

Women and Islam

in Early Modern English Literature



BERNADETTE ANDREA

CAMBRIDGE

WOMEN AND ISLAM IN EARLY MODERN ENGLISH LITERATURE

In this innovative study, Bernadette Andrea focuses on the contributions of women and their writings in the early modern cultural encounters between England and the Islamic world. She examines previously neglected material, such as the diplomatic correspondence between Queen Elizabeth I and Safiye, the Ottoman queen mother, at the end of the sixteenth century, and resituates canonical accounts, including Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's travelogue of the Ottoman empire at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Her study advances our understanding of how women negotiated conflicting discourses of gender, orientalism, and imperialism at a time when the Ottoman empire was hugely powerful and England was still a marginal nation with limited global influence. This book is a significant contribution to critical and theoretical debates in literary and cultural, post-colonial, women's, and Middle Eastern studies.

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This project began during my time as a PhD candidate at Cornell University, where I pursued “parallel tracks” in the Departments of English and Near Eastern Studies. In the former, I answered the question I had broached while completing my master’s thesis at the University of Calgary on Milton’s representation of the mediated woman: what did women in seventeenth-century England have to say for themselves? When I began this investigation fifteen or so years ago, modern editions of early modern women’s writing were scarce (though many were in the works) and access to early modern texts on the World Wide Web was scarcely a dream. Hence, much of my work was archival, which involved a commitment to establishing the textual basis for an investigation of women’s writing in the period rather than privileging representations of women in books written by men. Without such archival work, as my assessment of the continuing absence of sustained attention to women’s writing in studies of early modern England and Islam underscores, women continue to be left out of this discussion as speaking subjects. Many of the groundbreaking scholars who toiled to make early modern women’s writing accessible in modern editions are acknowledged in my endnotes.

While delving into the archives of early modern women’s writing for my doctoral dissertation, I also pursued the study of Arabic, which is a heritage language for me, with generous teachers such as Munther Younes, Samer Alatout, and David Powers of Cornell’s Near Eastern Studies Department. At that time, incredibly, a graduate student from English in an Arabic class was a curiosity, with most students linking western European literature and Islam coming from Romance language departments. Although I did not

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Introduction

“The borrowed veil”: reassessing gender studies of early modern England and Islam

The starting point for this study is the significance of women’s agency in the inaugural Anglo-Ottoman encounter, which began during the sixteenth century and extended through the early eighteenth century.¹ The English realm, excluded from Catholic Europe because of its turn to Protestantism, sought unorthodox diplomatic, economic, and military ties with the Ottoman empire, whose dominions stretched across Asia, Europe, the Arabian peninsula, and North Africa. Sustained engagement with the Islamic world during this period also encompassed the Persian and Mediterranean realms bordering the Ottomans, though involvement with the Islamic empire of the Mughals was minimal.² These ties affected English culture from the middle of Queen Elizabeth I’s reign (1558–1603), when her ambassadors brokered the first Anglo-Ottoman trade agreement, through the next century and a half, when the balance of power shifted in favor of the nascent British empire. Elizabeth propelled this encounter through her diplomatic correspondence with Muslim sovereigns, including the Ottoman queen mother or *valide sultan*. Over the course of the seventeenth century, this encounter would include English women from the highest to the lowest ranks as writers and travelers, such as the first English woman to publish original works in the prestige genres of Renaissance romance and sonnet sequences, the first generation of Quaker women missionaries and polemicists, the first female playwrights for the English stage, and the first English woman to compose a travelogue of her “embassy” to the Ottoman empire.

Despite the detailed historical documentation of England’s initial encounter with the Ottomans, literary and cultural studies of the era present two striking lacunae. The first derives from the false dichotomy between a constantly powerful West and a correspondingly subordinate East resulting from anachronistic applications of Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1978).³ As part of a cadre of scholars who recognize that early modern imperialism in the “Greater Western World” involved Ottoman, Spanish, and

only belatedly English claims, I consider the decisive place Islamic powers occupied in this network.⁴ The second lacuna results from the effacement of women's agency in recent studies on Anglo-Ottoman relations, most of which focus on gendered representations in male-authored travel narratives and dramas to the exclusion of sustained attention to women's cultural productions. Such studies pay little attention to the archive of early modern women's writing accessed since the 1980s or to the methodologies of women's studies developed to recover alternative voices from male-dominated sources.⁵

In response to these gaps, I argue for the necessity of integrating gender *as articulated by women sovereigns, writers, and travelers* when analyzing the discourses informing the era's Anglo-Ottoman – and more broadly, Anglo-Islamic – relations.⁶ Where these discourses consist of writing by men, as in the public theater and popular travelogues of the era, this approach constitutes a “feminist critique.” In her landmark essay, “Towards a Feminist Poetics” (1979), Elaine Showalter defines feminist critique as “concerned with *woman as reader*” and encompassing such subjects as “the images and stereotypes of women in literature, the omissions of and misconceptions about women in criticism, and the fissures in male-constructed literary history.” Although incorporating the techniques of feminist critique, this study emphasizes the field of *la gynocritique* or “gynocritics,” which is primarily “concerned with *woman as writer*.”⁷ It further endorses Margaret Ezell's *Women's Literary History* (1993), which questions the application of the post-nineteenth-century model of imaginative literature and individual authorship to earlier women's writing.⁸ Accordingly, my analysis focuses on collaborative textual productions such as diplomatic letters, travelogues, and religious tracts, as well as more conventional forms of prose fiction, poetry, and drama. Finally, the relatively rare studies of early modern English women and the Islamic world, including Billie Melman's *Women's Orient: English Women and the Middle East, 1718–1918* (1992), typically begin with Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's *Turkish Embassy Letters*, based on her travels throughout the Ottoman empire during the early eighteenth century.⁹ While these *Letters* remain crucial for any analysis of Anglo-Ottoman relations, Montagu's “embassy” is falsely construed – most famously by Montagu herself – as *sui generis*. I address this truncated genealogy by turning to earlier publications that advance our understanding of how women negotiated conflicting discourses of empire when England remained a marginal player in the great power politics of Europe – which included the Ottomans – even as it aspired to global imperial status.¹⁰

As my investigation shows, cultural agency for early modern English women generally involved a negotiated subject position, though by the turn of the eighteenth century the oppositional position of “feminist” was emerging.¹¹ From the late sixteenth century, when the act of the objectified female speaking itself constituted a radical assertion of agency, to the early eighteenth century, when a discourse of women’s rights began to be articulated by the first feminists, these women approached the era’s conflicting discourses of empire from a distinctively gendered position. Oftentimes, they aligned themselves with patriarchal anglocentric discourses casting them as superior to “the ‘other’ woman of empire,” even if that empire was more imaginary than real in the early modern period.¹² However, because the Ottomans cast the English nation as subordinate, many women therein identified with their counterparts from the Islamic world to compensate for their domestic marginality. Examples include Safiye, the Ottoman queen mother, whose correspondence with Queen Elizabeth was preserved in Richard Hakluyt’s *Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation* (2nd edn, 1598–1600); the Persian Circassian Lady Teresa Sampsonia Sherley, whose travels with her husband, Robert Sherley, informed the first original prose romance by an English woman, Lady Mary Wroth’s *Urania* (1621); the mid-century sect of pseudo-Muslim women “from beyond the Sea” associated with the early Quaker movement, which produced most of the publications by English women in the seventeenth century; the accounts of Muslim women co-opted by late seventeenth-century English female playwrights from their male contemporaries’ travelogues; and the firsthand record of Muslim women’s lives as recounted by Montagu. Hence, women from the Islamic world, most of whom were Muslim, became part of *English* literary history.

Before turning to the gynocritical analyses that are my focus, I must address the continuing effacement of women’s agency in literary and cultural studies of early modern England and the Islamic world. The reiterated trope, “turning Turk,” which has assumed the status of a “false universal” in current criticism, signals this effacement.¹³ Featured in Philip Massinger’s play, *The Renegado* (1630), it has been used to link early modern imperialism, commerce, conversion, and masculinity.¹⁴ However, Massinger’s play contains a related but more ambiguously gendered term for conversion: “apostata.”¹⁵ A feminist critique of Massinger’s play highlighting the effaced gender differential of this alternative draws attention to the importance of seriously engaging early modern women when addressing the Anglo-Ottoman encounter. To reiterate, such critiques remain incomplete if we

do not attend to the cultural productions of these women, which is the goal of the balance of this study.

