. Just as Nekayah’s insistence that she take a more active role in their quest broke down a gender divide between the aristocratic characters, Pekuah’s ascension into her own plot line and interests independent from her mistress makes the point that women in general – not just exceptional, educated, upper class women – have the intellectual capacity to go beyond the domestic sphere. Through their experiences, especially Pekuah’s scientific training, the women emerge as equal and effective members of their group, no longer isolated from the outside world or dependant on Imlac and Rasselas for their interactions with society.

Johnson’s inconclusive conclusion

However, this seemingly optimistic view of the world is undercut by the narrative’s conclusion. The appearance of progress found through the women’s actions is ultimately revealed to be an illusion. This narrative shift in focus towards the female character occurs alongside another change: the phrase “*choice of life*” frequently comes

up in the first volume. Italicized, it signifies the object of Rasselas' quest. Yet, towards the end of the first volume, shortly before Nekayah and Pekuah receive their extended first person accounts, it occurs in a new context. Earlier, it refers either specifically to Rasselas' own life or to a generalized idea of universal manhood. However, when the companions travel to the countryside on their visit the hermit, the phrase appears in a new context. Imlac introduces the group to the hermit by flattering the old man and broadening the earlier statements of their search: "I do not now wonder that your [the hermit's] reputation is so far extended; we have heard at Cairo of your wisdom, and came hitherto implore your direction for this young man and maiden in the *choice of life*" (81). The opening lines appeal to the public representation of power by praising his reputation, but in this new non-urban setting, Nekayah is included officially in their request for knowledge as well.

As I argued earlier, this small change represents a new shift in power, but the hermits response goes further by undermining the very idea of him as an authority for them to submit to, the idea of institutional knowledge (against which the female characters will increasingly rebel in *Rasselas*' subsequent chapters) and that there is one correct path to gain happiness. First the hermit praises knowledge through experience: "To him that lives well . . . every form of life is good." If the experience of life is valid, the form of life is valid. The traditional merits assigned to the lifestyle matter less than the actual experience of it. Secondly, he refuses to be held up as an example for others to submit themselves to: "I . . . have no desire that my example should gain by any imitators" (81). Unlike previous wise men, this hermit does not want to gain power over others by making them conform to his lifestyle. In the end of the chapter, he further

undoes the hierarchy of knowledge set up in the book by happily returning to Cairo with the group. This example of the young leading the old represents an upheaval of hierarchal power. This along with his refusal to believe there is a correct *choice of life* changes the tone of the narrative.

This shift is signified in the occurrences of the phrase. It disappears for the majority of the second volume, never coming up once during the women's narratives. Perhaps this is because both the women comment on the lack of choice available to an uneducated woman. It could also be because the narrative has opened itself up to the possibility of his companions emerging as the protagonists of their own quests – just as there is no one correct *choice of life*, there is no longer a stable narrative focus on any one character. The phrase resurfaces again right before the last chapter; however, this time, it is not italicized nor represented as a worthy goal. Discussing mortality, the nature of the soul and the existence of a supreme Being, the group gives up their quest and must find new goals for themselves. Rasselas, contemplating the catacombs, comments that “Those that lie here stretched before us, the wise and the powerful of ancient times, warn us to remember the shortness of our present state: they were, perhaps, snatched away while they were busy, like us, in the choice of life” (174). By no longer italicizing the phrase, it loses its special status and desirability. It becomes a distraction from greater questions, or as Nekayah points out, the contemplation of the “choice of eternity” (175).

This anti-resolution to the narrative's quest leaves the characters and their fates uncertain. Trapped by the flooding river, each indulges in fantasies involving destinies separate from each other. Though once she argued that diversity of experience made life bearable, Pekuah dreams of becoming prioress of the order at St. Anthony's, the

monastery where her ransom was paid, and being “gladly . . . fixed in some invariable state” (175). Interestingly, though her dream superficially involves a retreat from worldly things, it also entails her gaining power over other women. Though favored, she was one of many attendants serving Nekayah, but now she fantasizes of taking on attendants of her own. The monastery may have religious symbolism in that the ransoming of her body could correspond to the spiritual ransom of her soul; however, another reading emerges. I argue that she along with the rest of the group end the narrative with fantasies over power over others – power which mirrors that which another member of the group held over him or her - and the ending represents them balking against this in favor of a fantasy of repression. The monastery was the site where Pekuah gave up her potential sovereign power: rather than be the Arab’s consort she returns to Nekayah’s service. In her captivity, she is mistaken for, imitates and enjoys the status of her lady. Her dream is to reclaim this position – to no longer be the attendant but the one waited upon. Instead of desiring to escape old hierarchy, she simply wants to change her position in the hierarchy.

Similarly, Nekayah’s desire to rebel against the masculine knowledge and her brother’s authority over her manifests itself not in the new conception of knowledge her association with empiricism seems to suggest, but in an alteration of the patriarchy that embraced her brother and shunned her. Rather than continue along the gender blurring lines her and Pekuah’s intellectual pursuits created throughout the novel, Nekayah wishes to swap gendered social positions with her privileged brother by making a society where women mimic the all male orders of knowledge from which she is excluded. In the Happy Valley, her brother received a wider education than her, leading to him initially possess a greater ability to interact with the outside world. In response to this inequality,

Nekayah “desired first to learn all sciences.” However, it is not enough for her to gain the education her brother received, she also needs access to tradition similar to the patriarchal one he and Imlac find in Cairo. To accomplish this she “purposed to found a college of learned women, in which she would preside, that by conversing with the old, and educated the young, she might divide her time between the acquisition and communication of wisdom, and raise up the next age of models of prudence, and patterns of piety” (175). Her dream emphasizes the social areas she is barred from in the rest of the text. She received neither the formal education Rasselas did in the Happy Valley nor the informal experiential educations of Pekuah or Imlac. In this fantasy, she learns all of them and becomes like the authorities her brother and Imlac visited in volume one, most of which she was not given an audience with. Her college also involves her setting up a female tradition of knowledge and authority to match the male one she rebelled against.

Rasselas has his much commented on dream of “a little kingdom, in which he might administer justice in his own person, and see all the parts of government with his own eyes” (176). Yet, unlike the others, his fantasy of power collapses in upon itself: “he could never fix the limits of his dominion, and was always adding to the number of his subjects” (175-176). I purpose that in addition to being a comment on the impossibility of absolute rule and omniscience, it also points to a darker desire for power that Rasselas does not want to admit. Throughout the text he expresses desire to be a just ruler, but the dissolution of his fantasy points to another repressed desire: that he is “always adding to the number” points less to his desire to rule well than to have power over many. Like the other two, he is largely being driven by the desire to have power over others.³⁵

Even Imlac and the astronomer also express a desire for power, but in the form of self-rule. They argue that they would be “contented to be driven along the stream of life without directing their course to any particular port” (176), but this would involve their independence from their current employments, respectively serving the prince and serving science. They would no longer have to convey knowledge to others without being an actual authority the way the text’s many wise men are. They would be free to drift throughout society without ramifications or difficulties. This sharply contrasts their social relationships throughout the majority of the text: Imlac, though he possesses more knowledge of the world and the rest of the group is largely dependant on him, finds himself tethered to Rasselas’ quest, even though he expresses skepticism about it. He arranges their escape but does not seem able to act on his desires without a prince to obey and follow. Similarly, the astronomer feels oppressed by his imagined sovereignty over the universe, unable to do anything for fear of destroying life on earth. His dream of an unfettered life of drifting frees him from the cosmological obligations by relieving of any responsibility – he is like the earth he once dreamt he controlled.

Like the others, Imlac and the astronomer realize that even this dream “could [not] be obtained” (176). However, little real barriers are given to these dreams. What stands in their way instead is their on drive to leave the world of speculation and act. Unable to act upon their fantasies of power, they “resolved, when the inundation should cease, to return to Abissinia” (176). While whether or not they act on this fantasy is unclear, what is interesting is the change in desire. There are only two possible *choices of life* at the end of the book: one is to dominate and rule over yourself and others; the other is to be dominated by another. If anything seems absolute at the text’s conclusion, it is

that one cannot escape this power dynamic. After attempting in small ways to achieve independence in their lives, they dream of returning home - which, as the text points out earlier, would result in the death penalty. A text that begins with a search to choose a life, it ends in a choice in favor of death. They wish to die at the hands of a powerful despot.

By placing the setting of a mythic East and older genre of romance against the seemingly new elements of educated women and scientific progress, *Rasselas* ends by conflating two disparate themes into one: the appearance of progress is an illusion.

Eighteenth-century Europe may appear to have progressed further than the life depicted in oriental romance, but ultimately the two are ruled by the same forces: the human inability to change and the continued presence of oppression.

The Female Quixote

Though not as obviously steeped in oriental imagery, Charlotte Lennox's *The Female Quixote* presents a view of universalism compatible with the one Johnson would present seven years later in *Rasselas*. When examined alongside one another, their use of universalism can be seen as sharing two goals: to critique the status of women in England and to argue against a nationalistic view of history, which was beginning to emerge in the mid eighteenth century. For both, romance – particularly its depiction of the Islamic orient – emerges as the means to accomplish these goals. In Johnson's text, the elements of oriental romance envelope the entire narrative in its setting, events and characters; but in Lennox's, it is concentrated in the examples its heroine, Arabella, uses as a model for her own behavior as well as her judgment of the world around her.

In order to demonstrate how Lennox's novel uses these images of oriental romance in a way similar to *Rasselas*, it is necessary to read backwards from an ending

that seems to reject romance as a legitimate form of knowledge, in order to place it in a context that the novel actual does embrace romance values and in fact, is part of a tradition within the genre of evolving to fit emerging social concerns.

Towards the end of *The Female Quixote*, Samuel Johnson stylistically and symbolically enters the text. Reminiscent of the sages in his philosophical romance *The History of Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia*, “the Pious and Learned Doctor” instructs the heroine Arabella on the distinctions between history and romance, curing her of her fanciful world view (366), but unlike in his romance seven years later, the lesson is presented as seemingly unproblematic. Lennox’s second to last chapter, “Being, in the Author’s Opinion, the best Chapter in this History,” has what may be seen as an example of female acquiescence to male authority: the once independent heroine is lectured and chastised for her past views so that humbled, she can finally accept her destiny as her cousin’s wife.

This is reflected in a stylistic shift, as Lennox mimics the prose and aligns the Doctor with Lennox’s own friend and fellow writer, Samuel Johnson. Arabella loses her confidence in her own judgment, while her author subsumes her literary voice to a male authority.³⁶ After being “cured” of her romantic fancies, Arabella offers this apology and proposal to her cousin Glanville: “To give you myself, said she with all my remaining Imperfections, is making you but a poor Present in return for the Obligations your generous Affection has laid me under to you; yet since I am so happy as to be desired for a Partner for Life by a Man of your Sense and Honour, I will endeavour to make myself as worthy as I am able of such a favorable Distinction” (383). At first glance, her speech appears as an act of submission: that she is gifting herself lowers her to the status of

property, that she is “but a poor Present” signifies her inferiority, that Glanville is “a Man of . . . Sense and Honour” marks him as superior, and so on.

But in the greater context of the novel, this is not the case. Her humility comes after her realization of her own fallibility and the potential danger of her actions; at the end of her conversation with the Doctor, she declares, “I tremble indeed to think how nearly I have approached the Brink of Murder, when I thought myself only consulting my own Glory; but whatever I suffer, I will never more demand or instigate Vengeance nor consider my Punctilios as important enough to be balanced against Life” (381). Preceding this scene, her demands that Glanville follow chivalric codes and violently defend her honor almost result in the death of another suitor (also the lover of Glanville’s sister, Charlotte), Sir George. The horror she expresses at her actions are not defined in terms of gender – that she has overstepped feminine modesty – but in terms of a universal humanity.

To emphasize the point that Arabella learns her limitation as a human being, not a woman specifically, the closing contrasts her marriage to Glanville with that of their superficial foils, Sir George and Charlotte. The latter “pair were indeed only married in the common Acceptation of the Word; that is, they were privileged to join Fortunes, Equipages, Titles, and Expence.” Theirs is a union of property, in which it is assumed that the legal and economic disadvantages faced by eighteenth-century women would apply. In contrast to the materialism upon which George and Charlotte’s marriage is based, Arabella’s union with Glanville emphasizes their equality: “Mr. *Glanville* and *Arabella* were united, as well in these, as in every Virtue and laudable Affection of the Mind” (383). The emphasis on the non-material aspects of the emotions and intellect as

well as the use of their names raises them above the normal conventions of marriage, allowing them to be the “Partner[s] for Life” Arabella spoke of in her proposal.

The concepts of equality and universal humanity in the description of their wedding are not in conflict with those found in seventeenth-century romances, showing that while Arabella may give up romances in the final pages, not all the lessons she learned from them are discarded. The blurring of the distinctions between masculine and feminine behavior as well as Arabella’s embracing of non-European role models serve the text’s critique of the sexual and national chauvinism of mid-century England. In her introduction to the Oxford edition of *The Female Quixote*, Margaret Ann Doody presents Arabella’s romance fantasies as part of her victimization by a patriarchal system, describing Arabella’s world view as a “mode of survival . . . [that] make[s] a fantasy of her own that will not subordinate her father’s story” (xx). The romances, in Doody’s reading, are an alternative form of inheritance to the paternal one of land and titles that drives much of the plot: originally bought by the Marchioness “to soften a solitude which she found very disagreeable” (7), they are Arabella’s “only inheritance from her mother, and the female inheritance is customarily presented by women in their novels as dangerous or double edged” (xxi). Their danger lies in their effect on Arabella: not only do they create comic misunderstandings when she encounters eighteenth-century norms, they also blind her to the precariousness of her situation as a woman in that society. As Doody points out, by “reading her romances Arabella frees herself from fearing, or even seeing, the dangers of her position in relation to the paternal inheritance [that dictates her estate as well as control over her own body must go to her male relatives]” (xxi). This freedom, according to Doody’s reading, is more harmful than librating since it allows

Arabella to conceal “from herself the sad truth, that she is a pawn in the game of property” (xxi).

Agreeing with this assessment, I would like to focus on two less emphasized aspects of Doody’s reading: the complications from Arabella’s “female inheritance” and her awareness of her precarious situation as a woman in a patriarchal society, both of which stem from her romance education. Arabella does not realize that the romances are part of a “*female* inheritance” (emphasis mine). Instead, building off my reading of gendered knowledge in *Rasselas*, I argue that Arabella’s reading - as well as her father’s predisposition towards fantasy and romance - leads her to be unaware that knowledge is gendered in society. As a result, her ignorance of these distinctions leads her to favor more masculine oriented knowledge and company, making her – like Johnson’s Pekuah - a more desirable object and allowing her to enter into the newer social forms. Her uncle sees a union between her and his son as a matter of property and alliance built upon female subordination and obedience; her intellectual difference from the women around her wins her cousin over, facilitating her entrance into a companionate marriage built upon individual desire and mutual consent.

The castle in which Arabella grows up emerges as a space of collapsed social binaries after her mother’s death through the integration of her parents’ libraries. Doody points out that when the Marquis “removed them [his wife’s romances] from her Closet into his Library” (Lennox 7), it represents the “summarizing [of] a movement in literary history; for a brief while the romances had seemed to be canonical, worthy of a place in the gentleman’s library” (xxi). I think that this symbolic movement of texts could be seen as going beyond false appearances – more than simply *seeming* worthy and canonical,

within the reality of the household, they *become* worthy and canonical. This is due to Arabella's father, already given to flights of imagination and retreats from the "real" world, creating a non-gendered set of standards that operate in his small domain.

By consolidating the libraries, Arabella's masculine and feminine role models, her parents, become collapsed into one another. Her father sets up the condition of her education, one which instructs her that within the masculine tradition represented by the space of her father's library, women have sovereignty not only over their own bodies but over others as well, as taught to her in through the feminine tradition of her mother's texts. The Marquis act has blurred the categories of fact and fiction, history and romance, resulting in a genre normally gendered as feminine being validated in a masculine space. Her father seems to have given up his patriarchal authority over her, and when she declines a marriage offer from her cousin Glanville, the Marquis makes little attempt to challenge her decision and instead arranges a secret engagement during which time Glanville is supposed to win her affections. Glanville may wish "the Marquis had laid a stronger Injunction upon her in his will to marry him (65), but it would have done little good since Arabella was not raised to recognize patriarchal power over her. The reality is they don't really have patriarchal power over her because she is willing to lose her property rather than submit to their authority.

However, it is important to keep in mind Arabella's own knowledge: not only has she grown up in an environment that – even if accidentally – permits this mixing of gendered knowledge, she is unaware that the texts in the library are gendered at all. She assumes that all educated people read romances as true historical accounts and moral standard bearers. Though she is perceived as doing so by others, Arabella does not

perceive herself overstepping any gender boundaries through her conduct, because she is not fully aware that such boundaries exist. As a result, she –like Nekayah and Pekuah in *Rasselas* – is more at home in the company of educated men than with women of her age and status.

Similar to the isolation Johnson's heroines felt among other women, Arabella has difficulty relating to conventionally feminine topics at which the majority of the women she encounters excel. This inability is consistently portrayed as positive and a sign of moral superiority. The "Modes of Town-Breeding, and *nothing-meaning* Ceremony" leave Miss Groves "at a Loss how to make proper Returns to the Civilities of *Arabella*." While there is a ridiculousness to Arabella's heightened language - such as referring to her companion as "the fair Stranger" – her conversation and manners are seen as having substance and genuine concern lacking in the "*nothing-meaning* Ceremony" of conventional femininity, which is only interested in "Fashions, Assemblies, Cards, or Scandal": "The native Elegance and Simplicity of her[Arabella's] Manners were accompanied with so much real Benevolence of Heart, such insinuating Tenderness, and Graces so Irresistible, that she [Miss Groves] was quite oppressed with them" (69). Providing the starkest contrast to Arabella, is her cousin Charlotte Glanville; the difference between the two of them is not simply one of manners but of character. Charlotte with her "large Share of Coquetry in her Composition" self-centeredly cannot appreciate good qualities in or fortune for others, especially other women; she "was fond of Beauty in none of her own Sex but herself . . . Arabella, on the contrary, was highly pleased with Miss *Glanville*; and, finding her Person very agreeable, did not fail to commend her Beauty." Charlotte's point of view is already aligned with contemporary

society in its similarity to Miss Groves' preoccupation with the superficial; but here, the text makes the foreignness of Arabella's perspective clear by citing its origins in her romances: her praise of her cousin is a "sort of Complaisance mightly in Use among the Heroines, who knew not what Envy or Emulation meant" (80). The contrast between "normal" women and Arabella is illustrated in the subtitle: "the Adventures of Arabella."

In romances and for Arabella, adventure implies noble, heroic exploits, but for her contemporaries it means intrigues and sexual misconduct. The one other positively portrayed female character, a Countess now cured of the romantic views of her youth, points out this difference to Arabella: "The Word Adventures carries in it so free and licentious a Sound in the Apprehension of People at this Period of Time, that it can hardly with Propriety be apply'd to those few and natural Incidents which compose the History of a Woman of Honour" (327). But the negative connotations of "adventure" apply more to the other female characters than to the heroine: Miss Groves has left the town because she is pregnant out of wedlock for a second time, and Charlotte's coquetry is almost as much to blame for the near murder of Sir George as Arabella.³⁷ While overall, Arabella's reliance on romance convention is satirized and critiqued, the text only censures it when it makes her value herself over others, but when it prompts her to react kindly to those around her it is praised. Glanville is drawn to Arabella because she lacks the "feminine" traits of his sister. This embracing of a masculinized femininity leads to the continuation of the collapsing of categories begun with the Marquis moved the romances into the library.

The discussion of women's "adventures" raises a second aspect of Doody's argument this reading will address: while Arabella's reading habits may prevent her from

fully appreciating her financial vulnerability, “the sad truth, that she is a pawn in the game of property” (Doody xxi), Arabella does perceive herself vulnerable to patriarchal attack in her fear of kidnapping, and implicitly rape. Her fear of losing control of her body through sexual violence reflects the danger she does not recognize to her estate as well as a literal sexual danger not mentioned in Doody’s argument. Arabella’s reading seems to be drawn mainly from seventeenth-century writers, especially Scudéry, who as a member of the *précieuse* movement attempted to form an alternative social space where men and women could exchange ideas without the interference of seductions or marriage.³⁸ The behavior she espouses for women embraces intellectual conversation and chaste relationships while rejecting ignorance, social pretense and coquetry: Sapho is praised because “no one in the world is a better person, more generous, less self-interested, less self-important. She is loyal in her friendships, with a soul so tender and a heart so passionate . . . Incapable of envy she is just and generous in recognizing merit and takes more pleasure in praising others than in being praised” (*Histoire* 16). Arguably the most positively portrayed character, the Countess, most closely adheres to Sapho’s model:

This Lady, who among her own Sex had no Superior in Wit, Elegance, and Ease, was inferior to very few of the other in Sense, Leaning, and Judgment. Her Skill in Poetry, Painting, and Musick, tho’ incontestably great, was number’d among the least of her Accomplishments. Her Candour, her Sweetness, her Modesty and Benevolence, while they secur’d her from the Darts of Envy, render’d her superior to Praise, and made the one as unnecessary as the other ineffectual (322-323).

Like Arabella, she also read romances but this was tempered by her early experience in society. The Countess represents the positive view of romance within the text through her alignment with Scudéry’s values.

Sir George, on the other hand, represents the negative side of romance that writers such as Navarre, Scudéry and Lafayette wrote against. His use of romance language to seduce Arabella, culminating in his attempt to discredit Glanville in her eyes by inventing an affair with a prostitute posing as the Princess of Gaul., aligns him with the divine's charges that romances promote excessive passions and deceit. Sir George's use of the genre is implicitly sexual, endangering Arabella of not marrying her proper partner Glanville and the possibility of her seduction in the summer house: aggressive wooing of Arabella, especially his desire to speak to her alone, his flirtation with her cousin Charlotte Glanville, as well as his manipulation of the chamber-maid Deborah, who "for the Sake of the Presents Sir *George* had made her, she consented to meet him privately from time to time, and give him an Account of every Thing that pass'd with Regard to" Arabella (364). While Arabella's repeated fears of rape are ridiculed: Glanville proclaims, "Sure nobody would be so mad to attempt such an Action; my Cousin has the oddest Whims!" (98).³⁹ However, Sir George does represent a sexual threat: he desire to gain Arabella through deceit, including the seduction of her cousin and servant, makes the possibility of someone trying to carry her off from the safety of her house a real possibility.⁴⁰ In this light, following the correct type of romance conventions is valued within the text, while the sexually aggressive variation is aligned with the negatively portrayed aspects of mid-century English society.

The superiority of Arabella's romance manners over the other women she encounters point to another source of satire within the text outside of questions of reading or history: the limited role of and expectations for women in English society. The silliness of Arabella's "eccentric" beliefs and actions serve to make the shallowness and

selfishness “normal” female behavior more apparent. Aside from “curing” Arabella of her fancies, the text also makes the argument that for a contemporary woman to be intelligent and moral she must grow up outside of mainstream society and view the world through the idealized lens of romance.

Further reinforcing the superiority of Arabella’s upbringing to that of other women is the positive response she receives from the men who meet her. Glanville’s long struggle to “cure” his cousin is due to his preference for her above all other women. He often muses on the contradiction between her eccentric beliefs and her undeniable worth: “it [was not] possible to doubt she had a great Share of Understanding; since her Conversation, singular as some of her Sentiments seemed to him, was far superior to most other Ladies” leading him to want her to find him desirable as a husband rather than “Use of that Advantage her Father’s Authority could give him(37). While Glanville clearly prefers persuasion over coercion in his dealings with Arabella, the specter of forced marriage looms over the text. At the time of *The Female Quixote*’s publication, Parliament was debating what rights marriageable young men and women had in choosing their partner. Sue Champlain reads Lennox’s novels as part of this debate, with its “ideology of companionate marriage, an ideology that prioritised consent and rationality,” an ideology that would be refuted two years later (72): passed 1753, the Hardwicke Act “sought for the first time to outlaw all marriages that did not conform exactly to the strict provisions of statute . . .By far the most controversial provision was that which established parental consent as a prerequisite for marriage of any one under the age of twenty one” (36). Despite the ideological alternative, which would soon gain legal validity, Glanville’s refusal to use force to make her marry him, a right he possessed

the legal and social power to do, and his impression with her intellect point to his desire for an equal not a coquette. He blames her delusions not as the unfortunate outcome of educating women, but on her mis-education, “silently cursing *Cleopatra*, and the Authors of those Romances, that had ruined so noble a mind” (115). Within his assessment, there is an implicitly universalistic view of women and men as equally capable of intelligence and virtue, with education and experience being the only real determining factor.

Adding support to the reading that the novel is less a critique of romance but the inhumanity that can be drawn from it, there is not really (with the exception of the allusions to Richardson and Johnson in the conversion scene) an alternative genre offered within Lennox’s narrative. Even historiography, which should stand out as fact, is collapsed into romance. Loosner argues that in *The Female Quixote* “Lennox was working through (perhaps less than successfully) how women featured in current historiographical debates. Rather than jettisoning the ideas of all the historical ‘patriarchs’ of her day, she embraced some of them, revising them to suit her fictional purposes” (92). She points out that the author had a familiarity with contemporary historicism: “Lennox, as an amateur scholar of languages, may thus have been considered a *more* likely candidate for modern historiographical work. She was familiar with French and Italian and moved easily among kinds of writing. . . . At the time Lennox wrote *The Female Quixote*, for example, she was involved – seemingly *more* happily – in translating historical works” (95).⁴¹ Loosner challenges recent criticism that Arabella’s romances represent a valid, historical alternative to the “real” histories championed by the men around her. Loosner counters this with an insightful reading of Arabella’s exchanges with an amateur historian, Mr. Selvin, whom she meets at Bath. Both view themselves as

authorities on Classical history, and enter into a comical debate on historical sources. When Selvin finally realizes that Arabella is referring to recent French writers, not Romans or Greeks, as her sources, he believes he has triumphed: “A *Frenchman* was he? said Mr. Selvin, with a lofty Air: Oh! Then, ‘tis not surprising, that I have not read him: I read no Authors, but the Antients, Madam.” However, Glanville, partly out of mischievous spite as well as his desire to protect his cousin from ridicule, raises her romances author’s status, countering: “But *Scudery* must needs be more ancient than *Thucydides*, and the rest of those *Greek* Historians you mentioned. . .How else could they quote him?” (267).⁴²

While many critics have seen this as a debate between masculine and feminine forms of history, Loosner argues the dynamics are more complicated. First of all, it is another figure, Mr. Tinsel, whom Arabella intellectually bests at the same gathering, not Selvin, who is her adversary (Loosner 103): “Mr. Selvin, tho’ he bore her a Grudge for knowing more History than he did, yet assur’d her, that she had givin the best Rules imaginable for raillying well. But the Beau [Tinsel], whom she had silenc’d by her Reproof [when he attempts to mock those around him], was extremely angry” (269). Secondly, Selvin and Arabella share a flawed sense of history: “Selvin’s historical vision omits the kinds of information that Arabella provides – motivations deriving from the personal lives of the ‘heroes.’ . . .Just, love, and personal losses were not absent from the histories that Lennox and her contemporaries were reading [such as Voltaire’s *Siècle de Louis XIV* (1752)]” (105). Selvin is also “ludicrous” in that he is not well enough versed in history to distinguish ancient from modern authors.

He is so out of touch with the recent past that he does not even recognize the name Scudéry – a name that would have been known to modern historians as well as to readers of romance. . . [The name should also be familiar because her] brother Georges – under whose name she published – was a French political figure as well as a man of letters in his own right (106).

Since both are lacking knowledge, neither form of history is being privileged over the other. In line with the novel's overall argument for a kind of universalism that promote equality between all people, the narrative does not present a superior female history triumphing of a male one or one nation's historical perspective being privileged over another. Much like *Rasselas*, no one person or culture possess knowledge of a meaningful truth that can make sense of the world.

Using Loosner's argument that there is not a distinction being made between a male and female history, I believe that the questioning of history through its comparison to romance acts as a critique of any assumption that one point of view represents absolute truth. In this light, Arabella's romance reading adds a new dimension to the novel's universalism. Just as socially constructed differences between men and women are broken down, Arabella's world view also moves away from a Christian, Eurocentric view of the world. In Alexandrian romance, she favors and frequently references the defeated Persian prince, Oroondates, rather than the Hellenistic Alexander. Rather than favor Rome's Augustus, the ideological and mythical forbearer of England, she prefers Egypt's Cleopatra.

These preferences lead her to embrace alternative views to Christianity. When Granville, after attempting and failing to read romances she assigned him, condemns Statira for "Impiety quite inexcusable in a Christian," she reminds him that European,

Christian values are not universally held or universally valid: “You condemn this illustrious Princess with very little Reason . . . she was not a Christian, and ignorant of those Divines Maxims of Charity and Forgiveness, which Christians, by their Profession, are obliged to practice” (50). Rather than representing moral truth, Christianity is a set of practices held by one culture, and not superior to another. The Christians are “obliged” to follow these maxims, but she does not feel this is what everyone ought to do.

Reading *Rasselas* and *The Female Quixote* alongside one another and within a historical context that does not devalue romances, both novels can be seen as making a case for universal equality across cultural, class and gender lines. In addition, by going back to the romance sources they draw upon, the genre of romance can be seen as an evolving set of values, rather than a static, archaic tradition, which theories of the “rise of the novel” frequently depict it as. From this perspective, Johnson and Lennox’s tweaking of romance conventions emerge as a continuation of authors such as Marguerite de Navarre and Madame Scudéry, who used the romance as a way to critique their historical moment.

1 “The Introduction to Book I.”1798. Trans. J.O. Justamond. New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969, 1-5.

2 The two categorical imperatives that follows are to treat others as ends not means and to act so that the maxim of one’s actions can harmonize with a potential realm of ends, in which all other people are obeying the first two imperatives. *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*. 1785. Trans. James W. Ellington. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1993.