TURNING FROM “TURK” TO “APOSTATA”: GENDERING
CONVERSION IN EARLY MODERN ENGLAND

As suggested above, the masculinized tropes of the “renegade” and “turning Turk” have been deployed by various scholars seeking to challenge the transhistorical application of Said’s *Orientalism* to the early modern period. Nabil Matar, at the crest of the current wave of attention to Islam and England during the Renaissance, draws on early modern sources to identify a “renegade” as “one that first was a Christian, and afterwards becommeth a Turke.”¹⁶ In *Islam in Britain, 1558–1685* (1998), Matar demonstrates that, *contra* post-colonial anachronisms, during the early modern period “Britain did not enjoy military or industrial power over Islamic countries. Rather, the Muslims had a power of self-representation which English writers knew they had either to confront or to engage.”¹⁷ As he elaborates in *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery* (1999),

Historians and critics who have inaccurately applied a postcolonial theory to a precolonial period in British history forget that in the Elizabethan and early Stuart periods, England was not a colonial power – not in the imperial sense that followed in the eighteenth century. Although England had colonized Wales and Scotland and was waging a colonial war in Ireland, at the time Queen Elizabeth died, England did not yet possess a single colonial inch in the Americas.¹⁸

Working within the disciplinary framework of Ottoman studies, Daniel Goffman in *Britons in the Ottoman Empire, 1642–1660* (1998) confirms this ongoing reorientation with his conclusion, “[p]erhaps the nineteenth-century Briton could get under the skin of the colonial; in the seventeenth-century Mughal and Ottoman empires, it was more likely the Englishman whose shell would be pierced.”¹⁹ In sum, the balance of power constituting orientalism during the nineteenth-century peak of western European colonialism cannot accurately be applied to England’s proto-colonial era prior to the eighteenth century. Nonetheless, it cannot be dismissed as entirely irrelevant, since the anglocentric project of global imperialism imagined at the close of the sixteenth century frequently represented the Ottomans as positive foils.²⁰

Augmenting the historicist accounts of Matar and Goffman, literary critics such as Daniel Vitkus in “Turning Turk in *Othello*: The Conversion and Damnation of the Moor” (1997), Barbara Fuchs in “Conquering

Islands: Contextualizing *The Tempest*" (1997), and Jonathan Burton in "Anglo-Ottoman Relations and the Image of the Turk in *Tamburlaine*" (2000) complicate approaches to early modern English drama by exploring how increasingly racialized representations of religious conversion placed profound cultural and political pressures on English *men's* sense of their national identity.²¹ However, as emphasized above, literary and cultural studies have yet to pursue a sustained analysis of women's writings as a constituent element of the discourses accruing from this encounter. My explication of *The Renegado* – the text most frequently cited in studies on early modern England and Islam for its dramatization of the complications involved in turning Turk – underscores the need for a differential gender analysis, as the conditions leading to male versus female conversion to Islam are distinct. Strictly speaking, while a man is required to convert to Islam upon marrying a Muslim woman, a woman, if she is from the monotheistic Abrahamic tradition, is not required to convert upon marrying a Muslim man. A common motif in early modern English travel accounts involves Christian men "coerced" into converting by being placed in compromising positions with Muslim women. Although personal conviction certainly played a part in actual conversions, English documents in the period focus on the rewards for renegades in the Ottoman empire, which allowed an upward mobility for men not possible in class-bound Europe.²² Christian women's upward mobility occurred largely through marriage or concubinage in the harems of powerful men, which, to reiterate, did not require their conversion.²³ Reliance on the false universal "turning Turk" effaces these gender differences. The following explication of *The Renegado*, as a prelude to incorporating women's writing into this discussion, seeks to expose the fissures in such assumptions.

On the surface, the play has a standard plot: boy sees and desires girl; boy encounters obstructing father figures when seeking girl; boy gets girl, finally legitimizing this relationship through marriage. However, its twists and turns dramatize the dynamic of conversion specific to the Anglo-Ottoman encounter in the early modern period: turning Turk includes not only abjuring one's religion, but also one's manhood. The details involve a pair of displaced Venetians in Tunis: a gentleman-cum-merchant, Vitelli, and his mercenary manservant, Gazet. The complication arises when Francisco, a Jesuit redeemer of Christian slaves in the Barbary States, rebukes Vitelli for neglecting the latter's abducted sister, Paulina. This innocent, we learn, has been sold into the harem of Asambeg, the viceroy of Tunis, where she has been pressured into converting to Islam. Her "turning" later intersects with Vitelli's forbidden desire for Donusa, niece to the Ottoman sultan, for

If Paulina's virtue, in the dual sense of her chastity and her Christianity, is ultimately affirmed, her brother's faithfulness in both senses remains extremely tenuous throughout much of the play. Paralleling male travelers' accounts from the period, his physical climax in Donusa's chamber requires his acquiescence to Islam. As such accounts elaborate, ritual circumcision sealed this "turn." For instance, Robert Daborne's *A Christian Turned Turk: or, The Tragical Lives and Deaths of the Two Famous Pirates, Ward and Dansiker* (c. 1609–12), the antithesis to Massinger's ensuing play about "Turks" turning Christian, features the spectacular circumcision of the English pirate, John Ward, who embraced Islam for what the play depicts as the lure of a Muslim woman. Because "turning Turk was associated with becoming a eunuch," western Christian males, who did not practice circumcision during the early modern period, projected their deepest fears onto the figure of the renegade.²⁶ The ample popular literature (primarily testimonial accounts and ecclesiastical tracts) regarding seventeenth-century English men who converted to Islam foregrounds the troubling rem(a)inder of circumcision at the heart of English Protestant conceptions of the self.²⁷ In *The Renegado*, this symbolic castration drives the subplot, which involves Gazet's close encounter with the razor as he misunderstands the "price" of a eunuch's upward mobility in an Ottoman court. The pun by the English eunuch, Carazie, whose privileged station in Donusa's harem necessitated "but parting with / A precious stone or two" (298, 3.4.52), thus bears a sharp edge in more than one sense. As another potential English eunuch, Gazet epitomizes the anxieties besetting Christian males faced with the gender-specific ritual for "turn[ing] Turk," which would mean "los[ing] / A collop of that part my Doll enjoined me / To bring home as she left it: 'tis her venture, / Nor dare I barter that commodity / Without her special warrant" (250, 1.1.38–42). Not simply circumcision, then, but the double bind of becoming a eunuch – gaining upward mobility at the "price" of "[a] precious stone or two" (298, 3.4.52) – defines the masculinist discourse of conversion.

Yet, by focusing on male circumcision, scholarship on the play has encouraged a gendering that precludes women. As we have seen, the play follows the era's travel accounts in specifying the ban against consorting with Muslim women as decisive for Christian men's conversions.²⁸ Even the masculinist equation of conversion with circumcision presumed unruly female sexuality as its *sine qua non*. Moreover, in Massinger's play Christian and Muslim heroines are specifically condemned for "turn[ing] apostata" (254, 1.1.138; 320, 4.3.159), a double standard the Turkish princess Donusa unsuccessfully challenges during her trial for "corporal looseness

and incontinence” (313, 4.2.147; cf. 4.2.116–43). Her apostasy from Islam, traditionally punishable by death, collapses into a specifically gendered condemnation of women in general. “Apostata” was sometimes used generically in early modern England, as in Andrew Barker’s *A True and Certain Report of the Beginning, Proceedings, Overthrowes, and now present Estate of Captaine Ward and Danseker, the two late famous Pirates* (1609), wherein John Ward is condemned as “a villaine,” “an apostata,” and “a reprobate.”²⁹ My explication of the term in Massinger’s play serves to highlight the largely overlooked gender differential in current discussions of conversion across Anglo-Ottoman boundaries. Turning apostata does not necessarily equate with turning Turk. It is fitting, therefore, that “the renegado” featured in the title of Massinger’s play is displaced from its intended referent, the pirate Grimaldi, onto the female characters whose sexuality renders them suspect to Christian and Muslim men alike.

TURNING TO EARLY MODERN WOMEN’S CULTURAL AGENCY

In alternatively positioning gender – particularly as articulated by women – as a crucial category of analysis for the early modern Anglo-Ottoman encounter, the following chapters address a series of distinct but interlinked cultural moments from the late sixteenth century through the turn of the eighteenth century. This historical sweep, as many scholars have noted, involved the shift from England as a proto-colonial power – whose discourse of global empire as epitomized by Hakluyt’s *Principal Navigations* in no way matched its dominion – to England as an emerging imperial player with outposts in North America, the Caribbean, the Mediterranean, and South Asia.³⁰ This shift nevertheless remained uneven and uncertain throughout the period, rendering any teleological model untenable. Hence, I proceed via an “epochal” analysis, which “recognize[s] the complex interrelations between movements and tendencies both within and beyond a specific and effective dominance.”³¹ This approach enables a discussion of “emergent” discourses, such as imperialism and orientalism, prior to their instantiation within the anglocentric global empire consolidated in the late eighteenth century. It also militates against reading the “rise” of the British empire back into earlier eras when England remained subordinate to Islamic and Catholic powers.