3 Some critics such as Laura Brown have pointed out that the poem can also be read as a call to question the existing social orders of the world: “This ambivalence in the *essay*’s treatment of oppression helps to explain the ill-concealed of Pope’s least respected line [quoted above] . . . The blank and abstract assertiveness of this passage embraces the dichotomy that I have been belabour here: the exemplary submission of the Indian to ‘Whatever IS’ is one thing, and the sanguine acceptance of an order of oppression by an prosperous and expanding society is another.” *Alexander Pope*. New York: Basil Blackwell, 1985, 78. While these points do carry weight, the reading it as complacency has been a common, even predominant, interpretation and can still be used as a counter-example to Johnson and Lennox’s definition of universalism and the conclusions they draw from it.

4 *The Works*. London: Methuen & Co, 1956.

5 *Rasselas* tells the story of a prince held captive, along with the rest of the Sultan's children, in the luxurious prisons of the Happy Valley. Despite the material pleasures surrounding him, *Rasselas* is unhappy and spends his days fantasizing about a less perfect but more interesting existence in the outside world. One of his servants, *Imlac*, has traveled in the outside world and after hearing his story, *Rasselas* believes that if he had a "choice of life" he would be happy. He plans his escape and before he leaves, is found out by his favorite sister, *Nekayah*, who asks to accompany him. *Rasselas*, *Imlac*, *Nekayah* and her servant *Pekuah* go out into the outside world and explore various philosophies and lifestyles trying to decide which offers the best "choice of life." After many episodic encounters, they each fantasize about a lifestyle that empowers them and separates them from most of the group, but decide at the end to return to the Happy Valley, even though they would face the death penalty for leaving. The novel ends not with them acting on any of their plans, but simply sitting and continuing to think about what to do next.

6 *Female Quixote* follows the comic misadventures of *Arabella*, the daughter of a reclusive Marquis. For seventeen years, her only knowledge of the world comes from her father and the romances of her late mother. Taking the romances, mostly by seventeenth-century French authors, as historical truth, she views world events as driven by the desire of aristocratic men to selflessly serve the unattainable noblewomen. As a result, she expects nothing less than perfect obedience from any would-be suitor, including literally living or dying at her command. Like the Cervantes' text to which the title alludes, the narrative is structured around episodes where she misreads the situations when she is brought out into society. For example, she mistakes the new Gardner's assistant as a noble - therefore a potential lover - in disguise and frequently assumes the men she encounters are attempting to abduct her. In love with *Arabella* but wanting to avoid the public embarrassments created by her romance-world view, her cousin *Glanville* repeatedly attempts and fails to re-educate her to the realities of the world. His main obstacle is her contempt at his refusal to obey romance convention (her main charges against him are that he openly declared his love, wanted to marry within the next few decades and gained her father's approval) and that she refuses to accept that *Glanville* has legal and economic power over her, as her father's only heir. After the near death of a few characters, including *Arabella*, a clergyman offers her a rational argument against romances and a chastised heroine agrees to marry her cousin.

7 The one exception may be the South American kingdom of *El Dorado*: while there is no poverty and everyone seems content, the prison-like state of its subjects and the uniformity of beliefs undermine an unambiguous reading of it as an utopia. Also, *Voltaire's* choice to place the most scientifically advanced and socially stable society outside of Europe can be seen as a refutation of the possibility of happiness in his own culture or any in the known world.

8 A point of difference between the texts, though, is in their treatment of the servant and female characters. In *Candide*, *The Old Woman* and *Cunegonde* lack even simple *Candide's* ability to think and feel, and his servants and instructors (who seem to exist only to educate him) are largely interchangeable. *Pangloss* and *Martin*, though possessing opposite views of the world, function in the same way in their relationship to *Candide*.

9 An prime instance on this would be *Sapho's* condemnation of what within the narrative should be the topic of women's education in ancient Greece, but her examples are clearly concerned more with sixteenth-century France: "How bizarre is it that a woman can dance respectably for only five or six years of her life, but we spend ten or twelve teaching her how to dance, something she can do for only five or six? Yet this same person must exercise good judgment till her dying day and speak until her last breath, but we teach women nothing to help them speak agreeable or act appropriately" (43).

10 First he believes she mourns a dead lover and then ignores the plentiful evidence that she does not love *Alamir*; meanwhile, she remains skeptical of his shows of affection and eventually imagines he still loves his ex lover, *Nugna Bella*

11 *Literary Circles and Gender in Early Modern Europe: A cross-cultural approach*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006.

12 *Boswell* quotes *Thomas Percy* as describing *Johnson's* relationship with the genre as contradictory: "When a boy he [*Johnson*] was immoderately fond of reading romances of chivalry, and he retained his fondness for them through life. . . . Yet I have heard him attribute to these extravagant fictions that unsettled turn of mind which prevented his ever fixing in any profession" (*The Life of Samuel Johnson*,

vol. I, 20-21). Even with the dangers of attributing too biographical a reading of a text, one cannot help but wonder if the aimlessness of Rasselas in Johnson's romance inspired story may stem from his mixed view of the genre.

13 In "'No Romantick Absurdities or Incredible Fictions': The Relation of Johnson's Rasselas to Lobo's Voyage to Abyssinia," Ellen Douglass Leyburn argues that

It is easy to see in the persecutions recounted by Lobo the spirit of the people of whom Imalc says, 'they exposed me to the thefts of servants, and the exaction of officers, and saw me plundered under false pretenses, without any advantage of themselves, but that of rejoicing the superiority of their own knowledge,' [pg. 36] or of the Bassa who is feared by the man of wealth with whom Rasselas converses. [paragraph break] There are several even closer parallels with the adventures of Pekuah [whose abduction mirrors the hostility of local Muslims towards the Catholics, and the social structure of her captors mirrors that discussed in the Voyage's "Dissertation on the Kings"] (1062).

Upon comparisons of the two texts as well as other historical sources, it becomes apparent that Johnson's Rasselas does explicitly connect itself to historical accounts of Abyssinia.

14 Johnson's sources also include the more fanciful, but this helps illustrate how porous the boundary was between fact and fantasy, including the luxury of the prison palace of the Happy Valley (Kolb xxx). Given that in the Preface to Voyage, Johnson praises travel writers such as Lobo who "amuse his reader with no romantick absurdities or incredible fictions" (Voyage 3), his mixture of fantastic sources with more accurate ones should be seen as a deliberate statement. Johnson's use of the fantastic in Rasselas do not so much produce a sense of awe in the reader as much as they highlight the mundane pointlessness of the royal lives it describes.

15 From the beginning of Portuguese -Abyssinian relations, tensions arising from cultural and religious differences shaped the Churches' policies towards one another. Gold points out that "Europeans familiar with the rumors of an isolated Christian kingdom ruled by Prester John had often speculated about Abyssinia, but the country was virtually unknown to western travelers before the arrival of the Portuguese in the early sixteenth century" (xxvii). Prior to the arrival of Europeans, Abyssinian Christianity remained isolated from other churches due largely to the spread of Islam in the territories between the African nation and Europe. Beliefs unique to the indigenous church included a pagan-like cult of the Virgin Mary, Jewish practices such as Saturday Sabbaths, views of animals as clean or unclean and circumcision, as well as a belief in the dual nature of Christ as both human and divine.

16 Lobo's mission comes at turning point in the Portuguese presence in Abyssinian and his narrative experience reflects the frustrated ambitions of the Catholic Church. During the reign of Susenyos or Sultan Segued between 1607 and 1632, the Catholic Church, with its largely Spanish and Portuguese presence, enjoyed a tremendous coup as Susenyos accepted and then in 1622, publicly professed his conversion from the Abyssinian to the Roman Catholic Church. However, this conversion was due largely to the diplomatic skills of Jesuit Patriarch Pedro Paez as was made apparent when his successor, Afonso Mendes, came to power. Not content with Susenyos' public conversion, Mendes insisted that conversion to Catholicism be enforced on the nation as a whole and that all Abyssinian rituals differing from Catholicism be abolished. Susenyos, his successor and his subjects revolted against this religious attack on their cultural heritage: "The reaction was serious and unremitting, and in 1632 Susenyos reversed himself, revoked the empire's submission to Rome, and restored Abyssinia to the faith of its fathers. His abdication in the same year brought to the throne his son Fasiladas, who banished the Jesuits from the empire and, as Lobo informs us, meted out humiliation, punishment, and even death to them" (Gold xxx-xxxi).

17 This particular event occurs in Dancali shortly before they arrive in Abyssinia, they are not sold food because the king prohibited this. The king denies it, but after Lobo confronts him, they are able to buy supplies (32).

18 It picks up the narrative of the Patriarch and other Jesuits Lobo left behind and ends with a list of deposed rulers and revolts the country finds itself in without the guidance of European Catholicism. The episodes of one man's troubles is expanded to the entire Catholic presence in Abyssinia, as this addendum to Lobo's narrative offers lists of martyred Jesuits and their allies. In one episode, unarmed missionaries are massacred by a local governor's men. Gold points out in his notes that this last line by Johnson is a truncated version of the battle in Le Grand and that while Johnson retains the mention that one priest is left

alive, he delete the comment on it from the French translation: “Dieu le réservant sans doute à de plus grands travaux, & à un supplice en apparence plus ignominieux “(Relation 139) [Doubtless, God reserved for him larger works and torture more ignominious in appearance] (Voyage 120, notes 7-8). This is a typical episode in the text, but it also points to another trend in Le Grand’s translation of homogenizing adversaries to the Catholic Church. Earlier, the Jesuit’s failure to flee before the attack is attributed to their inability to trust anyone (119).

19 The appearance of faults within the Church is scene as coming from the outside. First a man selling Nubian horses poses as a bishop, which becomes an embarrassment for the Church when he kills a man and is exiled; then, his successor arrives “accompanied by his wife and children, and lived in so scandalous a manner, that the Emperor sent him the same year with a strong guard to a rock almost unaccessible” (120). While Le Grand presents these men as not representative of the Jesuits, it is clear that they are seen by the Abyssinians as part of the Catholic community since he marks these episodes as “one of the greatest reproaches that had ever happened to [the Jacobite Church in Abyssinia]” (120).

20 For example, after the removal of the false and heretical bishops, the narrative’s language makes the Jesuits appear to be the only Christians in the area. When the Jesuits makes a plea to the Patriarch of Alexandria “to have pity upon the Christians of Abyssinia, and to send them a bishop of such conduct and moderation, as might by his prudence and charity appease the spirits of the people” (121), the object of pity shows Le Grand’s marginalization of the indigenous Christians: “Christians of Abyssinia” could apply to either or both Jesuits and natives, but Le Grand’s earlier presentation of the episode as an explicitly Jesuit problem demonstrates that he is no longer aligning the two churches with one another. This is repeated again when Le Grand describes “the Church of Aethiopia” helping “the orthodox Christians that had be reborn in Jesus Christ” (Voyage 126, Le Grand 144-145) [My translation. Johnson translates this as “new converts” while Le Grand phrases it as “tant de chrétiens orthosdoxes, qu’il avait enfantés en Jésus Christ.”]. Their description as orthodox - at least in Le Grand’s eyes - and converts marks them as Catholics, and establishes the narrative stance that the only “real” church in Abyssinia is sponsored by Rome. This linguistic choice signals that non-Catholic Abyssinians will be presented as part of a hostile Other persecuting the Jesuits.

21 Arguably the most direct of these attacks is in the first dissertation, entitled “A Dissertation Upon Mr. Ludolf’s History of Abyssinia.” While it begins with an acknowledgement that Ludolf is well versed in the Abyssin language and “has spared no pains to facilitate the study of it,” Le Grand quickly points out that any knowledge of the history of that nation is due to a Portuguese Jesuit, Father Baltazar Tellez (151). His other source, a member of the Abyssinian Church, is dismissed as is the majority of Ludolf’s description of Ethiopia. The bulk of this dissertation summarizes the correspondence between Ludolf and Piques wherein Ludolf “remarks how little credit is to be given to the narratives of the missionaries, how prove their zeal for the Catholick religion by inventing false accounts, or by depending upon false information” (153).

22 Immediately following a scene that conflates the Abyssinian Christianity and Islam, Le Grand takes an adversarial stance against Ludolf. “As the Basilides’ project was never executed due to large oppositions from his subjects, Mr. Ludolf argues that Basilides never even conceived of it; he attempts to prove this by several convenient reasons” (Le Grand 148).[My translation: Le Grand writes: “Comme le projet de Basilides ne put être execute à cause de la très grand opposition qu’il trouva de la part de ses sujets, Mr. Ludolf soutient que jamais Basilides n’a pu avoir cette pensée; il tâche de le prouver par plusieurs raisons de convenance.” Johnson translates this as “This account, however disputed by Mr. Ludolf, who denies that any such design was ever on foot, and attempts to prove by political arguments the inconsistency of it with the Emperour’s interests” (Voyage 129).] By defending a persecutor of the Jesuits like Basilides, Ludolf is aligned with oppositions to Le Grand’s exclusive definition of Christianity. Le Grand defends his version of events, arguing that the “facts proved by so many testimonies, ought to be confuted by some more solid arguments, than vain conjectures, and uncertain reasonings” (Voyage 130).

23 Gold also cites the argument that the translation could be read as an argument against a potential English-Portuguese alliance (xlv-xlvi).

24 When using Johnson’s translation to discuss Lobo and Le Grand’s works, I have tried to omit or point out insertions and deletions by Johnson using Gold’s notes.

25 For example, in his introduction to *The World Displayed* (1759) lays much of the blame for Europe's mistreatment of Native Americans and Africans on the Portuguese. Describing early encounters between Portuguese and Africans, Johnson sets the two groups up as contrasting examples between cruel experience and exploited innocence: "When the Portuguese came to land, they increased the astonishment of the poor inhabitants, who saw men clad in iron with thunder and lightening in their hand . . . and their dread and amazement . . . were raised to a higher pitch, when the European fired their canons and muskets among them, and they saw their companions fall dead at their feet without any enemy hand, or visible cause of their destruction. . . . The Portuguese could fear nothing from them" (9). He goes on to describe the sadistic pleasure the Portuguese take in torturing their captives because "they scarcely considered them as distinct from beasts" (10).

26 My translation: "le teint très noir."

27 Expand later: This mirrors to the old woman's narrative in *Candide*, which forms an oriental anecdote – photo-negative version of this scene – moral travel is good – here, Rasselas travels; Imlac claims to be less unhappy than the others in the Happy Valley because of his past travels (54). Johnson commented on how similar the themes of the two narratives were and the odd coincidence of them being produced almost simultaneously.

28 Even though it is likely that Samuel Johnson would have used a masculine pronoun for his readers, I feel that given the chapter's theme of the social constraints placed on women, combined with the large female readership of the eighteenth century justifies the use of a feminine pronoun.

29 This is especially true if one takes the main examples of Muslims found in the text so far: Rasselas in particular lacks knowledge of the world, though a prince is ultimately powerless and unhappily immobile in his palatial prison.

30 This exchange can also be read as relating back to Protestant-Catholic tensions in Europe. Imlac's dismissal of pilgrimages as "superstitious" aligns him with Protestant ideology, but Rasselas' dismissal of this assessment as based in cultural biases belittles the debate from a universalist position similar to the one taking in Johnson's translation of *Voyage*.