Accordingly, the first chapter of this study expands conventional methodologies for comparing early modern women’s cultural productions across Europe by viewing the Ottoman empire, which during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries included most of “eastern” and continually

encroached upon “western” Europe, as integral to this discussion. Focusing on the exchange of gifts and letters between Queen Elizabeth and Safiye, the Ottoman queen mother, this chapter examines the sixteenth-century emergence of “the sultanate of women” to assess Elizabeth’s paradoxical position as a “female prince.” Tracing the parallel patriarchal dismissal of women’s sovereignty in the Ottoman empire and the West, as well as the appropriation of Ottoman debates on the issue by western men, this chapter concludes with a sustained analysis of Elizabeth and Safiye’s exchange of gifts and letters. As I propose, this exchange functioned as the “field” within which the two women deployed shared signifiers of femininity to establish their sovereignty in their respective patriarchal cultures.

Chapter 2 shifts to the Jacobean era, characterized by King James I’s (1603–25) reversal of Elizabeth’s ameliorative policy towards the Ottomans and his concomitant effort to rein in English women’s literary, political, and social activities. Against this backdrop of retrenchment and backlash, Lady Mary Wroth published the first prose romance (along with the first sonnet sequence) by an English woman, which met with immediate resistance from the king and his male courtiers for its thinly veiled critique of Jacobean patriarchy. This chapter focuses on Wroth’s layering of a gendered critique with her tendentious representations of conflicting empires: the Holy Roman, the Ottoman, and the Safavid Persian. As I show, the overlapping of subaltern female subjectivity with the multivalent discourse of empire in the period remains “under erasure” in Wroth’s romance, which “deletes and leaves legible at the same time” the overdetermined status of its central emblem: Pamphilia’s cabinet.³² Accordingly, the first part of the romance, published in 1621, presents a purely but potently imaginative Holy Roman empire covering the Eurasian regions actually governed by the Ottomans. The second part, continued in manuscript, signals Wroth’s traumatic personal experience of gender subordination, despite her elite status, by means of her identification with the doubly othered Persian wife of Sir Robert Sherley, Lady Teresa Sampsonia Sherley.

Chapter 3 turns to the volatile period of the mid-seventeenth-century English Revolution, followed by the Restoration after 1660 of the monarchy, state censorship, and religious persecution. This era nevertheless opened the floodgates for English women’s printed writings, with Quaker women producing the bulk of such publications for the entire century. Moreover, Quaker women were at the forefront of the Anglo-Protestant missionary movement, venturing during the 1650s and 1660s as far as the Ottoman empire and contiguous Mediterranean regions. This chapter explores the contradictions structuring early Quaker women’s cultural

agency by proposing the paradigm of “the missionary position” to encompass their concurrent proto-feminism and proto-imperialism. As I stress, early Quaker women, particularly in their dual capacity as missionaries and publishing women, challenged the shared patriarchal mores of the competing empires constituting “the multi-cultural Mediterranean” of the seventeenth century even as they reinforced emerging Anglo-Protestant stereotypes.³³ Beginning with Mary Fisher’s audience with the Ottoman sultan and concluding with Katharine Evans and Sarah Chevers’s imprisonment on the isle of Malta, this chapter dwells on a liminal moment for radical sectarian engagement with the Islamic world by emphasizing Fisher’s ecumenism and Evans and Chevers’s narrow bigotry as alternate possibilities for emergent feminism in the English tradition.

The fourth chapter, focusing on the *fin de siècle* leading to the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, marks the emergence of a discourse we can clearly label “feminist” and material conditions we can reliably call “imperialist.” This transitional period produced the first articulations of “feminist orientalism” by anglophone writers, culminating in Mary Wollstonecraft’s *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792). Nonetheless, though neglected in current criticism, this period simultaneously produced an anti-orientalist counterdiscourse as part of the era’s feminist debates. This chapter begins by tracing the extended genealogy underpinning feminist orientalism as it emerged in English culture at the turn of the eighteenth century. This genealogy involves the patriarchal orientalism elaborated by seventeenth-century male travel writers, the feminist orientalism critiquing the patriarchal component of the earlier tradition while retaining its imperialist biases, and the counterdiscourse by early feminists such as Delarivier Manley, preceding Montagu by a generation, who located supposed “oriental” abuses such as domestic immurement and polygamy within England itself. As I argue, Manley challenged emerging feminist orientalism by eschewing the definition of imperialist selfhood characteristic of seventeenth-century men’s travelogues and early eighteenth-century feminist polemics. Rather than displacing the source of patriarchal despotism onto an orientalized other, she locates it squarely in England.

The coda returns to Montagu as a crucial figure for studies of English women and the Islamic world by reading her oft-cited Turkish bath or *hammam* scene alongside the interrogation of patriarchal and feminist orientalism by Algeria’s premier woman writer, Assia Djebar. This dialogic method juxtaposes early modern English women’s engagement with the Islamic world and contemporary Muslim women’s engagement with the legacy of western European imperialism to discover not only the differences, but

also the potential rapprochement between these intersecting histories. “The borrowed veil” of this introduction’s title accordingly positions Montagu between her precursor Manley, whose play *The Royal Mischief* (1696) features this phrase, and Djébar, who complicates without erasing the historical links between western European women and women in the Maghreb – the West of the Islamic world. Manley challenges the patriarchal orientalist motif of “the borrowed veil” by shifting its meaning from imprisonment to empowerment for the Muslim anti-heroine of her play. Montagu, for her part, famously donned the “ferace and yaşmak” (the traditional full veil of early eighteenth-century “Turkish ladies”) to share in what she perceived as their greater liberty than the economically and socially confined English women of her class.³⁴ Djébar similarly presents the full veil – this time the twentieth-century Algerian variety – as the means by which the traditional woman becomes “a potential thief within the masculine space.” Djébar’s view of such covering, however, is more nuanced than the celebrationist, and even exoticist, stance of Montagu. She, unlike Montagu, stresses the potential costs of this patriarchal masquerade, which leaves the veiled woman “halfblinded when she can only look with one eye.”³⁵ To read Montagu in terms of Manley plumbs a previously neglected genealogy for Montagu’s innovations. To read Montagu alongside Djébar’s elaboration of the ambivalent links between feminists from western Europe and those from the Islamic world establishes a dialogic method that moves beyond even the broad-minded Montagu’s ultimately narrow perspective. The present study thus focuses on early modern English women’s articulation of their agency *vis-à-vis* the still powerful empire of the Ottomans, but finally assesses this ambivalence from the perspective of an Arab-Berber woman writing at the cusp of the twenty-first century. It thereby yields a dialogism grounded in the historical specificities of England’s proto-colonial era and in the continued relevance of early modern cultural productions for the global gender politics of our post-colonial age.³⁶

Early modern queens and Anglo-Ottoman trade

The anxiety provoked by the “female prince,” Elizabeth I, who reigned from 1558 to 1603, has been extensively debated in English literary and cultural studies. Louis Montrose, in an influential essay, considers Elizabeth’s reign as exemplary of “the interplay between representations of gender and power in a stratified society in which authority is everywhere invested in men – everywhere, that is, except at the top.”¹ To maintain this authority, Elizabeth resisted the demands from her male courtiers and all-male Parliament that she marry.² Her authority as “female prince” was thus contingent on her anomalous position as a “virgin queen.”³ Yet, feminist critics have disputed this emphasis on Elizabeth’s management and manipulation of male courtiers’ anxieties about gender and power: Philippa Berry stresses her cultivation of a court culture centered on her ladies-in-waiting to the exclusion of more celebrated male courtiers; Christine Coch argues for her strategic use of maternal, rather than erotic, metaphors as the foundation for political authority; and Jennifer Summit presents her as authoring an ambivalent Petrarchan “poetics of queenship” to counter masculine domination.⁴ On the whole, however, discussions of Elizabeth as a “woman on top” of an otherwise patriarchal society have remained within the bounds of the British Isles, occasionally extending their comparisons to continental Europe.

This chapter engages the debate over contested representations of women’s sovereignty during the age of Elizabeth by moving away from an anglocentric, or even a conventional eurocentric, focus. Instead, after surveying the parallel responses from Ottoman and English male establishments to the presence of powerful women at the helm of their respective patriarchal societies, I turn to a series of letters exchanged between Elizabeth and various members of the Ottoman dynasty. Her correspondence with Safiye, the Ottoman queen mother, is especially revealing in that it features the “socio-historically constructed female cultural space” contemporary cultural theorists have conceptualized as a negotiated subject position rather than as simply hegemonic or oppositional.⁵ Specifically, Elizabeth

and Safiye's correspondence exemplifies the negotiated subject position with reference to the paradox of women's rule within their respective patriarchal cultures even as they negotiate cultural and religious differences.