31 The emptiness of the royal siblings' power is similar to the powerlessness of Crusoe's sovereignty over the island discussed in chapter two. Just as Crusoe's property lacks meaning without other people's recognition of it, Nekayah and Rasselas' status holds little meaning without ability to exert power over those of lower status. As Nekayah points out, "we have never yet been either great or mean. In our own country, though we had royalty, we had no power" (89). For her, status without meaningful authority places them in a limbo where they are isolated from an identifiable social position.

32 Imlac's own position is more ambiguous. On one hand, he encourages Rasselas to seek out the traditional, male dominated forms of knowledge; but on the other, he too upsets power hierarchies when Rasselas must depend on him for survival in the outside world.

33 Science, here, refers to knowledge in general, but given the immediate mention of the Astronomer following his declaration, I feel it can also be used in the more modern sense.

34 In *Laughing Feminism: Subversive Comedy in France Burney, Maria Edgeworth, and Jane Austen*, Audrey Bilger argues that because "the preference for sentimental comedy relied so heavily on images of domestic order and because domestic order required that women be subordinate to men, social fears of noncompliance and disruption made it difficult for a writer to be comic, critical, and female" (21). As a result, suspicions "regarding laughter's sexuality led [social critiques like] John Gregory, in his extremely popular conduct book, to advise that young women beware of getting carried away by group laughter" (23). Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1998. Taking this into account, Pekuah and Nekayah's laughter should be read as an act of subversion against eighteenth-century English restrictions on women.

35 This fantasy mimics the power Rasselas believes his father possesses. When Imlac is describing his travels, Rasselas is shocked that theft exists: "'Surely,' said the prince, 'my father must be negligent of his charge, if any man in his dominions dares to take that which belongs to another. . . . If I were emperor, not the meanest of my subjects should be oppressed with impunity'" (32). Here, the text sets up Rasselas' quest as being partly based in the naïve notion that a ruler has the power to be aware of and address every infraction. This foreshadows the failure of the quest: rulers cannot be perfectly in power anymore than individuals can find happiness.

36 Many critics have even claimed that Johnson wrote this passage. Duncan Isles cites literary scholar and Anglican clergyman John Mitford's comments in an 1843 edition of *Gentleman's Magazine* as the origin of this claim (422) and it continued into the twentieth century. Carey McIntosh, for example, used this chapter as evidence of Johnson's stance against romance in his reading of *Rasselas* in his 1973 *The Choice of Life: Samuel Johnson and the World of Fiction* (14-18). However, as Isles points out, "this claim is by no means adequately supported. It rests largely on internal stylistic evidence. Against this, there is absolutely no contemporary suggestion of his having written it; linguistically, there appears to be nothing in it that a good writer familiar with Johnson's style could not have achieved" (422).

37 Glanville stabs Sir George when he mistakenly believes his rival is secretly meeting with Arabella. This was Sir George's plan, but Charlotte, discovering the plan, substitutes herself and is "transported with the Thoughts of thus having an Opportunity of convincing Sir George of his Perfidy" (365).

38 In *Women Triumphant: Feminism in French Literature 1610-1652*, Ian Maclean defines the movement as "a system of existence conceived of as an antidote to their [women's] plight as wards and wives . . . The précieuse develops essentially feminine qualities, such as 'finesse,' elegance, sensibility; she is neither then pedantic, but 'savant' . . . she exits in a universe in which love is deified, but only that love which has been purified from the constraint, from the considerations of convenience and financial gain, from the dangers of habit and monotony" (152).

39 The reality of rape in the eighteenth century is difficult to determine in terms of precise numbers of victims and perpetrators; however, the work that has been done in this area points the difficulties of successfully prosecuting and convicting a rapist. In "The 'Blackmail Myth' and the Prosecution of Rape and its attempt in 18th Century London: The Creation of a Legal Tradition," Antony Simpson points to this century as a time where a shift in common-law regarding rape occurred, making "both rape and attempted rape much more difficult to prosecute" (103): "Even if a man was prosecuted for rape . . . he need not have been unduly worried about it. The low rate of conviction for this offense made legal sanctions unlikely. . . . For a large number of men . . . being accused of this crime was not necessarily something of which to be ashamed. . . . There are many similar examples to be found of men of rank who offered considerable violence to those who rejected their advances and who did not appear upset by public exposure" (111-112). See also Laurie Edelstein's "An Accusation Easily to be Made? Rape and Malicious Prosecution in Eighteenth-Century England" for an examination of legal practice and defense strategies in the eighteenth century, as well as a counter to some of Simpson arguments. Anna Clark's *Women's Silence Men's Violence: Sexual Assault in England 1770-1845* also offers an examination of court cases, and differs from the other two in her emphasis on twentieth-century cultural theory to interpret the past.

40 Also undermining the critiques of Arabella's romance world view, Sue Chaplain comments that when Arabella "comments on the romance of Andronice and Hortensius, explaining that Hortensius was saved by Andronice from a sentence of death imposed upon him for killing a stork. Sir Charles is outraged" and argues that such a thing could never happen in England or civilized society (though perhaps, he concedes, "Among the *Indians of America*"), readers at the time would have seen a flaw in his logic. In 1723, the passing of the Waltham Black Act "created fifty new capital offences pertaining to the interference with or destruction of property, including the hunting, wounding or stealing of deer, the poaching of hare or fish, the breaking down of the mound of any fish pond, the killing or maiming of cattle, the cutting down of any tree planted in an avenue, orchard or plantation and the setting alight of barns or haystacks" (*Law, Sensibility and the Sublime in Eighteenth-Century Women's Fiction: Speaking of Dread*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004, 70).

41 Loosner also makes the interesting observation that Lennox "translated the same number of works as she wrote novels" but this major portion of her work has been ignored by most scholars (95).

⁴² Earlier Glanville asserts that Thucydides cites Scudéry and it goes unchallenged.

Chapter Four: Sexual Oppression and Repression in Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya*

Within narratives of the “rise” of the English novel, the Gothic novel represents a return of the repressed.¹ While the texts in the preceding chapters dealt with texts whose connections to romance are frequently sublimated or ambiguous, Gothic texts are consistently embedded in the romance tradition. Even in histories of the novel and romance which argue that the latter’s decline enabled the former’s rise, the Gothic novel acts as a bridge between the two genres. In his study of the history of the genre, Montague Summers views the Gothic novel as emerging from the overlapping of the older tradition of the romance to the new Romanticism emerging at the end of the eighteenth century: “a Romance in 1750 often carried with it uncertain suggestions of the Sagas of Chivalry, Amadis, the Palmerins, Triante the white, as well as very distinct memories of [Scudéry’s] *Artamenes; Or, The Grand Cyrus*” but then “gradually fiction grew more realistic and less romantic, until romance again asserted its sway in the efflorescence of the Gothic Novel, where it was the supreme quality, and in the Sentimental Novel”(25,28).² The rise in popularity of both the Gothic and Sentimental novels was aided by a cultural shift towards Romanticism, which “weans out thought and care . . . [;] offers us a wider and fuller vision; and it is therefore subjective; it is reactionary in its revolt against the present since it yearns for the loveliness of the past” (18). Filled with Romantic focus on individual emotional expression and rebellion against parental tyranny, the Gothic novel also consciously aligns itself with a romance past.

Combining the elements of race, religion and gender discussed in earlier in the dissertation, this chapter examines how representations of the Islamic Orient operate within a subcategory of the novel that consciously aligns itself with romance. Focusing on Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya* (1806), the figure of the Moorish prince is placed in a different political context than the eighteenth-century characters discussed earlier. This novel uses a discourse of orientalism more in line with the system Said describes. In particular, Dacre mixes past images of oriental romance with a belief in the superiority of English society that emerged at the end of the century as a part of a justification of imperial expansion. However, Dacre uses her depiction of oriental despotism as part of a social critique of the failures of English liberalism to ensure the rights of women. Using an enslaved Moor turned devil as a foil, Dacre presents examples of submissive women who are secretly rebelling against the social order. Though she does not explicitly argue for increased legal rights or social freedoms for women, Dacre's presentations of the dangers to society through its enforcement of feminine passivity implicitly demonstrates a need to create a society where women are educated to be free subjects and independent of patriarchal control.

The Gothic Novel and Representations of the Orient

In what is widely considered to be the first, English Gothic novel, Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) was presented as a discovered medieval document, a romance chronicle of the fall of a false king and the restoration of the proper heir. Following suit, Clara Reeve's *The Old English Baron: A Gothic Story* (1778) mimics the style of a medieval romance, even providing omissions where the fictional "original" document was damaged over the years. Even when not presented as an

“edited” medieval text, the gothic genre is frequently set in the past, focusing on the tumultuous history of young nobles. Noting this mix of a new movement’s attempts to root itself in the past, Ian Watt quips, “It is hardly too much to say that etymologically the term ‘Gothic Novel’ is an oxymoron for ‘Old New’ (158).³

In the larger context of histories of the novel, the romance and its gothic descendant have shared a similar fate in the ideological rise of the “novel.” Similar to the way the romance has been distanced generically from the novel in order to promote the latter’s ascent into legitimacy, the Gothic has often been labeled as separate from the “legitimate” genres of the novel as well as the Romantic movement that emerged at the end of the century. In her discussion of Gothic tropes, Anne Williams draws parallels between the critical reception and categorization of the Gothic with the narratives of marginalization that it frequently contains:

Calling the “Gothic novel” the “Gothic romance” allows this poor relation an introduction into the drawing room, even if she must remain on the margins – a neurasthenic cousin, or a Madeline Usher, always in the process of disappearing but never permanently buried. Gothic’s intermittent resurrection as “romance,” however, raises another set of problems and suggests another story altogether, for early Gothic “romance” is almost exactly contemporary with the literature we now call “Romantic. . . . There is no easy way to distinguish between early Gothic and several texts we count among the masterpieces of Romantic poetry. Indeed, the unbiased reader might assume that many famous works bespeak a close relation between “Gothic” and “Romantic”: Coleridge’s “Mystery Poems,” Keats’s “Belle Dame sans Merci,” “Lamia,” and “The Eve of St. Agnes,” Shelly’s *Alastor*, Wordsworth’s “Lucy” lyrics and the early “Salisbury Plain” – all are replete with Gothic paraphernalia: fatal women, haunted castles, bleeding corpses, and mysterious warnings (3-4).

The Gothic novel draws from supposed sensational shallowness of the romance, the narrative structures of the eighteenth-century novel and the sublime aesthetics of the Romantics, troubling genre distinctions and categories of high and low literature.⁴

The emphasis on the strange and fantastic that led many critics to devalue the Gothic novel, also lent itself to the changing image of the Orient occurring in the late eighteenth century. While previous chapters show that I view eighteenth-century perceptions of the Orient as more varied and complex, I do agree with Said's connection between cultural representations and colonial justifications. In *Zofloya*, we can see a new form of cultural production that, at least on the surface, justifies English imperialism: orientalism becomes a means by "which colonial rule was justified in advance by Orientalism, rather than after the fact" (39). However, texts such as *Zofloya* still exist in a transitional period: while it can be seen as part of a tradition that would later justify colonial rule, setting the stage for literary celebrations of English supremacy over decadent African cultures such as H. Rider Haggard's *She* (1887),⁵ Dacre's novel needs to be read in the context of the literary tradition that precedes it as well.

Today, the very invocation of the Orient puts a discussion into the context of imperial domination and submission. However, this dynamic was not always portrayed in the literature of the time as a powerful west and a weak East. Instead, both tyranny and oppression are seen within oriental representations, with this Eastern fantasy acting as a means to describe an English political reality. In "The Making of a Political Paradigm: The Ottoman state and Oriental Despotism," Lucette Valensi argues that the emergence of the term *despot*⁶ was directly related to seventeenth and early eighteenth-century views of the Ottoman Empire. Venetian ambassadors in the fifteenth century commented on the

Ottoman system depending on “the total submission of the subjects from the bottom to the top of the social ladder, and the . . . absolute authority of the rule” (183), but are presented in neutral terms “that were used to describe other [political] systems” (187). However at the end of the sixteenth century, a shift had occurred: “Of course, the Venetian ambassadors stuck to the themes of unlimited abundance of human and material resources of the empire, the exceptional position of its capital city, and the proven qualities of its army, but at the same time, they described a process of corruption in the entire system in all of its parts” (187). Moreover, this “immoderation, excess, extravagance, and a generally corrupt form of government” was presented as stemming from the despotism of its ruler (191).

Whether it concerns a political state or a family home, this concept of a space being corrupted from the despotic rule of a patriarchal figure easily aligns itself with the narrative troupes of the Gothic novel. In Horace Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto: A Gothic Story*, the mystery of why a giant helmet smashes the current ruler’s male heir stems from the improper rule of the kingdom. The despot Manfred is shown to be an unfit king by his treatment of the subjects closest to him, his female family members: he tries to put aside his faithful wife in favor of a near-incestuous match with his dead son’s betrothed, Isabella; repulsed by her father-in-law’s advances, she becomes a prisoner then a fugitive; and finally, he kills his daughter when he mistakes her for the resistant Isabella. Manfred’s extreme abuse of those under his rule in the domestic sphere broadly points to a secret revealed later in the plot: he is not the “real” ruler. Drawing on the romance tradition of a noble race, the mysterious wanderer Theodore with his innate good manners and sensibility is the true hereditary heir; Manfred’s ancestors acquired

their rule through betrayal and violence. The despot deposed, Theodore's aptness as a ruler is shown through his considerate, though still patriarchal, treatment of his wife, Isabella. Walpole's interest in antiquity, which informed much of *Otranto*, also encompassed Orientalism with works such as: "A letter from Xo Ho: a Chinese philosopher at London, to his friend Lien Chi at Peking" (1757) and *Hieroglyphic Tales* (1785), which included "A New Arabian Night's Entertainment." Even if not explicitly present in *Otranto*, concepts of the gothic and oriental were, at least for Walpole, part of the same literary project.

When Gothic conventions combine with an Eastern setting,⁷ the parallels between oriental despotism and the genre's frequent critique of tyranny become clearer. William Beckford's *Vathek* (1786)⁸ portrays its Islamic kingdom as filled with the sadist, grotesque, decadent and extreme: all of which center on the central themes of power and domination. For example, the Caliph Vathek's mother "enjoy[s] some intercourse with the infernal powers" "under the guard of fifty female negroes mute and blind of the right eye" (58).⁹ The exoticism of her power fits in with the general ideology of the Gothic novel, regardless of its setting: the oppression of the individual within the family or in the general society is a constant throughout Gothic narratives. Often set in exotic locations of the Mediterranean, using Catholics and Muslims as figures of despotism, the gothic novel acted, nevertheless, as a means of critiquing the social conditions faced by its English readers. This internal examination of power dynamics within the English Gothic can be found in the work of its contemporaries, especially in cases that involve Orientalism.

Orientalism and English Liberalism

By looking at a larger, trans-generic body of texts, we can observe how oriental imagery was used to form a critique of English power structures, especially in hierarchies of power. Similar to the way the debates over English Protestantism described in Chapter Two contained contrasting views on how to judge the influence of Islam on national religious identity, the debates over how to advance the rights of women in the mid to late eighteenth century also produced a mixed response to oriental alternatives to English society.

Though written in the early eighteenth century, Mary Wortley Montagu's *Turkish Embassy Letters* were not publicly distributed until after her death in 1762, and can be seen as an influential force shaping representations of Islam in the English cultural imagination at the end of the century. Montagu saw the Ottoman empire as potentially beneficial ideas for England. Besides her interest in promoting the Turkish practice of smallpox inoculation in England, she also saw Turkish women as enjoying a greater degree of freedom, health and happiness than their English counterparts. For instance, while observing women at a public bath, she comments on their superior social graces declaring that she knows of "no European court where the ladies would have behaved themselves in so polite a manner to such a stranger" and that here there are "none of those disdainful smiles, and satirical whispers, that never fail in our assemblies, when any body appears that is not dressed exactly in the fashion."¹⁰ She goes on to note their moral superiority shown by the absence of "wanton smile[s] or immodest gesture[s] amongst them." She also comments on what she sees as a greater degree of class equality among

the women: while the ladies there have servants, there is not “any distinction of rank by their dress” in the bath house, “all being in the state of nature” (85).

Montagu contrasts this female utopia to England through her representation of her own body: scarred by smallpox, marked by tight lacing, unable to undress and join them without damaging her husband’s political mission and her own reputation.¹¹ In the Ottoman Empire, she finds a female space missing in England: “the woman’s Coffee-House” (86). Despite advances towards equal rights and reform, English women of all classes were often barred from social circles in which new ideas and rights circulated, such as the nearly all-male space of the coffee house. For Montagu, the Orient represents a space of female empowerment that critiques the failures of English liberalism.

In contrast, other proponents of women’s rights saw the East as symbolic of the old systems of abuse that the West needed to free itself from. For example, Mary Wollstonecraft’s *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792)¹² uses the otherness of Islam to present the subjection of women as being incompatible with English and French concepts of liberty. Critiquing Milton’s description of Eve’s natural subordination to Adam, she declares she “cannot comprehend his meaning, unless, in true Mahometan strain, he meant to deprive us [women] of our souls, and insinuate that we were beings only designed by sweet attractive grace, and docile blind obedience, to gratify the sense of man when he can no longer soar on the wing of contemplation” (19).¹³ Arguing for education to strengthen women’s minds, she positions her opponents with the despotism and decadence often associated with Orientalism: “as blind obedience is ever sought for by power, tyrants and sensualists are in the right when they endeavor to keep women in

the dark, because the former only want slaves, and the latter a play-thing” (24). Free European women, she contends, have no need for coquetry and subservience:

In a seraglio, I grant, that all these arts are necessary; the epicure must have his palate tickled, or he will sink into apathy; but have women so little ambition as to be satisfied with such a condition? Can they supinely dream life away in the lap of pleasure, or in the languor of weariness, rather than assert their claim to pursue reasonable pleasures and render themselves conspicuous by practicing the virtues which dignify mankind (29).

Wollstonecraft’s argument assumes that her readers already associate the Orient with the extreme subjection of women as well as with a feminized decadent sloth, while the Occident is connected with “reasonable pleasures” and “virtues that dignify mankind.” Her view represents one similar to those Said will observe in his work; however, looking backwards at its historical context, it should be read as part of a history of Islamic influence on England and not simply as an indicator of future English imperialism.

Similarly, Percy Shelley conveys his argument against tyranny and slavery in *Revolt Against Islam* (1817) by employing an oriental setting. Emily A. Haddad, in her examination of orientalist poetics, points out that though arguments such as Wollstonecraft and Shelley’s are based on biased, imperial views of a monolithic East, they employ these images not to promote English superiority but to argue for change within England: that the “relationship between men and women is functionally equivalent to that between tyrants and slaves . . . such a formulation was not commonly applied to Britons to their own culture at this time, [but] it had the status of conventional wisdom when applied to the Islamic East” (24-25).¹⁴ By relying on Orientalism, both authors could draw attention to problems within their own culture: they used a non-European Other to make the familiar strange to their reader.

Orientalism and Power in the Gothic Novels of Charlotte Dacre

At first glance, Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya* appears to be part of a tradition that critiques the Islamic East as a space of despotism. In addition, her novels in general seem to serve as warnings against women's independence. *Confessions of the Nun of St. Omer* (1805) is a first person narrative of a penitent nun relating to her son her sexual downfall due to her willful nature and preference for reading romances; an epistolary novel, *The Passions* (1811) chronicles jilted lover, Appollonia's sadistic delight in sexually corrupting her rival Julia; *The Libertine* (1807) traces its heroine Gabrielle's sexual fall, which leads not just to her own but those of her father, lover, and children as well. *Zofloya* follows the doomed trajectory of Victoria; in rebellion against the authority of parents, husband and church, she aligns herself with the Moorish slave Zofloya in order to gain brother-in-law for a lover through the murder of both their spouses. While she accomplishes this, her triumph cannot fulfill her as shortly she becomes the oppressed mistress of Zofloya, who reveals himself to be a demon and literally damns her to hell.

Despite the appearance to the seemingly negative depiction of Moors and independent women in *Zofloya*, I believe this novel along with the rest of Dacre's work should be read more as a critique of female passivity that promotes selflessness, self-restraint and a denial of sexuality.¹⁵ In this chapter, *Zofloya* will be shown as a critique of social values, especially those of female passivity and the idealization of the domestic space: regardless of rank, education or quality of mind, submission leads to figurative and literal death. While it differs from *A Vindication* in its use of orientalism, *Zofloya* promotes a nearly Wollstonecraftian argument for both women and men to rule their own

passions in order to create a more just society: the failure to do so, especially in terms of ruling the family, leads to disaster.

To do this, the texts employ the oriental images of despot and slave: by aligning the heroines with these figures, the novels criticize English social values as lacking the freedom and liberty they claim to possess by transforming the gothic landscapes into oriental tyrannies. Together these *Zofloya* presents the idealization of this abject form of femininity as a danger both the society that promotes it as well as the individual who internalizes it. In the novel, the downfall of the more socially powerful and accepted characters comes from their acceptance of the appearance of submissiveness in marginalized characters such as Victoria and Zofloya; however, it is a pose that those not in power must assume in order to survive both socially and literally. Even in the case of the passive, virtuous Lilla, none of the women and servants of the novel actually fulfill the obedient appearance they project.

Zofloya: The Problem of Emancipation, Unruly Women and Royal Slaves

At first glance, *Zofloya* reads as a misogynistic argument against female independence. The opening lines present the tale as a moral lesson for its readers: “The historian who would wish his lessons to sink deep into the heart, thereby essaying to render mankind virtuous and more happy, must not content himself with simply detailing a series of events – he must ascertain causes, and follow progressively their effects; he must draw deductions from incidents as they arise, and ever revert to the actuating principle” (39). Presumably following this edict, the narrative frequently repeats the cause of the characters’ misadventures as stemming from the infidelity of Victoria’s mother, Laurina. Rearticulating that the narrative is not “a romance merely” but a moral

lesson, the last lines warn against Satanic temptations (254), with the implicit understanding that the extreme events of the texts – multiple murders, seductions, fraternizing with banditti, incest, implicit miscegenation and lesbianism, and a literal descent into hell – all stem from Laurina’s inability to keep her marital vows.

Following this line of thought, Diane Lone Hoeveler, in her recent work on the text, argues that *Zofloya* is an attempt on Dacre’s part to distance herself from her father in terms of his Jewish identity and political affiliations. In *Gothic Feminism: The Professionalization of Gender from Charlotte Smith to the Brontës*, she argues that “the female gothic novels of this period [late eighteenth, early nineteenth century] were thinly disguised efforts at propagandizing a new form of conduct for women. . . . ‘professional femininity’ – a cultivated pose, a masquerade of docility, passivity, wise passiveness and tightly controlled emotion.” In this reading, *Zofloya* emerges as a crude parody of Mary Wollstonecraft’s belief in the need for a strong maternal role model in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, where Victoria’s demise provides a negative example of English womanhood, similar to Charlotte Brontë’s “aristocratic and sexually threatening women . . . [in her] portraits of Blanche Ingram and Bertha Rochester” (157). Hoeveler contends that though “we know very little about Dacre’s life . . . one fact remains: in *Zofloya* she produced a virtual parody of Wollstonecraft’s works and as such introduced Wollstonecraft’s ideas, albeit in perverted form, to a larger reading audience” (144). She also implies that Wollstonecraft’s ideal woman is represented largely in Lilla, since she is more in line with women’s “proper feminine roles as docile, passive and dependant on the rightful claims of the patriarchy” (152-153).¹⁶ The failed womanhood of the novel depends on the figure of Zofloya, who represents a “menace inherent in the text . . . not

simply of white women taking black men as illicit lovers . . . [but] the social and economic alliance of dispossessed subject population working together, recognizing their mutual alienation and objectification, and banding as one in a maniacal and deadly pursuit of the great white father and his property” (150).

Building on this argument in Hoeveler’s subsequent article “Charlotte Dacre’s *Zofloya*: The Gothic Demonization of the Jew,” the Moor emerges even more as a symbol of the fears and desires of society, Victoria and finally Dacre herself. In this article, Hoeveler equates *Zofloya* both with the negative figure of the Wandering Jew as well as Dacre’s father, Jonathan King.¹⁷ It is, she posits, “more accurate to read *Zofloya* as a Jew, and an abjected demonized, and wandering Jew” (166) and that Victoria’s murder of Lilla “mimicked the Jewish ritual murder of a young Christian for sacrificial demon-worship” (173).¹⁸ With the undercurrent of Jewish identity in both Victoria and *Zofloya*, Hoeveler argues that the text points to a “deeper threat . . . [of] the social and economic alliance of dispossessed populations working together recognizing their mutual alienation and objectification, and banding as one in a maniacal and deadly pursuit of the great white father and his property” (174). This dangerous alliance, according to Hoeveler, is comes from Dacre’s attempt to simultaneously embrace and reject her Jewish heritage.¹⁹ In this light, the decision of Victoria and Laurina to step outside of the socially subscribe boundaries of wife and mother is presented in an extremely negative light. Laurina's sexual fall in particular is cited frequently as the root of all the evil acts and tragic outcomes of her children and the unfortunate victims that cross their paths.

The contrast Hoeveler sets up holds true in the description of the most “feminine” character in the novel. Unlike these unruly women, Lila stands out as a model of

feminine virtue. In *Zofloya*, narrator describes all her traits -from her the physical appearance to her personality - or lack thereof – as prompting admiration in all those who come in contact with her:

calculated to excite an ardent love in youth was the mind and person of the orphan Lilla. Pure, innocent, free even from the smallest taint of a corrupt thought, was her mind; delicate, symmetrical, and of fairy-like beauty, her person so small, yet of so jus proportion; sweet, expressing a seraphic serenity of soul, seemed her angelic countenance, slightly suffused with the palest hue of the virgin rose (144).

Unlike the blonde, virginal, angelic appearance of her rival, Victoria is seen as lacking the feminine ideals described above. Her brother-in-law, Henriquez, is repulsed by her for her difference from Lilla: “being so completely, both in mind and person, the reverse of that pure and delicate being, he not only failed to view them as two creatures of the same class, but almost thought of Victoria with a tincture of dislike, from the very circumstance of her being so opposite to his lovely mistress” (147). Throughout the text, Victoria is bold and passionate, but until the arrival of Lilla, her dark features are described as beautiful. The hyper-femininity of the new arrival recasts Victoria as Other and undesirable. Comparing the two women, the stereotypical binary of woman as either virgin or whore, Mary or Eve, seems to form the basis of their rivalry.

However, I find that Victoria and Laurina's falls are not portrayed as caused by their independence from social norms but their inability to know or properly rule themselves. Within the novel, this is certainly not a gendered trait but one that is shared frequently by the men surrounding them. It is the lack of independence of all the characters, but especially women, that the novel critiques. Without social or political recourse outside of the men who rule them, without an education to teach them to

understand themselves and the world, Victoria and Lila are not binary opposites but victims of the similar fates. Both are left with parental protection through the loss of the moral stability of their fathers; both must rely on desire of Berenza and his brother marrying them in order to survive in society; and both are driven primarily out of their lack of power. Those with less power in the novel, women and slaves, must take on the appearance of submissiveness in order to gain power over their situation. The Moorish slave Zofloya stands in as a symbol of this duality of seeming submission and covert manipulation. Together, all three characters - Victoria, Lila and Zofloya - draw into question the ability of masters to trust the appearance of their subordinates and critiques a social system that idealizes slavish passivity over intelligent independence.

Making a Model Wife: Victoria feigns passivity

Rather than a conflict between the aggressive Victoria and passive Lila, the text questions the ability to read women's behavior at all. Confined by social expectations, in order to be accepted as a wife or lover, a woman must at least give outward signs of submission. Victoria's own actions put the virtues of feminine passivity into question before Lila's introduction into the narrative. While Victoria fails to notice Zofloya's similar deception, she is adept at presenting herself as a model of feminine passivity with her lover Berenza. The reader witnesses her passions and plots, but at least at first, the other characters only see the façade she creates.

When she is brought to her lover's house in Venice, Victoria realizes that she cannot openly show her jealousy of other women or her feelings towards Berenza; instead she must conform to Berenza's conceptions of properly feminine behavior.

Questioning him on whether or not he will continue to visit his lover and “companion of his looser hours,” Megalena Strozzi, now that Victoria is living with him (95), she shows a spilt between her actions and her motives: while she “pursued” him verbally, “her jealous eyes wandered;” and she is “artful” beneath her “air of innocence” (94). In this scene Victoria tries to determine what exactly her status is in Berenza’s life, an important fact given she has left the dubious, but still socially recognized security of her mother’s house to be with him

Berenza lays out what he expects of a mistress, and to gain the stability of that role, Victoria acts the part: all the while, the reader is being instructed in the difficulty of distinguishing between true submission and covert mastery. Berenza stipulates that to be officially his mistress, and not just a lover to dally with occasionally like Megalena, she must become completely under his possession:

it is not enough for me that *my* mistress should be *admired* by men; they must *envy* me in their hearts the possession of her. She whom Berenza can love must tower above her sex; she must have nothing of the tittering coquet, the fastidious prude, or the affected idiot: she must abound in the graces of *mind* as well as of *body*; for I prize not the woman who can yield only to my arms a lovely insipid *form*, which the veriest boor in nature can enjoy in as much perfection as myself. *My* mistress, too, must be *mine* exclusively, in heart and soul: others may gaze and sigh for her, but must not dare approach. It is she too, who, while her beauty *attracts*, must have dignity sufficient to repel them. If she forfeit for a moment her *self-possession*, I cast her for ever from my bosom. But if . . . it be within the verge of possibility that she forfeit her honour, then – oh! Then, her blood alone can wash out her offence! . . . dost thou mark me? --- hast *thou* the courage, has thou firmness, to become the friend, the mistress of Berenza? (95).

Berenza requires that his mistress live for him alone, focusing her efforts on pleasing him by being both desirable and unavailable to others. Explicit in his demands are the

consequences of disobedience: a moment of losing the “self-possession” that maintains the balance between her ability to attract and repel admiration will result in her being cast aside, while actual betrayal will result in death.