Drawing on the "exchange of women" model for cultural formation introduced by anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss and modified by feminist theorists such as Gayle Rubin, Luce Irigaray, and Eve Sedgwick, I further propose that this exchange of gifts and letters enacts a significant, albeit limited, subversion of the paradigm whereby women are circulated as objects between men to secure patriarchal relations.⁶ Jane Donawerth explores similar subversions in an early modern English context by focusing on women's literary and political agency as "part of the Tudor-Stuart gift-exchange system, which helped to weave the social fabric of court, community, and extended family."⁷ Evoking Irigaray's challenge – "*But what if these 'commodities' refused to go to 'market'? What if they maintained 'another' kind of commerce, among themselves?*" (emphasis in original) – Donawerth poses the question: "In the Tudor-Stuart gift-exchange system, was it possible for the goods to get together among themselves – for women who were legally propertyless, who were sometimes themselves counted as merchandise – to circulate gifts?"⁸ My focus on Elizabeth and Safiye's exchange extends this investigation of early modern women's literary and political agency into Anglo-Ottoman relations during the sixteenth century.⁹ By negotiating the paradoxical position of the sovereign woman within their respective patriarchal cultures, they become "objects that speak" as agents of cross-cultural exchange.¹⁰ As such, their cultural productions (diplomatic letters and gifts) remain an important part of Ottoman *and* English literary history.

THE SULTANATE OF WOMEN AND SIXTEENTH-CENTURY DEBATES OVER WOMEN'S SOVEREIGNTY

The correspondence between Elizabeth and Safiye during the last decade of the sixteenth century occurred at the height of political power for elite women in England and the Ottoman empire. The English "virgin queen" was approaching her fourth decade as reigning sovereign. At the same time, the Ottoman empire was under the sway of a series of women who exercised their political clout as royal mothers and made up the "sultanate of women."¹¹ Throughout this period, structural changes in Ottoman society, primarily surrounding succession to the sultanate, strengthened the traditional right of mothers to act as mentors to their sons and verified the political office of mother of the sultan (i.e., *valide sultan*). The "age

of the favorite” – characterized by the slave concubine Hürrem/Roxolana’s unprecedented elevation as the legal wife of Sultan Süleyman I (1520–66) – was followed by “the age of the Queen Mother,” dominated by Nurbanu (1574–83), Safiye (1595–1603), Kösem (1623–51), and Turhan (1651–83). The historical phenomenon of the sultanate of women, which characterized Ottoman politics from the middle of the sixteenth century to the end of the seventeenth century, thus becomes the prism through which I evaluate Elizabeth’s reign. This methodological shift moves beyond the limiting masculinist paradigms of Elizabeth as “female prince” or “virgin queen”; it also moves beyond feminist revisions of these paradigms still lodged within an anglocentric framework.

Ottoman men within the imperial bureaucracy interpreted the sultanate of women as a sign of the “decline” of the empire.¹² At its peak in the mid sixteenth century, for instance, Süleyman I (known in western Europe as “the Magnificent” and in the Ottoman empire as “the Lawgiver”) was warned by one of his counselors about three things that could undermine his rule, the foremost of which was “acting according to the wishes of women.”¹³ This critique of the harem became increasingly common in the Ottoman reform literature of the late sixteenth century, which corresponds to the turn of the millennium in the Muslim calendar. The sixteenth-century bureaucrat and historian Mustafa Ali’s apocalyptic assessment may be seen as typical of the Ottoman response.¹⁴ In a series of influential treatises, Ali proposes that the decline of the empire resulted from “the spread of corruption and irresponsibility in government, the injustice destroying the realm, and the growing political influence of women and eunuchs of the Harem.” According to Ali, this decline began in Süleyman’s era with Hürrem’s extraordinary influence over the sultan and reached its peak in his own day with the ascendancy of Safiye as *valide sultan*. As he concludes, “[t]he disorder of the age and perturbations of space and time which appeared, one by one, after this ruler’s accession [Murad III, 1574–95], and which proved to be the cause of the disruption and degeneration of the order of most of the world” directly resulted from women’s political agency.¹⁵ Ali’s peers, who likewise condemned “esteeming the women and following their advice,” shared similar views.¹⁶ In the early seventeenth century a counselor to Murad IV (1623–40) would look back on the previous era and remark, “It is a long time since the high-chambered household of the lofty Sultanate (may it remain under the protection of eternal grace) was served by solicitous, well-intentioned, worthy ulema [religious scholars] and by obedient, self-effacing, willing slaves.” Again, chief among the causes listed for the decline of the empire was the contamination of the sultanate resulting from the domination of

the harem.¹⁷ Thus, throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Ottoman male establishment alternately demonized and dismissed political power exercised by women as an aberration that impaired the effective application of sovereignty in the empire.

Although Islamic principles of propriety required male bureaucrats of the Ottoman establishment to be circumspect in their representations of royal women, western European men felt little restraint in launching blatantly misogynist attacks against their queens. The Calvinist John Knox's *The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* launched the analogous debate in western Europe over women's sovereignty. Aimed at the Catholic Mary Tudor (who reigned from 1553 to 1558), but inadvertently published on the accession of the Protestant Elizabeth I to the English throne, it is notorious for its vitriol. In the controversy over "gynococracy," Knox epitomized the conservative position that "a woman is created inferior by God and has no authority with respect to her husband or to any man." His most immediate respondent, the Anglican bishop John Aylmer, represented the relatively liberal response that "a woman is capable of behaving in a virile manner and therefore of governing men."¹⁸ However, even defenders of royal women based their arguments on the patriarchal doctrine of women's constitutional inferiority to men. According to Aylmer, the system of lineal inheritance in England allows for rare exceptions to this patriarchal rule; for Knox, such exceptions seemed monstrous.

Hence, while Knox supports his arguments against women's sovereignty with evidence from the Judeo-Christian scriptures and Graeco-Roman writings, the overall tone of his tract is one of visceral disgust over "the monstiferouse [*sic*] empire of women."¹⁹ Aylmer, by contrast, maintains "if it were unlawfull (as he [Knox] will have it) that that Sexe should governe: yet it is not unlawfull that they should enherit, as hereafter we shal prove."²⁰ Aylmer concedes women are "weake in nature, feable in bodie, soft in courage, unskilfull in practice, not terrible to the enemy, no Shilde to the frynde" (sig. B2^v). God's inscrutable will, he argues, allows for the anomaly of a female ruler within a realm governed by the divine right of kings. To mitigate the negative impact of Elizabeth's gender on her claims to sovereignty, he nevertheless emphasizes her difference from the "Turk" in matters of religious allegiance and national loyalty. Under her sister, Mary Tudor, Elizabeth was falsely imprisoned "as one that hadde come out of Turkey to betraye Englande" (sig. N3^v). Elizabeth's stalwart loyalty to her sovereign, though Catholic, and to her religion, though Protestant, confirmed her as a fit sovereign for post-Reformation England. Under Elizabeth's leadership, Aylmer triumphantly asserts, "God is English" and "[t]he French Turke"

(sig. P4^v; cf. sig. Q). His final defense of women's sovereignty combines the definition of Elizabeth's integrity *vis-à-vis* the Islamic other, and by extension England's, with the allegorical voice of an aggrieved mother: "And will you now suffer me, or rather by your disobedience purchase me, to be a mother withoute my children, and to be made the nurse of a sorte of infideles Idolaters and Turkes" (sig. R^v).²¹ The debate over gynecocracy in England thus became embroiled with ecclesiastical antagonism to political alliances, such as France's alliance with the Ottomans.

The politics informing the parallel debates over women's rule in the Ottoman empire and England further intersect in the history of Hürrem, better known in the western European tradition as Roxolana.²² Although Hürrem's ethnic and national origins remain unclear, her rise in the Ottoman hierarchy from captive to queen is well documented.²³ Captured somewhere along the northern frontier of the Ottoman empire during the early decades of the sixteenth century, Hürrem immediately entered the imperial harem as a *kul* (personal slave) of the sultan in the sense of owing absolute loyalty to him.²⁴ As male children acquired through the *devshirme* (tribute paid in Christian children), such slaves made up the sultan's much admired standing army of *janissaries*.²⁵ As females acquired through trade as well as raids, they became potential consorts of the reigning sultan (*haseki*), from whom would come the mother of his successor (*valide sultan*). Moreover, the confluence of the Islamic injunction that only infidels can be enslaved with the shift in the Ottoman dynasty towards slave concubinage meant by the sixteenth century only women of non-Muslim origin could become mothers of sultans, though these women invariably converted to Islam. Soon after entering the imperial harem, Hürrem achieved the status of *haseki* with the birth of her eldest son Mehmed.²⁶ Normally, she would have been disqualified as the sultan's sexual partner after this birth under the "one-mother-one-son" rule and would have eventually accompanied her son to a province of the Ottoman empire, where he would become governor upon his coming of age. As the Ottoman dynasty was built on open succession, in which the most able of the sultan's sons won the throne from his brothers upon their father's death, the one-mother-one-son rule theoretically ensured a level playing field for each son. Hürrem's reign as *haseki* of Süleyman nevertheless departed from established practice in a number of ways that profoundly disturbed contemporary Ottomans.