Already marked as a mistress, she will be unable to marry if Berenza casts her away. At this point, their relationship is unconsummated, but it is unlikely that she would be able to present herself as a virgin to potential suitors after running away with and living with a man. Victoria realizes that while unsure of her feelings towards Berenza – she “prefer[s] him to all men” but her “sensations toward him have nothing ardent in them” - her fate depends on fulfilling his fantasy of feminine devotion: “I feel it is requisite to my future prospects, to those plans and views, yet vague and indefinite, which are floating in my brain, that he should not entertain any, not the smallest doubts of my regard for him. I must endeavor, then, to suit my conduct to the fastidious delicacy of his ideas.” Consciously, Victoria makes a distinction between her private desires and public self: “by nature unfitted to admit so soft, so pure a sentiment as *real* love,” Victoria can hide the “*stormy* passions of the soul” in order to present the mild, self-controlled, submission that fits “the fastidious delicacy of his ideas” (97). Her best chance of social and literal survival is to attach herself to Berenza as a mistress, not just ward, and if possible, as his wife.

Ironically, to accomplish this she must persuade Berenza that she is not attaching herself to him for survival. He does not consummate their relationship because of “the tormenting, the useless reflection, that perhaps he was not particularly distinguished by the confidence of Victoria; that perhaps she had flown to him merely as a refuge from

discomfort and oppression, and that had *another* addressed her, she would equally have flown to him” (91). He refuses her professions of love and fidelity arguing that she is “a stranger to the turnings and windings of thine *own* heart” (95). While later I will make a similar argument about Victoria, Berenza’s statement shows his confidence that he can read her better than she can herself. He believes that he can determine whether or not she loves him on the basis of her actions, which proves fatal as Victoria proves herself adept at manipulating his perception of her.

Her deception entails mimicking Berenza’s own melancholy, pensive approach to love. Victoria finds it “necessary and politic to answer his sincere and honourable love with an *appearance* equally ardent and sincere.” Since Berenza’s disposition is “melancholy, somber and reflective . . . she must then become melancholy, retired, and abstracted” (97). By falling prey to a reflection of himself, Berenza reinforces the theme of mirrors and binaries found throughout the novel: unable to recognize himself in her actions, he also cannot see that the true submissive in their relationship is not the passive girl he sees but the lovelorn dupe she imitates.

Within her seduction of Berenza is a critique not just of the submission he demands of her, but also of the ideals contained in his concepts of femininity. The text emphasizes that all of this is conveyed on the superficial level of physical appearance and are the result of conscious artifice, but they also negatively contrast the part she plays with the vivacity of self she must hide: “her eyes, no longer full of a wild and beautiful animation, were taught to languish, or to fix for hours with a musing air upon the ground; her gait, no longer firm and elevated, became hesitating and despondent. She no longer

engrossed the conversation; she became silent, apparently absent, and plunged in thought” (98). Her past actions are described as “beautiful,” “firm,” and “elevated” while her new appearance contains no overtly positive adjectives. Adding to the negative reading of her pretended affection is the description of Berenza’s initial attraction to her. Though he believes himself capable of molding her mind “so as perfectly to assimilate to his wishes,” he does not wish to do away with all of her characteristics: “Her wild and imperious character he would have essayed to render noble, firm, and dignified; her *fierté* [pride] he would have softened, and her boldness checked” and it is her “graceful elegant form, and animated countenance of Victoria, that led him to form of her strongly-marked character the best and most flattering estimate” (59). These traits can fit into the acceptable view of womanhood he inscribes onto her, but also are the characteristics she must eventually repress in order to fully secure herself in his home, and will form the root of her later rebellion against him.

Perhaps the most hypocritical aspect of Berenza’s demands is that he desires a sexually available mistress who is ashamed of her sexuality. The final blow to his reservations comes when she imitates his own mental torment by parroting his own feelings as she feigns to be asleep and unconscious of his observation. Pretending to confess her love for him in a dream, “starting up, and stretching out her arms, as if under the impression of her dream, attempting to embrace him; when opening her eyes, and affecting surprise and shame at the sight of Berenza, she covered her face with hands and turned aside” (98). The allure of this act is found in two proofs he believes it shows him: it proves her love of him because he believes it comes from her unconscious, therefore true, self and her “surprise and shame” show a modest chastity that represses sexual

desire. Believing he has won her heart, Berenza is the one in fact who has been conquered. The reader sees that to which he is blind: “it was Victoria’s care that her lover should not recover from his delusion: well did she support the character she had assumed; and the tender refined Berenza became *convinced*, that he possessed the first pure and genuine affections of an innocent and lovely girl!” (99).

However, in order to secure a better social place as his wife, Victoria’s act of devotion must take on a more slavish aspect, and prove that she is devoted enough to sacrifice her life for his. This trope of a woman sacrificing herself for her lover will become a point of ridicule with Victoria and later with Lila. Berenza, though he loves Victoria, does not wish to marry her: “There was a certain stigma to his idea attached to her, through the misconduct of her mother, which it was impossible for his delicate mind to overlook.” In this matter, Victoria is unconscious of the distinction between a mistress and wife,²⁰ of which her elevation from one to the other will teach her, securing her hatred and resentment towards Berenza. Victoria prevents an assassin sent by the jilted Megalena from killing Berenza in his sleep and in the act is wounded. This act of seeming devotion, the appearance that she places his well-being over that of her own, leads him to break his resolution to keep her as a mistress and not a wife. While earlier he had “not considered [her] as an *equal*, because, though innocent in reality, in his eyes she was scion of infamy and shame” due to her mother’s conduct, the assassination attempt causes him to question how “he could ever have deemed unworthy of his honorable love the creature before him, shining superior in a glory emanating from *herself*” (137). However, while she is physically pierced by the assassin’s blade it what he interprets as a

self-less act out of devotion to him, it is really Berenza who is penetrated and becomes Victoria's slave. When he first met her, he fantasized about modeling her character into a woman who lived for him; instead, Victoria gains "So complete and powerful a dominion . . . over his mind, that his *proud* and dignified attachment, softened into a doting and idolatrous love" (137).

Seeing only an idealized picture of wifely devotion, Berenza cannot read Victoria's heart. Outwardly, she plays the role of devoted lover: "Ah, do not weep, Berenza!" faintly ejaculated Victoria. "I would suffer ten thousand times more to prove my *love* to thee – nay I rejoice to prove it," giving him the impression of a "contempt for her own life in the defense of his – the patience, nay the pleasure with which she bore the unhappy consequence of her courage" (102). Inwardly, Victoria is rejoicing, but for a different reason: "she felt that the wound obtained in defense of her lover's life (and of which her firm mind entertained no apprehensions) would bind him inseparably to her" (102).²¹ For her, the act represents no real sacrifice or danger on her part – only the opportunity to further manipulate the man with power over her physical and social well-being.

Her reception of his marriage proposal also offer a passive mask to cover her emerging resentment as she realizes his previous devaluing of her due to her mother's actions. She "heard him with a look of complacency, and all that softness she knew so well how to assume . . . [and] listened with an acquiescent smile," while the knowledge he had not thought her worthy of marrying, "darted like lightning through her brain, and struck her proud heart as a three-edged dagger. . . .as sudden hatred and desire of revenge

took possession of her vindictive soul” (138). Significantly, the image used to describe this blow to her pride is described as a dagger. The actual dagger that physically pierces her, “of which her firm mind entertained no apprehensions,” is nothing to her and everything to Berenza; but after she heals, the psychic wound caused by the not just double-edged but “three-edged dagger” forms the origin of her own acts of violence against others.

As will be seen in following episodes, the physical act of stabbing - with perhaps the exception of Leonardo’s murder of Ardolph – is portrayed as an act of impotence on the part of the attacker and signifies the power the victim holds over those who wish to dominate her. Leonardo attacks Berenza out of his devotion to Megalena, who in turn is dominated by her passion for Berenza. However, it is Victoria who emerges triumphant from the actual event but injured by the fallout of her increased power. Similarly, when Victoria attempts to wield a knife to attack Lila, it will entail the exposure of her own thwarted passions. These episodes of women being stabbed ostensibly for their lovers, is a revision of romance troupes of feminine passivity. Overlaid on this is the theme of oriental despotism, with the line between slave and enslaved being blurred in the decadence of the characters’ unbounded passions.

Failure of Self-Sovereignty

Despite Victoria’s attempts at rebellion, she is ultimately subdued by male authority in the form of Zofloya. Just as courtship rituals seemed to give women power when the marriages they led to made them their suitors’ property, the slave’s professions of service lead directly to the heroine’s damnation. Part of Victoria’s downfall comes

from her inability to rule herself: carried away by her impulses, she does not understand what desires lie at behind her actions. When she attempts to play the role of a passive woman with her lover Berenza, she deliberately seeks out to ensnare him in marriage more out of survival than personal preference. In fact, though she plays the passive slave, she rebels against the marriage she fought so hard to obtain.

Victoria's inability to understand what motivates her plans of seduction and revenge form the crux of her downfall. Her expressed desire through the plot's climax is for her husband's brother Henriquez; however much of the text's intensity of feelings and descriptions are spent on Zofloya and Lilla.²² Henriquez arrives at a time when Victoria is unhappy in her marriage to Berenza: "When the mind is dissatisfied . . . it ever views objects through an exaggerated medium; trifles . . . are twisted from their proper insignificance, to aid the conceptions of a disturbed imagination. Thus it was with Victoria: she knew, and felt, that Berenza was her superior, and imagined that he must feel it likewise." Establishing her state of mind as unstable, the text argues that her "disturbed imagination" does not allow her to accurately perceive her situation.

In this light, it is arguable that Henriquez is not so much the true object of her desire, but a convenient body onto which to project her dissatisfaction: that Victoria "gazing upon him with admiration, in an instant drew ungrateful comparison between their persons, to the disadvantage of [Berenza]" (Ed. Cracium 140), expresses not so much her attraction to Henriquez but her hostility toward her husband. This anger at Berenza originates from her own sense of inferiority due to the social stigma her mother's affair has given her. While she cannot undo the damage done to her by Laurina, her

pursuit of Henriquez opens up the opportunity to attack the superiority of Berenza's position. If successful in seducing his brother, Victoria would make her husband's positive view of his life a sham by destroying his relationship with his brother and revealing her marital unhappiness.

Further reinforcing her desire for Henriquez as a projection of rather than a real source of emotions, Victoria's fantasies dwell on the two figures her brother-in-law brings into her life more than on Henriquez himself. Her dream supposedly sprung from her attraction to Henriquez is dominated instead by his servant Zofloya. Contrasting the lack of physical description of her professed object of desire, Zofloya is presented in rich detail as are her reactions to him:

she beheld a Moor, of a noble and majestic form. He was clad in a habit of white and gold; on his head he wore a white turban, which sparkled with emeralds, and was surmounted by a waving feather of green; his arms and legs, which were bare, were encircled with the finest oriental pearl; he wore a collar of gold round his throat, and his ears were decorated with gold rings of an enormous size. Victoria contemplated this figure with an inexplicable awe, and, as she gazed, he bent his knee, and extended his arms towards her (Ed. Cracium 145-146).

Whereas Henriquez plays a non-descript passive role in her dream, Zofloya appears in graphic detail emphasizing his desirability through his lavish clothes and bare flesh. In her fantasy, the master does not respond to her, but the servant does as he kneels and offers to embrace her. This dream of Zofloya offers her a reflection of her own actions, in which she has played the role of passive slave in her seduction of her husband; however, Victoria fails to see the similarity and is instead seduced herself, as she views "this figure with an inexplicable awe." If her dreams act as manifestations of her desires, as well as

premonitions of the future,²³ then it points to her unconscious desire to be courted by Zofloya and not his master. Waking, she fails to recognize other aspects of her dream: her desire to be seduced, rather than continue on as the aggressor, and her desire for Zofloya. By not recognizing these desires, she becomes a slave to her own impulses: pursuing - when she wishes to be pursued – another man who will not fulfill her. Rather than a figure of independence, Victoria is defined by her slavish need to be claimed by a socially acceptable man.

Dacre's female protagonist represses her attraction to the Moor because they conflict with her notions of class and race. Ever conscious of her own ambiguous social status as the daughter of an adulteress and as a mistress-turned-wife, Victoria fears further demotion through her association with the black slave: "She was now on the point of betraying her inmost thoughts, her dearest wishes, her dark repining, and hopeless desires; of betraying them, too, to an inferior and an infidel!" (Ed. Cracium 56). Here, she sees herself at risk in two ways: revealing herself after carefully crafting an exterior appearance to mask her true feelings;²⁴ and becoming intimate with "an inferior and an infidel." This fear, however, can also be seen as one of the causes behind her attraction to him. Besides any potential excitement at breaking taboos of race and rank, there is also a sense of kinship between the two. Both have socially fallen: she through her mother's infidelity and her own affair with Berenza; he through the conquest of Spain. While Victoria never consciously makes this connection, the parallel remains. On the surface, he offers her the power to strike back at a husband who unintentionally humiliates her because of her social fall; beneath her acknowledged desires, she may also see her

relationship with Zofloya as a means for both of them to revenge themselves on the social order that oppresses them.

However, this appearance of mutual empowerment is quickly undercut by Zofloya's own motivations.²⁵ Zofloya dominates Victoria through his services to her. Courting her with compliments and favors, he takes their relationship outside of the exchange of a servant and mistress by insisting on being compensated by her submission to him: "Keep your diamond, Signora; the riches of the world are valueless to me – my aim is higher. . . .*Your* friendship – *your* trust – *your* confidence – yourself, Signora" (201). The nature of their bargain leads Victoria to the gradual realization of her desire for and dependence on the Moor. George E. Haggerty describes the progression of this relationship a depiction of "female desire itself as a kind of victimization, suggesting that by giving in to illicit desire, either simply incestuous, or more unusually, miscegenational, she encourages a 'worm' that feeds on her very being" (174).²⁶ The positioning of Zofloya as the manifestation of Victoria's desires (both the means of achieving her conscious desire for Henriquez as well as her more repressed desire for the servant) suggests that "giving in to illicit desire" also involves a masochistic willingness to allow herself to be dominated by her passions, and later by Zofloya.

The conflation of female desire with oppression and eventual damnation places the text as potentially misogynist and racist. Victoria's rejection of social norms through her relationship with Zofloya results in her being cast out of society when she lives with the banditti and out of the world when cast into hell, and can be seen as a moralistic caution against female desire and interracial relationships. However, while Dacre's

decision to portray the satanic within the figure of a moor carries racist implications, Zofloya can also be seen as one of the many example of female masochism throughout the novel. By damning herself in her relationship with him, Victoria repeats the performances of the principle female characters before her. Laurina becomes increasingly dominated by Ardolph, but despite the fact that “he retained no longer traces of the fascinating elegant Ardolph, but degenerated gradually into the harsh and savage tyrant . . . to accompany him she felt unavoidable, for . . . she loved him still” (Dacre 243, 244). The proud Megalena Strozzi endures Berenza’s indifference and neglect until it becomes too much for her to bear. Finally, Lilla is victimized partly out her desire to passively submit to the contradictory demands of the men in her life: her desire to please Henriquez leads her to stay near him, giving Victoria the opportunity to kill her; while her obedience to her father’s death bed decree prevents her from marrying, which would have also removed her from harm’s way. In there own manner, each woman damns herself through her submission to male authority.