First, she continued as the sultan's sexual partner after the birth of her first son, subsequently begetting three more sons and a daughter with him. More notoriously from an Ottoman point of view, the sultan abandoned the practice of remaining aloof from marital ties by making Hürrem his legal

wife. Although Ottoman sources remain silent on this impropriety, western Europeans acknowledged the general mood of discontent in Ottoman ranks over the sultan's unorthodox marriage. As the Venetian observer Luigi Bassano records, "such love does [Süleyman] bear her that he has so astonished all his subjects that they say she has bewitched him; therefore they call her *Ziadi*, which means witch."²⁷ Hürrem's departures from dynastic precedent resulted in further innovations that were also intensely disturbing to contemporary Ottomans. For instance, Hürrem did not accompany her eldest son to his provincial governorship as was customary over the past century; indeed, as a mother whose interests encompassed more than one son she could not. Furthermore, she undermined the customary separation of the sultan from the women's harem when she moved her quarters into his palace.²⁸ Her role in the Ottoman central government, however, was not simply that of a seductress and schemer. Rather, she was a significant "political actor" whose activities extended beyond internal dynastic politics to international diplomacy. Like Safiye later in the century, Hürrem "acted as the sultan's voice in diplomatic correspondence" and frequently exchanged gifts with political allies.²⁹

The hostility to Hürrem within the Ottoman establishment reached its apogee in response to her role in the execution of Mustafa, the sultan's eldest son by a former concubine. Ottomans and western Europeans alike admired the prince. Western European ambassadors within the Ottoman empire reported, "he has extraordinary talent, he will be a warrior, is much loved by the Janissaries, and performs great feats" and "[i]t is impossible to describe how much he is loved and desired by all as successor to the throne."³⁰ At the courts of western Europe, Mustafa was celebrated as "of all the Ottoman's posterity, there was never none so like to attempt the great enterprises, and to achieve them with honour, as he was." As in the Ottoman empire, the cause of his death was "taken to be the favour and love which the Turk [i.e., Sultan Süleyman] beareth to the children he hath by another woman [i.e., Hürrem], not the mother to him that is slain. But his other sons are nothing of that towardness and activity that this man was of."³¹ Going against the general view that Hürrem and her supporters committed an egregious political crime in eliminating Mustafa from the succession, traditional and revisionist historians argue that her actions were entirely rational given the Ottoman system of open succession. In the former case, V. J. Parry proposes that the system of open succession required the victor to eliminate all collateral male claimants to the throne, i.e., the execution of the new sultan's brothers and their male children and the consequent exile of the women of their households from the seat of political power. Hürrem's

actions against Mustafa thus constituted an explicable, and even justifiable, response to Ottoman dynastic politics. Following these expectations, she worked to protect the lives of her progeny, upon whom her status as a potential *valide sultan* was contingent.³² In the latter case, Leslie Peirce challenges the view of Hürrem as an illegitimate participant in dynastic politics by arguing, “in trying to eliminate Mustafa from the succession and enlist allies in her efforts, Hurrem was fulfilling the expected role of a prince’s mother in protecting her son.” The hostile response within the Ottoman empire more accurately resulted from “the ambivalence of Hurrem’s role” as simultaneously wife and mother.³³

Hence, although Hürrem came to signify the purportedly pernicious nature of women’s rule in western Europe and the Ottoman empire, the specific nature of her transgression presented itself differently in each political tradition. In particular, despite the more transgressive status of her legal marriage to the sultan for the Ottoman system of governance, western European commentators fixated on what they erroneously saw as a breach of lineal succession. This apparent breach appeared even more atrocious because of the involvement of women in dynastic struggles. Drawing on this dual emphasis, Nicholas Moffan’s Latin rendition of the episode, *Soltani Solymanni Turcarum Imperatoris horrendum facinus, scelerato in proprium filium natu maximum, Soltanum Mustapham parricidio, Anno Domini 1553 patratum*, launched a historiographic trend that reached England by the late sixteenth century with Hugh Goughe’s translation of Moffan’s text: “The horrible acte, and wicked offence of Soltan Soliman Emperour of the Turkes, in murtheringe his eldest sonne Mustapha, the year of our Lorde, 1553.”³⁴ This translation participates in the critique of women’s rule as illegitimate by condemning the prince’s execution as an “unnaturall acte” resulting from “the kyng [Süleyman] in processe of tyme” being “ravyshed above measure with the bewtie of an other [of] his concubines named Rosa [Hürrem]: by whom he had foure menne children, and one woman” (sigs. jv–jv^v). This discourse of feminine manipulation leads to outright misogyny in statements such as “she admonished the king not with out teares (as unto women in fained matters they are at no time wantinge)” (sig. kiii). Moreover, Hürrem’s political agency is further diminished with the invectives, “cursed woman,” “unnaturall stepmother,” and “adulterous harlot” (sigs. kiii^v–kiiii). The logic linking women’s political agency to witchcraft thus defines both Ottoman and western European patriarchies. The published letters of the diplomat Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, which influenced numerous representations of Hürrem, further entrenched “sorcery” and sexual manipulation as the hallmark of women’s sovereignty.³⁵ For

instance, the English historian Richard Knolles, in his first edition of *The Generall Historie of the Turkes* (1603), relies on Busbecq's letters and Goughe's translation in narrating how "Solyman becometh amorous of Roxolana" and depicting "[t]he mallice of Roxolana against Mustafa." He closely follows his sources when condemning Hürrem/Roxolana "for being growne to that height of honour and power as never was woman in the *Othoman* court."³⁶

These histories spawned a spate of stage plays in France and England recasting the story of Hürrem's intervention into Ottoman dynastic politics as "the sort of tragic tale of oriental palace intrigue which became vastly popular in western Europe in the seventeenth century."³⁷ French dramas such as Gabriel Bounin's *La Soltane* (1561), performed before Catherine de' Medici, are noteworthy for shifting the emphasis in the Mustafa story to Hürrem/Roxolana.³⁸ As Clarence Rouillard observes, French writers received the news of the prince's assassination with mixed emotions. On the one hand, historiographers such as Moffan (originally from Burgundy) considered it "a cause for general Christian rejoicing."³⁹ On the other hand, Hürrem's role in his death confirmed French men's fears about the baleful influence of their own queen regent.⁴⁰ Fulke Greville, who was heavily influenced by French experiments in Senecan drama, prepared the first English-language dramatization of this episode, *Mustafa* (composed c. 1604; published 1609 in a pirated edition). Greville also misreads Ottoman history to make Mustafa the heir apparent to Sultan Süleyman and Hürrem/Rossa a malicious usurper. The typical western European misconstrual of Hürrem/Rossa's primary transgression as "shak[ing] that *Ottoman* succession" consequently becomes layered in Greville's drama with the widespread representation of women's political agency as witchcraft.⁴¹ Greville was undoubtedly aware that his representation of women's sovereignty might prove unpopular, as indicated by the disclaimer in his widely circulated life of Sir Philip Sidney: "Yet as I have not made all women good with Euripides, so have I not made them all evil with Sophocles, but mixed of such sorts as we find both them and ourselves."⁴² In Greville's version, Hürrem/Rossa nevertheless becomes a homegrown English shrew as well as a Senecan villainess.

In the wake of Greville's *Mustafa*, several plays linking orientalist themes to concerns about women's sovereignty appeared on the English stage, from William Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* in 1606 to Charles Sedley's version of 1676.⁴³ A resonant passage from *The Tragedy of Mustapha, the Son of Solyman the Magnificent* (1668) by Roger Boyle, earl of Orrery, signals the end of this largely masculinist tradition, after which the first English

women playwrights for the public stage began to appropriate orientalist themes for feminist ends.⁴⁴ This play epitomizes the patriarchal response in early modern England to the perceived problem of women's sovereignty, symptomatically located in the sultanate of women:

A Vizier's Power is but subordinate;
He's but the chief Dissembler of the State;
And oft for public Int'rest lyes; but I,
The Partner of Supreme Authority,
Do ever mean the utmost that I say.⁴⁵

Evoking a familiar scenario, Boyle's *Roxelana* (a variant of *Roxolana*) condemns the Ottoman chief minister to death and asserts her political power over the empire, which is based on her sexual power over the emperor. The theme of the woman who rules the empire because she rules the emperor thus persisted as an overdetermined motif in English drama into the seventeenth century, particularly in representations of Asian and Islamic cultures. It is against this literary and historical backdrop that Elizabeth's correspondence with sixteenth-century Ottoman sovereigns, including Safiye as *haseki* and *valide sultan*, must be set.