Imoinda and Lilla: Perfecting Passivity

In light of Victoria’s own pantomimes of female passivity, Lilla’s fatal acts of submission emerge as a parody of idealized romance heroines such as Behn’s Imoinda. The narrator’s description of Imoinda’s death highlights both the erotic desirability of the woman as well as Oroonoko’s power to dominate and the narrator’s own desire to do violence to the wife. Imoinda’s death is necessitated by her sexual desirability: it prevents her from being “*first Ravished by every Brute [if she is recaptured]; exposed to their nasty Lusts, and then a shameful Death*” (Behn 94). Besides her influence over Oroonoko

and her position as his “Mistress,” the narrator does not cast herself as sexually desirable and while he may have been conversing with the narrator, Imoinda’s pregnancy provides evidence that Oroonoko was not completely neglecting his wife. Imoinda’s position as excelling the narrator in terms of feminine desirability is brought out more in the highly eroticized depiction of her death. From the “thousand Sighs, and long Gazing silently on her Face, while Tears gust . . . from his eyes” as Oroonoko tells Imoinda about his murder-suicide plan to him “imbracing [sic] her, with all the Passion and Languishment of a dying Lover” as he draws his knife creates a sexually charged atmosphere so that when he does stab her, it doubles as a phallic penetration and final sexual act between the couple. The erotic nature of her death is heightened by her desire to be dominated by her husband – “he found the Heroick [sic] Wife faster pleading for Death than he was to propose it” – and establishes him at last as unequivocally as a man and king, not a woman’s pet or hunted beast.²⁷ Her submission to him defines her as an ideal wife: “[African] Wives have a respect for their Husbands equal to what any other People pay a Deity; and when a Man finds any occasion to quit his Wife, if he love her, she dyes by his Hand” (Behn 94). Imoinda’s death becomes a reminder to the narrator that Oroonoko did indeed love his wife and that the couple had a relationship more intimate than the one he had with his “*Great Mistress*.” Taking the more erotic interpretation of the title, the value of being Oroonoko’s mistress is lessened by this re-assertion of Imoinda’s greater influence as a wife.²⁸

Like Behn’s narrator, Victoria represses her desire for the enslaved Moor; consequently, by reading her desire for Henriquez as a projection of her attraction to

Zofloya, it seems then that the erotic triangle where she and Lilla are in competition carries little basis in reality. However, Victoria's passionate hatred of Lilla plays a dominant role throughout the text, making it apparent that even if her feelings for Henriquez are a mask for something else, she sincerely feels herself to be in conflict with her more feminine counterpart. Justification for this rivalry is found by recognizing Henriquez as a substitute for Zofloya and reconstituting the triangle so that the slave is its focal point.

As in *Oroonoko*, Dacre's text sets up a triangle between two women and a noble slave. Since the stage adaptations of Behn's text became just as if not more popular than the novel over the course of the eighteenth century, Lilla's whiteness and sexual purity aligns her with the version of Imoinda found in the stage adaptations.²⁹ Traces of this connection to the *Oroonoko* narratives are found in Victoria's reactions when Zofloya pays attention to Lilla. For example, Victoria's sullen response to his refusal to kill the orphan alludes to an unexplored connection between Zofloya and Lilla. Taunting Victoria's anxieties, "Zofloya, smiling with a scornful archness, retained the hand of Lilla in one hand, and holding the chain in the other, while he looked upon it . . . [addresses Victoria] in a jeering accent." Victoria's jealousy of Zofloya and not Henriquez's attention to Lilla becomes more visible as the scene continues when she accuses him of being "tender of the upstart" (Dacre 204). The scene confronting Victoria in the cave is of Lilla once again thwarting her desires in a repetition of her dream in the garden: the object of her desire – Zofloya replacing Henriquez – embraces her rival and if the earlier

reading of Victoria's desire includes a masochistic wish for oppression, the chain also acts as another instance of Lilla supplanting Victoria as a desirable woman.

The rivalry between the women has been interpreted as a contest where Lilla's femininity surpasses Victoria's, whose sexual desires make her more masculine. James A. Dunn argues that it "is significant . . . that this comparative regendering is not the occasion of some jealous catfight – with Victoria envious of Lilla's favored femininity – but rather produces Victoria's disgust and loathing of Lilla's feminine insignificance" (313-314). However, I see little evidence that Victoria feels either "disgust or loathing" toward Lilla. In fact, the opposite seems to be the case. Even in her murderous intentions and intense jealousy, Victoria's attraction to Lilla is apparent: after Berenza's death "innocent Lilla, too, caressed her with heartfelt pleasure, and Victoria returned her caresses with a gloomy eagerness, as the murderer might be tempted to fondle the beauty of the babe whose life he intended to take" (151). While Victoria's reactions point to her violent intentions for Lilla, her "eagerness" to caress and "fondle the beauty" of her rival certainly do not express a rejection of Lilla's femininity. Instead, I argue it points to another example of Victoria using Henriquez to repress her taboo desires. Her passions are aroused at the time of her brother-in-law's arrival but this does not mean that Henriquez is what awakens her desire. Just as Henriquez stands as proxy for her desires for his servant, Zofloya in turn also serves as a space onto which Victoria projects her desire for Lilla.

Returning to Zofloya's first appearance in the novel, the dream can be read as an expression of Victoria's repressed desire for her rival. The initial image of the two lovers

in each other arms relies on an assumption that Henriquez is the object Victoria focuses on. However, the action of the dream places the gaze of Henriquez, Victoria and the reader on Lilla: “his arm encircled her waist, and her head reclined upon her shoulder, while he contemplated her angelic countenance with looks of ineffable love” (145). The dream expresses Henriquez’s ownership of Lilla in the way he takes possession of her by grabbing her waist and she shows her submission by lowering her head. The image ends with Henriquez looking proprietarily down on her, which evokes a “deep groan . . . from the miserable Victoria” (145). Zofloya’s appearance reinforces this reading through its similarities with Lilla’s. He is dressed in “a habit of white and gold,” the colors associated with Lilla just a few paragraphs earlier: her skin is “suffused with the palest hue of the virgin rose. Long flaxen hair floated over her shoulders” (145, 144). Adding to the similarities between the two figures, the orientalist tropes throughout the description give Zofloya a feminine quality, such as his legs being “encircled with the finest oriental pearl” and the gold rings that ornament his body (145). With this reinterpretation of the dream, Zofloya acts as a signifier for multiple signs of taboo desire: incest (Henriquez), miscegenation (his blackness) and lesbian (Lilla).

Taking her repeated attempts to repress these two repressed desires, Victoria’s violence towards Lilla takes on an additional aspect of self-purgation. Despite her fierce nature and explicit rejection of societal norms, Victoria resists taking the blame for her actions, and instead blames other women. First, her mother is held responsible for the daughter’s misfortunes in general: “But for her . . . the accursed pleasures of illicit love would never have tempted me to sin – she *first* corrupted and allured my mind” (247). Likewise, Lilla is held responsible for the suicide of Henriquez. Responding to Lilla’s

inquiry into Victoria's role in his death, Victoria transfers her own culpability onto her victim: "Murdered by *thee*, viper! . . . 'Twas thee who plunged the sword into his breast, - thy accursed image reveling there, impelled him to the frantic deed!" (219). By blaming Lilla, she rearticulates their relationship: Lilla emerges in this passage as the true actor despite her passivity. Victoria projects onto Lilla the masculine traits of violence, agency and passion that Henriquez rejected her for. In contrast, Victoria becomes a passive vessel that Lilla manipulates.

This blending of identity provides a perverse reflection of the events directly leading to Henriquez's suicide in a way that undermines the middle-class ideals of domesticity other gothic novels seek to restore. Further mocking the chivalry of courtship, Victoria feigns that she acts only on the behalf of Lilla as did Zofloya in his service to the former. The happy ending in the marriage of a virtuous couple representing English middle-class principles comes undone when Victoria takes Lilla's place in the wedding-bed. Like that consummation that only produces death, the murder of Lilla acts as another instance of non-reproductive sexuality that can be seen as a near-parody of Imoinda's death in *Oroonoko*. Imoinda submits to death as a sign of her fidelity and submission to her husband; in a failed simulacrum of this scene, Lilla pleads for a death that will symbolically link her with her intended husband: "'Ah! dearest Victoria - . . . If I must die - be it then the same death as my Henriquez suffered, - plunge thy stiletto in my heart'" (219). The endearment of "dearest Victoria" and the desire that Victoria pierce her breast echoes Imoinda's performance as "the Heroick Wife faster pleading for Death than he was to propose it"(Behn 94), but this image falls apart when the "courage of the wretched Lilla forsook her" (Dacre 220). Lilla's inability to live up to the ideology

of submission she espouses underscores the inversion of the romance conventions and concepts of sovereignty found in *Oroonoko*. Instead of a wife submitting to death at her husband and ruler's hand, Dacre presents an alternate image where a woman usurps male power to less idealized results.

Dacre presents Lilla's murder as a perversion of male rights over female bodies. The similar stabbings by Henriquez and Leonardo are positively portrayed as acts of justice. Henriquez attempts to prove his fidelity to Lilla by reacting in the strongest, most negative way after discovering he mistakenly slept with Victoria: "A frantic cry escaped his lips – it was the inarticulate name of Lilla; as springing, a raging maniac, from the bed, he snatched a sword that hung on the opposite wall, and dashing its hilt on the floor, threw himself, in desperate, agony, upon his beating breast" (217). Emphasizing the immediacy of his response and making it literally in Lilla's name, the text clarifies that while Victoria may act on the impulses of unconscious desires, he on no level desired his sister-in-law. The excessive violence of his suicide, such as his attempt to dash his head against the ground rather than die in Victoria's arms, is justified within the text's morality as it cause her to relive "her death-reared visions" from earlier in the texts (217). Reminding readers of the dream contextualizes his death as part of Victoria's eventual damnation foreshadowed before she accepted Zofloya's services.

This theme of male justice through violence continues when Leonardo avenges his family by killing his mother's seducer. While his sister is aligned with infernal forces, he positions himself as an agent of God: "Thus die!- for this moment I importuned incessantly just Heaven – and Heaven, in its justice, has at length granted my

prayer””(241). This repetition of justice and Heaven give Leonardo a heroic aspect absent in during his sister’s crimes. Following the tradition of the masculine gothic, Leonardo is the mysterious outsider who, by righting a past wrong, is able to reclaim his identity.

Within *Zofloya*, killing one’s enemies – romantic rivals,³⁰ one’s own unfaithful body, family enemies – is presented as divine justice as long as the phallic act of stabbing remains in the hands of men. Men act on behalf of a patriarchal view of morality and the divine; any attempt by a woman to take part in this form of agency is condemned as a perversion of the natural order.

Dacre’s contrasting images of masculine rights found in Leonardo and a fallen, unnatural woman in *Victoria* works as an attack on conventional gothic endings with a vision of a reformed family and social organization based on mutuality, justice and love. While the masculine gothic of Dacre’s *Zofloya* meets with qualified success, its uses of the feminine gothic tradition focus on the dangers and oppressions of the domestic space upon the heroine, but failures to safely restore her to either Heaven or the domestic sphere. The repetitions of violence by and against women, the desire for oppression and the rejection of the middle-class model of domestic life are facilitated in Dacre’s repeated questioning of social concepts of femininity. By showing Lilla and Victoria as appearing to submit to patriarchal authority but being unable to fully internalize it, the text presents the image of the passive, chaste woman as at best a self-delusion leading and at worst a cover for a rebellious subject posing a danger the society around her.³¹

¹In his 1919 essay “The Uncanny,” Freud argues that compulsory repetition is what lends the mind some of its “daemonic character.” The uncanny is aligned with elements that jar the individual not because of their newness but because of their familiarity: it is the return of something the mind has already repressed.

Freud, Sigmund. "The 'Uncanny.'" 1919 *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. Trans. and ed. James Strachey et al. Vol. 17. London: Hogarth Press, 1953-74, 238, 241. This trope is frequently associated with the gothic tradition as strangers are revealed as lost relatives, heroines endure repetitions of terrifying encounters, and the sufferings of the present are revealed to stem from the traumas of the past.

2 *The Gothic Quest: A History of the Gothic Novel*. New York: Russell and Russell, 1938.

3 "Time and Family in the Gothic Novel: *The Castle of Otranto*." *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 10,3 (1986), 159-171

4 Williams goes on to discuss Romantic/Gothic intersections:

Ann Radcliffe and Monk Lewis were writing in the 1790s along with the first generation of Romantic poets, who knew their work well. Coleridge not only read but reviewed [it] (with considerable approbation) . . . Wordsworth might have complained of the public's "frantic" taste for 'stupid and sickly German tragedies, but his protest masks his own youthful predilection for Gothic themes and passions. Byron was acquainted with "Monk" Lewis, whose literary traces appear in *Manfred* and other of the poet's works. Shelley began his literary career with a couple of Gothic novels, published while he was still at Eton. And Keats, describing 'Isabella,' 'The Eve of St. Agnes,' and 'The eve of St. Mark,' remarked on the "fine mother Radcliff" [sic] names he had chosen (3).

5 *Three Adventure Novels: King Solomon's Mines, Allan Quatermain, She*. New York: Dover, 1951.

6 Valensi cites the first appearance as in a 1720 French dictionary (174).

7 One could contend that the exotic Southern European locations of many Gothic novels already contain an element of Orientalism in them with Catholic Italians exhibiting a similar decadence, decay and lack of reason Said aligns with European concepts of the East.

8 Similar to Walpole's *Otranto*, Beckford claims his work is a translation of a pre-existing text.

9 For a detailed discussion of the significance of the servant's deformities, see Srinivas Aravamudan's *Tropicopolitans: Colonialism and Agency, 1688-1804*.

10 *Letters of the Right Honourable Lady M-----y W-----y M-----e : written during her travels in Europe, Asia and Africa, ...* A new edition. Paris, 1779.

11 While she does not list these reasons to the women at the bath, I believe that she declines their invitations with a symbolic gesture to the restrictions English society has placed upon her throughout her life: "I excus'd my selfe with some difficulty . . . I was at last forc'd to open my skirt and shew them my stays, which satisfy'd 'em very well, for I saw they beleiv'd I was so lock'd up in that machine that it was not in my own power to open it, which contrivance they attributed to my Husband" (86). Though presented a humorous antidote, the image of her "lock'd up" in her clothing is not that far from reality, since she needed to travel with a maid to help dress and undress herself. For more on Montagu as well as an overview of criticism written on the bath scene see Isobel Grundy's *Lady Mary Wortley Montague*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999, pgs 137-140.

12 Ed. Carol H. Poston. 2nd Edition. New York: W.W. Norton, 1998.

13 Which, interestingly, Montagu uses to make a positive comparison between the women at the public bath and Eve. Wollstonecraft is possibly responding specifically to the *Turkish Embassy Letters*.

14 As noted in chapter one, Thomas Southerne's adaptation of *Oroonoko* does open with a comparison between the marriage and the slave markets; however, the notable difference between that and Shelley's argument is that the play does not seek to overthrow either women's subordination or African slavery, while Shelley's does.

15 In future work, I plan on exploring the homosocial relationships between the women in Dacre's novels. Throughout her work, I believe, offers instances where her female characters could gain a happiness through their relations with other women, but instead, reproduce the abuses they receive from their male lovers on female potential allies.