ANGLO-OTTOMAN RELATIONS AND THE "SULTANA" LETTERS

The late sixteenth-century *valide sultan*, Safiye, third in line after Hürrem, typifies the sultanate of women.⁴⁶ Moreover, as she engaged in an extended correspondence with the English queen, she presents a crucial case for analyzing contested representations of women's sovereignty during the age of Elizabeth. This exchange, however, must be located within the *valide sultan's* institutional role in the Ottoman power structure. It must also be situated *vis-à-vis* the political and economic rapprochement between Elizabethan England and the Ottoman empire. Only then will it become explicable not simply as a gendered supplement to sixteenth-century Anglo-Ottoman relations. Indeed, one of the *valide sultan's* contributions to this correspondence appeared in England's pivotal proto-imperialist collection, Richard Hakluyt's *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation* (1598–1600). A powerful Ottoman woman thus became integral to *English* literary and cultural history.

Safiye initially gained her privileged status as the *haseki* of Murad III (who reigned from 1574 to 1595), a role contingent on her bearing a son. Once her son Mehmed III (who reigned from 1595 to 1603) succeeded his father, she became *valide sultan*, the highest political office for a woman in

the Ottoman empire. In this capacity, she supervised the training of the female servants of the realm, fostered the political networks that were the primary means of exercising imperial authority, protected her son's interests as prince and acted as one of his top advisors once he became sultan, maintained the public image of the dynasty through charitable works and royal progresses, and mediated the sultan's contacts with foreign diplomats. Her resources were vast, her stipend the highest in the realm, and her personal wealth extensive. As Peirce concludes, "If they were not, like males, directly endowed with sovereignty, royal mothers were its custodians."⁴⁷ This assessment of the *valide sultan's* role radically challenges the still current view of harem women as illegitimate political players.⁴⁸

Safiye, once she became *valide sultan*, numbered among the most important power brokers in the empire. Nonetheless, as a personal slave of the sultan, she had no status in herself; rather, her status arose retroactively once she bore a prince for the dynasty. As a result, "[t]he consorts of the Ottoman sultans were, from the dynasty's point of view, safe political actors because their only claim to power was their motherhood."⁴⁹ They could not be used as conduits of power through the exchange of women in marriage and thus complicate the royal succession, as occurred in the volatile dynastic politics of sixteenth-century England.⁵⁰ Yet, Safiye was not without her personal history, which western Europeans emphasized when pursuing their political and economic interests in the Ottoman empire. Contemporaries identified her as Albanian, Moldavian, Bosnian, Slav, Circassian and even, probably confusing her with her forerunner Nurbanu, Venetian.⁵¹ As mentioned above, under the Ottoman *kul* system only women of non-Muslim origin could become slave concubines of the sultan; Muslims could not be enslaved under Islamic law, though slaves could later convert to Islam, as Safiye did. By the middle of the sixteenth century, *kul* of non-Muslim origin had become the sole body of women eligible to mother future sultans, as exogamous marriages with Muslim princesses had been phased out to ensure the stability of the empire. Safiye's early affiliation with Christian Europeans shaped the influence she exerted on the sultan, as similar affiliations had for her predecessors, Hürrem (of eastern European origin) and Nurbanu (of Mediterranean origin). Safiye's interest in English affairs at the end of the century arguably results from this combination of her commitment to the Ottoman dynasty as a mother of the (future) sultan and her cosmopolitan outlook as a *kul* of Christian European provenance.

Following Islamic and Central Asian models, women of the Ottoman sultan's inner circle figured prominently in the diplomatic activities of

the empire. As such, they projected the sultan's voice, though they just as frequently appropriated it to pursue their collateral interests. Diplomatic exchanges between the Ottoman empire and representatives of foreign sovereigns during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries therefore depended upon the support of the imperial harem, headed by the *valide sultan*. As we have seen, Hürrem as *haseki* intervened in a decisive (and some would say, disastrous) way in Ottoman dynastic politics. This political influence extended to her diplomatic correspondence with Polish and Persian counterparts. Her immediate successor, Nurbanu, also exercised political agency by corresponding with powerful western European women such as Catherine de' Medici, queen regent of France.⁵² Analogously, during the Elizabethan period English ambassadors were required to negotiate with Safiye. Cultivating "the Turks mother's favoure," to cite the late sixteenth-century diplomat John Sanderson, was deemed essential for establishing political and economic ties with the Ottomans.⁵³ Knolles deftly sums up the corresponding response to Safiye as "a most proud, ambitious, and imperious Woman, and withal exceeding rich, who, with great Authority, at her Pleasure, over-ruled all in the time of the Reign of her Son *Mahomet*."⁵⁴ Both views – of the female as sovereign and illegitimate – similarly bedeviled Elizabeth's negotiations of sovereignty.

To summarize, two overlapping conditions shaped the *valide sultan's* cultural and political agency during Safiye's lifetime: the preeminence of the Ottoman empire in Eurasia and the subject status of the Christian European populations from which the Ottoman dynasty drew its potential mothers. The Ottoman empire was not the single significant Islamic power during the early modern period: the Safavid dynasty had established itself in Iran around the turn of the sixteenth century and the Mughals held sway in India from the middle of the century.⁵⁵ However, the Ottoman empire's distinction from an Islamic perspective was its conquest of the Hijaz, with the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, and its accompanying role as guardian of orthodox Muslim interests from Granada to the Eurasian steppes. From a Christian perspective, the salience of the Ottoman empire resulted from its encroaching physical and political presence in the heartland of Europe. Yet, as western polities struggled to establish discrete national identities against the elusive ideal of a supranational *Respublica Christiana*, they were as likely to form alliances with the Turks as to repudiate them. The Franco-Ottoman alliance against the Habsburgs stands out as a prime example of nationalistic interests running counter to the ideology of a unified Christendom.⁵⁶ The English, by contrast, were relative latecomers in the race to receive the benefits of Ottoman trading concessions and to combine with

other anti-Habsburg powers, among them the Ottomans. From the late Elizabethan era, they nevertheless played an increasingly prominent role in western European relations with the Ottomans by parleying their excommunicated status as heretical Protestants into a political alliance and trade partnership across cultural and, in particular, religious lines.

It was in this context that the English during the latter half of Elizabeth's reign sent a series of diplomatic missions to the Ottoman sultan in an attempt to move from under the wing of the French, who had maintained a virtual monopoly on Ottoman commerce with western Europe since 1535. Attempting to establish England's independent status, William Harborne, the queen's inaugural ambassador to the Ottoman empire (1582–88), traded on English differences with continental Europeans, especially religious differences. Early modern Protestantism and Islam held strong affinities, both politically (as allies against the Catholic Habsburg powers) and ideologically (as iconoclasts and rigorous monotheists).⁵⁷ Ottomans favored Protestants – “Luteran mezhebi” – the Lutheran sect, as opposed to the Pope's sect – and considered them, when politic, *de facto* Muslims. Sultan Murad III, in a letter to “the members of the Lutheran sect in Flanders and Spain,” describes Protestants thus: “As you, for your part, do not worship idols, you have banished the idols and portraits and ‘bells’ from churches, and declared your faith by stating that God Almighty is One and Holy Jesus is His Prophet and Servant, and now, with heart and soul, are seeking and desirous of the true faith.” Pope Pius V's 1570 excommunication of “Elizabeth, the usurper and pretensed Queen of England,” combined with the papal arms embargo against the Islamic enemy, accordingly set the stage for England's unique role in the Ottoman empire during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁵⁸

In support of Harborne's initiative, Elizabeth sent several letters to Sultan Murad III from 1579 to 1581 with the expressed purpose of establishing trade between England and the Ottoman empire.⁵⁹ As supplicant to the sultan, the queen in these letters stresses the religious connections between English Protestants and Ottoman Muslims, though she downplays the gender difference between herself and her interlocutor.⁶⁰ Presenting herself as one iconoclast and sovereign corresponding with another, she hails as, “Elizabeth by the grace of the most mightie God, and onely Creatour of heaven and earth, of England, France and Ireland Queene, the most invincible and most mighty defender of the Christian faith against all kinde of idolatries, of all that live among the Christians, and falsly professe the Name of Christ.” Subverting crusader rhetoric, she evokes the epithet “Defender of the Faith” to ally herself with the Ottoman sultan; together they worship

“that God (who onely is above all things, and all men, and is a most severe revenger of all idolatrie, and is jelous of his honour against the false gods of the nations).”⁶¹ Ottoman officials, for their part, honored Elizabeth as the “Lutheran Queen” and welcomed her representative as the “Lutheran Ambassador” (“Lutheran” being the blanket term for Protestants in this period).⁶² Indeed, the grand vizier in the year of the Spanish Armada boasted “there was nothing lacking for the English to become Muslims, except for them to raise their forefingers and recite the confession of faith.”⁶³ Perhaps in response to this potential for England’s incorporation into the Ottoman empire as a tributary, in subsequent letters Elizabeth limits the sultan’s reach to the Orient.⁶⁴

A decade after Sultan Murad granted trading concessions to the English similar to those held by the French, Safiye and Elizabeth exchanged a series of gifts and letters confirming Anglo-Ottoman political, economic, and cultural ties. In addition to forging such ties, this correspondence established an unprecedented political and personal relationship between these sovereign women. As previously mentioned, Safiye’s letter of 1593 achieved salience in English culture due to its publication in the collection *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation*.⁶⁵ Although Hakluyt’s heading to this letter incorrectly identifies the slave concubine Safiye as “the most high and mighty Emperesse the wife of the Gran Signior Sultan Murad Can,” his marginal note, “This Sultana is mother to Mehemet which now reigneth as Emperor,” alludes to the culturally specific role of *valide sultan* as a crucial political power broker.⁶⁶ Whether as “wife” or “mother,” therefore, Safiye occupied a gendered role deemed particularly well suited for initiating a correspondence with the sovereign queen of England.

In fact, when Safiye began her correspondence with Elizabeth it was in her role as the *haseki* of Murad III, second only to the *valide sultan* in the harem hierarchy. Despite this secondary status, Safiye in her original letter deftly follows the standard invocation to God, “the Absolute and the Veiler and the Creator,” and “the Lord Muhammad . . . the seal of the prophets,” by identifying herself as “the mother of Sultan Murad Khan’s son, His Highness Mehemmed Khan.” Hence, even as she follows the accepted trajectory of praise for God, the Prophet, and the sultan, she strategically foreshadows her potential status as *valide sultan*. She impresses on her English readership the extent of the Ottoman empire, which stretched from “the regions of Rum and ‘Ajam and Hungary,” to “the lands of the Tatars and Wallachians [and Russians, of the Turks and Arabs and Moldavia, of the dominions] of Karamania and Abyssinia and the Qipchaq steppes, of

the Eastern climes and of Jawazir and Shirwan, of the Western climes and of Algeria and Qairawan,” to “the lands of Hind and Sind and Baghdad, of the Franks and Croatsians and Belgrade.”⁶⁷ In other words, the Ottoman sultan’s reach extended from the former Byzantine empire into Persia, through central Asia and northeastern Europe, across Mesopotamia and the Arabian peninsula, and into North Africa. Safiye correctly boasts that the empire encompassed “the seven climes” and “the four corners” of the (Old) World. Indeed, Knolles marks the single exception to the Ottomans’ reach as the New World.⁶⁸

Having asserted the might of the Ottoman empire and her role in its power structure – both current (*haseki*) and potential (*valide sultan*) – Safiye allies herself with the queen of England through epithets stressing their common sovereignty and femininity. She praises Elizabeth as “the support of Christian womanhood . . . who follow the Messiah, bearer of the marks of pomp and majesty, trailing the skirts of glory and power, she who is obeyed of the princes, cradle of chastity and continence, ruler of the realm of England, crowned lady and woman of Mary’s way.”⁶⁹ Official Ottoman correspondence to the queen of England generally transposed the masculine address to sovereigns into the feminine form, as Sultan Murad does in his letter of 1579 to Elizabeth, where he refers to her as “most sacred Queene, and noble prince of the most mightie worshippers of Jesus, most wise governor of the causes and affaires of the people and family of Nazareth.”⁷⁰ The *valide sultan* subverts this model by applying terms specific to a female sovereign: her reference to “Christian womanhood”; her use of the term “cradle,” an honorific title also applied to the *valide sultan*; and her invocation of Mary, mother of Jesus.⁷¹ At the same time, Safiye stresses Elizabeth’s regal status by describing her as “she who is obeyed of the princes” and “ruler of the realm of England.” Hence, although the customary Ottoman address to queens tended to re-gender them as masculine or to de-emphasize their political power as women, Safiye does neither in her letter to Elizabeth.

Safiye establishes her own sovereignty in this letter by showcasing the “presents and gifts” she received from the English ambassador, “who came to rub his forehead on the threshold of happiness of His Majesty, the fortunate and felicitous Padishah of Islam and the Marslike sovereign.” Concomitantly, Elizabeth’s letter is represented as a tribute to Safiye as a pivotal player in the Ottoman circuit of diplomacy: “[This] special letter, full of marvels, whose paper was more fragrant than pure camphor and ambergris and its ink than finest musk, notifying indescribable and immeasurable consideration and love towards (me) Her well-wisher.” By capping this passage with references to “the Agha of the Door of chastity and modesty” and “the

curtain of chastity,” Safiye is not diminishing her sovereignty due to her feminine subject position, as in the signature modesty topos of early modern English women’s writing.⁷² Instead, these references must be situated within the culturally specific definition of *haram* as “sacred, inviolable, or taboo.” The imperial harem, as Peirce stresses, was so named “because of the presence there not of women but of the sultan.” Hence, Safiye’s references are intended to establish her dignity and authority, as opposed to the western misconception of the harem as a space of feminine oppression and masculine fantasy.⁷³ In closing, Safiye reasserts her authority as a sovereign woman by promising to promote Elizabeth’s cause: “What was expressed in the contents of Her letter became recorded by the ear of acceptance, and in justice. It caused the esteem heretofore attached to that cradle of rule and dominion to increase.” Elizabeth, however, must maintain her correspondence with Safiye (and, by implication, her supplicant status) if such an exchange is to be effected: “If She will never cease from [sending] such . . . letters which foster the increase of sincerity and love, this is to be made known.” With these conditions, Safiye pledges, “There shall never be cessation from news about Her good health arriving and news about Her good health becoming known . . . and I shall endeavour for Her aims.”⁷⁴

In disregarding Safiye’s assertion of women’s sovereign power as the basis for sixteenth-century Anglo-Ottoman relations, Hakluyt’s alterations to her first letter downgrade the *valide sultan*’s role in the Ottoman polity.⁷⁵ As indicated above, this letter follows the standard Ottoman invocation to God and the Prophet Muhammad with an assertion of Safiye’s status as a future *valide sultan* before charting the extent of the Ottoman empire. By contrast, Hakluyt’s rendition follows an ambiguous reference to the Prophet with, first, a statement about the extent of the Ottoman empire; next, a genealogy of its male sovereigns; and, finally, the relationship between Elizabeth and Safiye. This reordering has two related effects: it elides the sovereign position of the *valide sultan* and it narrowly defines her (and, by implication, Elizabeth) as a mere woman. Moreover, Hakluyt’s version of this letter modifies the original Turkish reference to “Mary’s way” (as in Skilliter’s literal transcription), into the Latin emphasis on “*Maria virgine*” or “the virgine Mary.”⁷⁶ A tendentious link is thus drawn in Hakluyt’s version between the Ottoman queen mother, Mary as virgin mother, and Elizabeth as virgin queen. This cultural mistranslation suggests Safiye’s letter was being incorporated into the western European, and increasingly anglocentric, imperialist project. However, we must be careful not to ignore the historical specificity of the exchange between Elizabeth

and Safiye, which took place during an era when the Ottoman empire was the most powerful force in Eurasia and the English were as yet belated imperialists.