16 Ibid. 152-153. Hoeveler goes onto argue that "It would appear that Mary [Shelley] understood too well what her mother failed to grasp – that women's protection was in their studied pose of difference and weakness" (159).

17 Interestingly, Hoeveler does not connect her argument to the more morally ambiguous representation of the Wandering Jew in Lewis' *The Monk*. In general, both this article and *Gothic Feminism* portrays Lewis'

influence on Dacre as an unfortunate occurrence that led to a marred first novel (*The Confessions of the Nun of St. Omer*), proven by Byron ridiculing it in verse (171). By largely ignoring this gothic predecessor, I believe she leads a reader to miss the striking parallels between the two texts, especially in their endings. Connections between *The Monk* and *Zofloya* are largely agreed upon in the scholarship of the two, and Dacre's view of Lewis as a literary model is acknowledged throughout her own work.

18 She offers little evidence or explanation for these claims: if supported, they would indeed add an extra layer to the text as well as work being done on anti-Semitism, especially since ritual murder stories usually focused on young boys. Hillel Kieval points out that some Eastern European tales involve young women moving to the city in "Neighbors, Strangers, Readers: The village and the City in Jewish-Gentile Conflict at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century." *Jewish Studies Quarterly*. Vol. 12, No. 1 (January 2005): 61-79. While it would be fascinating to find a connection between ritual murder narratives and Dacre's work, the scene strikes me as carrying more eroticism than anti-Semitism.

19 Hoeveler writes largely in response to the positive representation of Zofloya Kim Ian Michasiw finds in "Charlotte Dacre's Postcolonial Moor" from *Empire and Gothic*. Using Dacre's earlier poetry, Michasiw ties her to two competing discourses on blackness: the Negro, who is a slave to be pitied, and the Moor, who is a warrior to be respected and often feared. In this way "Zofloya's self-designation as 'slave' is at one level, a trace of his ironic participation in the discourse of Romance [since chivalric overtones in courtship lead a man to pose as enslaved by the woman he serves]" while at the same time it allows Dacre to remind the audience [that the current status of his race not be forgotten, that the increasingly asymmetrical power relations between Victoria and Zofloya be understood with reference to African slaves and their European masters" (35).

20 Flattered by his affection for her, "little did she ever suppose, that while the proud Venetian deemed her worthy of becoming his mistress, he conceived her unfit for the high distinction of becoming his wife" (100). Berenza's opinion of this distinction is established when he first meets her. Seeing her mother and Ardolph's home as a means of analyzing the inhabitants to determine "whether the mischief they had caused, and the conduct they pursued, arose from a selfish depravity of the heart, or was induced by the force of inevitable circumstance," he is predisposed to objectify the household – including Victoria – as subjects in an experiment. Due to prejudice against her for her mother's misconduct, "pride alone forbade his soliciting her hand" (58).

21 Another act of self-interest in the assassin attempt is that Victoria decides "to conceal from her lover her conviction that the intended assassin was her brother" (102). Her choice to conceal his identity points to possible motives that are far removed from her desiring Berenza's well-being: for example, she could be acting out of sisterly affection or at least family loyalty by protecting her brother from detection; she could also be simply protecting herself by not allowing the indiscretions of yet another family member to sully her own reputation. Even though she is unaware at the point that Berenza holds her family history against her, her mother's own infamy and retreat from polite society could act as enough of a warning to Victoria to protect herself socially from association with her family members.

22 Most of the desires found in the novel's characters seem to form unconsciously. For example, Laurina unthinkingly allows herself to be "surprised" by Ardolph's seductions, and Ardolph himself is not aware of the depth of his attachment to Laurina.

23 This dream sequence continues into a prophetic vision of the deaths of Lilla, Berenza and Henriquez. 146.

24 This is observed throughout her dealings with Berenza from the time when she first feigns more interest in him than she feels in order to escape from her mother and up until his death as she hides her anger at him for once considering her not worthy of being his wife.

25 This also echoes the relationship between Matthew Lewis' *The Monk* between Ambrosio and his demonic lover, Matilda, as she initiates their relationship by using terms of service, only to emerge as its dominating force. Dacre's work is deeply indebted to Lewis' as seen in her dedicating her novels to him and her allusions to *The Monk* in virtually all of her novels. *Zofloya* itself is just as much a direct response to *The Monk* as Ann Radcliffe's *The Italian*, the difference between them being that while Radcliffe wrote hers to critique Lewis' violence and sensationalism, Dacre intends hers more as a homage.

26 The “worm” quote is from Dacre: “The secret of Victoria hovered on her lips; hitherto it had remained unknown to mortal soul; in the gloomy solitude of her own perturbed bosom, had she till now preserved it, where, like a poisonous worm, it had continued to corrode” (156).

27 In chapter one, I argue that her submission to him makes her an ideal subject to his ideal noble: “While she does become the “Occasion” that leads to his expulsion from Coramantien and his alliance with the common slaves, Imoinda also offers a model of ideal subjecthood in the novel’s defense of the Stuarts. Together, she and Oroonoko embody a vision of society where divine right and absolute rule are answered by unquestioning loyalty and obedience” (23).

28 With this ending in mind, the introductory image of the feathered headdress takes on a more ominous tone. Her rival dead, the narrator returns with a sign of violence and dominance. The warrior Caribs wear feathers to show their rank within the tribe, one that is based on victorious combat. Adding to her social standing in England, the headdress acts a sign that the narrator is the sole surviving witness and now possesses complete control over Oroonoko. While she could not win a battle of influence with Imoinda while they lived, in death the narrator can shape the events of Surinam as she wishes, including a near erasure of Imoinda from the plot. This narrative violence towards the bird-engraved Imoinda is foreshadowed by the symbolism of the headdress, which stands in for other birds silenced by physical violence.

However, the narrator’s victory is a hollow one. Despite her insistence that she was the chief ally of Oroonoko, she utterly fails in her attempts to save him. In fact, all she has left is the headdress and the story, which contains glaring omissions and deflections. The tragedy of Oroonoko is not just the failure of the colonial government or Oroonoko to regain his freedom; it is also that of the futile battle between two women to gain sovereignty over their own lives through the influence of a man.

29 In chapter one, I discuss how “eighteenth-century audiences were more familiar with the stage adaptations of Oroonoko. The popularity of the plays reached the point where it becomes difficult to determine if eighteenth-century commentators refer to the novel or its dramatic reincarnations.” Kugler 1

30 The Marchese di Loredani’s attempt to avenge himself on Ardolph could also fall under this category.

31 Within *Zofloya*, as well as Dacre’s other texts, there seems to be an adherence to the Sadean program: out of her isolation (in her case, the loss of her family to her mother’s adultery), who like Sade’s Juliette, follows her pleasures at all costs (even her soul) and revels in the violence she inflicts on others, ending with the domestic sphere in shambles. That Dacre initiates Victoria’s sexual liberation through the rejection of her mother, and ends with the domestic sphere in shambles also mirrors Sadean plotlines, such as *La philosophie dans le boudoir*.

Conclusion

Throughout my readings, I have attempted to recover what I believe are the repressed romance and Oriental elements in eighteenth-century English culture. But while the novels discussed in this dissertation use these elements to set forth their individual social commentaries, more work remains to be done on the idealizations contained within a romance view of Islam. For example, the “whitening” of characters such as Behn’s Oroonoko and Johnson’s Abyssinians, while part of an attempt to overcome cultural boundaries, is also part of a racial ideology that would come into full force during the nineteenth century. Ann Thomson, despite her overall positive reading of eighteenth-century European depictions of North Africa, warns that readers must not “idealize” these portrayals: “It is true, for example, that enlightened travelers [explored out of a desire] . . . to understand human nature, the evolution of language and ideas and the workings of human society, which they considered to follow universal laws” rather than for purely economic and imperial gain; however, “this should not blind us to the Europocentrism [sic] inherent in their attitude . . . the racist attitudes so widespread in the following century developed from eighteenth-century roots” (5).

In the future, I plan to continue to look at the “silenced” elements in mainstream English literature during the long eighteenth century. One avenue of research will include a focus on representation of Islam: while some work is currently being done by eighteenth-century scholars focusing on the Near East,¹ I want to further my research on the Mediterranean as a way of exploring the porous boundaries between European, Oriental and African culture. For example, this work could take a form similar to Chapter Two’s analysis of the influence of Islamic culture on English Protestantism by locating

other cultural sites that are considered deeply English embedded in concepts of English identity but actually originating from foreign interactions. An example of such a site is the Restoration introduction of the Coffee House in English daily life.

A staple of public life throughout the long eighteenth century, the coffee-house offers a powerful example of the way seemingly domestic concepts were infused with a foreign influence. Part of the appeal of coffee after the establishment of the first coffee house in 1652, came from “a number of translations from Arabic [that] were published which described the health advantages of coffee-drinking” (Matar 110). Referred to as the “Mahometan” or “Arabian berry,” the drink became intertwined with English Protestant identity as well, with some scholars arguing that “Coffee was the drink of the practitioners of the Protestant work ethic because it stimulated the mind of the drinker, increased his waking hours for productive work and reduced his sexual desire” (Matar 111). Embracing the foreign origins of the drink, many coffee-houses identified themselves with the “Turk’s Head” on their sign,² and their owners began “to adopt Muslim clothes and customs . . . [and] many woodcuts of the coffee-house showed owners and customers wearing a turban” (166). Coffee houses were a space for circulating news and ideas, for social mingling; parallel to these activities, a cultural mixing occurred as English cultural customs became infused with the influence of Islamic culture.

However, the infusion of national identity with foreign elements did not go unnoticed or unprotected by all members of English society. As Matar points out, there was a sense of anxiety concerning the potential cultural imperialism of the fashionable drink: “Coffee could be a Muslim agent to entice Englishmen away from their religion

and turn them into renegades [i.e. converts] . . . an anonymous writer declared, [it] a “Turkish Renegade berry while water was English and loyal: their mix or marriage was the befouling of the latter . . . [and that] coffee makes the drinker as ‘faithless as a Jew or infidell’” (Matar 112-113). The metaphor of miscegenation through imbibing coffee is found throughout anti-coffee writing: “Those who drank it, some writers indicated, began to look physically like Turks: their complexion changed and they became swarthy and ‘Moorish,’” which was presented as applicable “not only to the physical complexion [of the drinker] but to the moral condition too” (Matar 113).³ Such anxieties over losing one’s cultural identity connect back to existing political insecurities in England’s relationship with the Islamic world: rather than viewing itself as an imperial actor enforcing itself on the Orient, England in the Restoration and much of the eighteenth century saw itself as a cultural receptor. As a result, a tension emerged around the incorporation of the non-English into emerging forms of English identity, which is reflected in the cultural production of scholarship, plays, poems and prose of the time.

This future exploration of foreign influence on English identity will also involve additional research on the importation of other cultures and populations into England. In addition to the presence of Islamic culture, I will also explore the aftermath of the seventeenth-century Dutch migration, Cromwell’s readmission of Jews into the country, and the introduction of Eastern European diasporas that continue to this day.

The interaction between romances and novels will also remain part of my research, specifically its use in political arguments surrounding class hierarchies and the monarchy. A novel originally considered for this dissertation but omitted as its focus changed, Maria Edgeworth’s *Belinda* (1801) presents an ambiguous critique of the

romance: on one hand, its rational heroine rejects the genre as frivolous and false, but on the other, her less intelligent romantic rival Virginia St. Pierre uses an education based mainly on romances to accurately judge her feeling for her fiancé and benefactor. Realizing that she does not love him in the way a romance heroine would, she rejects him, leaving him free to marry his appropriate partner, Belinda. In addition, the novel's presentation of race seems to depart from the romance model in its depiction of the child-like African slave Juba, but still manages to present his marriage to a white farmer's daughter as socially unproblematic. If Edgeworth's novel were incorporated into my research of the romance in the eighteenth century, I would be able to address other issues not found in this project, such as the use of romances in asserting continental politics, including the articulation of revolutionary values in Jacques-Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's *Paul et Virginie* (1787), after whose heroine Edgeworth's Virginia is named. By examining texts such as *Belinda's* positioning of foreign politics, romance and transatlantic slavery in conjunction with one another, I will continue to look at the way literary representations reflect and impact the cultural reality of their time.

Elizabeth Charlotte, Countess Palatine of Simmern, also known as Liselotte, makes an intriguing connection between reality and the romance that runs counter to twentieth-century critiques of the romance's lack of realism. Writing in 1706 to Sophia of Hanover, mother of England's George I, Liselotte comments that the "upheavals of the last twenty years are unbelievable: the kingdoms of England, Holland and Spain have been transformed as fast as the scenery in a theatre. When later generations come to read about our history they will think they are reading a romance, and not believe a word of it." (qtd. Kroll 123).⁴ I believe that further work on eighteenth-century evocations and

perceptions of romance will offer insight into the political debates of the time, especially surrounding Catholic-Protestant conflicts and the contentions of the Stuarts and Hanovers for the throne. I hope to discover parts of the English literary tradition that seem fanciful or artificial - such as the royal slaves and hidden lineages so popular in romance – that in fact reflect a historic reality.

Overall, my future research will center on complicating distinctions between the domestic and foreign, past and present in eighteenth-century English culture. One of the ways I will approach this will be to examine how international interactions with other cultures and periods of high migration into the nation changed the cultural identity of England. Another will be to attempt to distance eighteenth-century texts from a twentieth-first century perspective by looking backwards to the historical contexts, such as romance writings and the preeminence of the Ottomans, that preceded and continued during the era.

1 Felicity Nussbaum's presidential address, for example, at the 2007 ASECS convention in Atlanta was "The Arabian Nights in the Eighteenth-Century: Other Empires, Other Slaves."

2 According to Matar, "the Turk's head was a relic of England's past when Christians returned from their wars with Muslims in the Levant and displayed a grotesque and fearsome face of the Saracen. The crest had served as a reminder of the conflict between Christendom and Islam. But with the rise of the coffee-house, the sign of the Saracen's head gave way to the Turk's head, sustaining thereby the ominous evocations of a powerful and dangerous adversary – especially as in the late 1650s and in the 1660s, the Ottoman Empire was militarily reinvigorated" (115). Based on my observations, the images seem to be almost identical: the Saracen's Head continues to be a name and image used by English pubs dating back to the Crusades. While Turks' Head seems to be more closely associated with the coffee house tradition, the two terms are often used interchangeably.

3 Matar argues that the backlash had an economic motive as well: "coffee-drinking posed a cultural danger since coffee-houses tempted customers away from the traditional English taverns and precipitated financial crises for brewers. This economic factor was important in the Restoration attack on coffee was frequently transformed into a nationalist cause: to drink ale or beer was a demonstration of patriotism . . . to drink coffee was [according to *The City-Wives Petition against Coffee* in 1700]to 'Apostatize from the good old Primate way of Ale drinking, to run a Whoring after such a Variety of Destructive Foreign Liquors'" (114)

4 *Letters from Liselotte, Elisabeth Charlotte, Princess Palatine and Duchess of Orléans, 'Madame', 1652-1722*. Trans. and Ed. Maria Kroll. London: Gollancz, 1970

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