Safiye's next letter to Elizabeth was issued in her official capacity as, to quote its seal, "the mother of Sultan Mehemmed Khan" (i.e., *valide sultan*) – the most powerful woman in the Ottoman empire. Following the standard invocation to a Christian sovereign, this letter begins by acknowledging the blossoming correspondence between the *valide sultan* and the English queen: "After the presentation and offering of sincere greetings and abundant salutations, rose-perfumed, which emanate from pure mutual confidence and the abundance of amity, what has to be submitted and notified is this: Your letter has arrived and reached (us); whatsoever you said became known to us." Again, Safiye pledges to act as Elizabeth's champion with the sultan in the matter of the proposed English trading concessions. Confirming her support for the English mission, she insists, "We do not cease from admonishing our son, His Majesty the Padishah, and from telling him: 'Do act according to the treaty!'" she prays Elizabeth "not suffer grief in this respect!"⁷⁷ The balance of the letter concerns gifts exchanged between the two women, including an English coach for Safiye and an Ottoman dress for Elizabeth. As sociologist Pierre Bourdieu emphasizes, the economy of gift exchange depends not only on "economic capital" in the strict sense (i.e., material wealth in the form of money, stocks and shares, property, etc.), but also 'cultural capital' (i.e., knowledge, skills and other cultural acquisitions, as exemplified by educational or technical qualifications), 'symbolic capital' (i.e., accumulated prestige or honour), and so on." If "[o]ne of the most important properties of fields is the way in which they allow one form of capital to be converted into another," we may conceptualize Elizabeth and Safiye's exchange of gifts and letters as the means whereby these sovereign women negotiated the patriarchal contradiction of women's rule without negating either term of this shared cultural oxymoron.⁷⁸

As Hakluyt's list of "the presents that were given . . . to the Grand Signior" establishes, the economy of gift exchange constituted an essential prerequisite for diplomacy in the Ottoman court.⁷⁹ One of the most impressive gifts sent by the English crown to the Ottoman dynasty was "an elaborate and complicated organ," accompanied by the master organ-builder and musician, Thomas Dallam. We will not dwell on Dallam's adventures in the Ottoman empire other than to note his symptomatic "male gaze" into the women's harem, which he recorded in his *Account of an Organ Carried to the Grand Seignor and Other Curious Matter*. Given a tour of the

sultan's private quarters by an Ottoman official (a fellow English man who had converted to Islam and risen to the position of interpreter), Dallam chanced upon the court of the women's harem, into which he directed his gaze. Through a thick grate barred with iron, he observed "thirtie of the Grand Sinyor's Concobines that weare playinge with a bale [ball]." Although he initially took the harem women for "yonge men," perhaps because they were not clothed in the constrictive styles of early modern English women, Dallam was soon drawn to the details of their appearance, including "the skin of their thies [thighs]," which showed through their sheer pants, and their "naked" legs. He concludes he was "verrie lothe" to leave his voyeuristic perch just outside the women's harem, for "that sighte did please me wondrous well." The sultan attempted to persuade him to stay in Istanbul by offering "two wyfes, ether tow [two] of his Concubines or else tow [two] virgins of the beste I Could Chuse my selfe, in Cittie or contrie" – a classic case of the exchange of women between men, though an offer which Dallam refused.⁸⁰

Set against this background, the gifts exchanged between Elizabeth and Safiye may be seen to short-circuit the patriarchal symbolic system that casts women as objects and men as agents of exchange. Rather, as women on top of their patriarchal societies, they deploy signifiers of masculinity and femininity to assert their agency despite aspersions from male detractors. For instance, to cement her friendship with the *valide sultan*, Elizabeth conveyed her customary gift – a portrait of herself – though with a twist. The queen sent many such gifts during her reign, generally in the context of marriage negotiations. However, by privileging women's pleasure and preferences, this gift to a female sovereign undermines the conventions governing exchanges whereby women serve as conduits for male bonding. Indeed, the portrait pleased the *valide sultan* so much she asked for a second one. Because representing the human form, and the female form in particular, is prohibited in orthodox Islam, the *valide sultan* could not return a corresponding portrait. Instead, she sent Elizabeth "a sute of princely attire being after the Turkish fashion," an appropriate gift for a queen notorious for manipulating gender and cultural norms to pursue political ends.⁸¹ They exchanged other gifts in the course of their negotiations, including jewelry, clothing, and cosmetics. For instance, Safiye's request for rare English cosmetics in a letter sent through her *kira* (Jewish "mediatrix") is prefaced with the assurance, "on account of Your Majesty's being a woman I can without any embarrassment employ you with this notice."⁸² Womanliness, exercised by women as agents rather than imposed on them as objects of exchange,

thus becomes the means to establish political and economic bonds across cultures.

In the next chapter, I turn to an era in English culture less amenable to both Anglo-Ottoman relations and women's cultural agency under the notoriously insular and misogynist King James I (1603–25). Yet, during the Jacobean era the first original (as opposed to translated) prose romance and sonnet sequence by an English woman – Lady Mary Wroth – appeared in print. Wroth retains the former era's fascination with the Ottoman empire, adding the early seventeenth-century interest in the Safavid Persians bordering the Ottomans. Yet, in her prose romance, *The Countess of Montgomery's Urania* (1621), she puts these Islamic empires “under erasure” to promote a purely imaginary Holy Roman empire spanning Eurasia. In the manuscript continuation of this romance, she incorporates the historical figure of the “first” Persian in England – Lady Teresa Sampsonia Sherley – into her imperialist fantasy of female agency. As we shall see, this assertion of agency in the atmosphere of Jacobean backlash highlights the tentativeness of Elizabeth's negotiations as an exceptional “female prince.” At the same time, it marks continuities in early modern English women's identification with women from the Islamic world as a means to challenge patriarchy in their own realm.

The imaginary geographies of Mary Wroth's Urania

The imperialist investments in Lady Mary Wroth's prose romance, *The Countess of Montgomery's Urania* (1621), have been examined primarily in terms of the triangular traffic in slaves linking Africa and the Americas as sites of western European expansion.¹ Yet, as I have emphasized from the beginning of this study, seventeenth-century England was only emerging as a global imperial power, whereas the Ottomans had established a centuries-old empire in Eurasia, the Arabian peninsula, and North Africa. This chapter therefore departs from the customary transatlantic focus by turning to the overlooked struggle between Islamic and Christian powers for the heartland of Europe extending from Vienna to Rome. Although this region traditionally delineated the Holy Roman empire, its status as the bulwark of universal Christendom remained largely imaginary throughout the early modern period, pressured externally by the expanding Ottoman empire and riven internally by the rise of modern nation states.² This shift of perspective, which necessarily stresses the Ottoman empire's control over much of Europe (generally dismissed as "eastern" rather than "western"), thus challenges the frequent, and historically unfounded, conflation of the terms "Christian," "European," and "imperialist." The Ottomans were also, though not the only, early modern imperialists.

This chapter assesses how Wroth's *Urania* figures women's agency *vis-à-vis* these competing empires. As Gerald MacLean argues, the emerging anglocentric discourse of empire was enabled by lessons the English learned from their ties with the Ottomans, forged during the Elizabethan rapprochement of the late sixteenth century (see Chapter 1).³ By the early seventeenth century, the reigning sovereign, James I, reversed his predecessor's ameliorative policy towards Islamic powers such as the Ottomans. Concomitantly, he supported the patriarchal backlash against English women's participation in humanist reforms.⁴ Pamphilia, one of the main characters in Wroth's romance, epitomizes the contained woman writer during an era

of expansionist ambitions. Hailing from Morea on the Greek peninsula, she becomes sovereign of her eponymous realm in Asia Minor. Yet, she is divorced from the political movements that occupy her male counterpart, Amphilanthus, Prince of Naples, King of the Romans, and ultimately Holy Roman Emperor. Similarly, Wroth was born into the aristocratic and admired Sidney family. However, her challenges to Jacobean patriarchal restrictions – particularly her exposure of the regime's abuses through her published writings and her commitment to her "true love" rather than an arranged marriage – rendered her a "fallen" woman. The wish-fulfillment of romance forecloses this fate for the character Pamphilia. Her contradictory role in the romance, emblemized through the cabinet in which she secretes her writing, nevertheless underscores the paradox of the feminine "object that speaks" for the English woman writer during an era of competing imperialisms.⁵

This chapter concludes by turning to the second part of *The Countess of Montgomery's Urania*, which Wroth was not able to publish due to patriarchal resistance. In this manuscript, she continues her negotiation of conflicting early modern discourses of empire by triangulating the first part's suppressed Ottoman empire and imaginary universal Christendom with a series of dispossessed Persians. Most notably, the ostensible female heir to the Persian throne appears as a Christian convert attempting to forge alliances with the powers of western Europe. The shifting religious and racial identity Wroth ascribes to this character, as I shall argue, corresponds to that of Lady Teresa Sampsonia Sherley, a Christian(ized) Circassian subject of Shah Abbas I wed to the English adventurer Robert Sherley. The Sherley brothers' travels to Persia became a chronic annoyance for the English crown, which sought trading, political, and even military ties with the opposing Ottoman empire. Despite the Sherleys' disregard of the crown's foreign policy, their travels inspired an extensive discourse about Persia in early seventeenth-century England, including several stage plays. This corpus has led critics to nominate Robert Sherley, who appeared before King James in a turban to which was affixed a cross, as "the first 'Persian' in England."⁶ Without an analysis of early modern women's cultural agency, however, this view erases the ambivalent position of Lady Sherley as more accurately the "first" Persian in seventeenth-century England. I propose that Wroth's awareness of the devastating effect of gender subordination on even the most elite women motivated her incorporation of this doubly "othered" historical Persian into the imaginary geographies of her romance.⁷

GENDER, AUTHORSHIP, AND EMPIRE IN *URANIA*, PART I

As numerous critics have noted, women writers during the English Renaissance were bound by the injunction to chastity, silence, and obedience reiterated in contemporary religious sermons, legal codes, educational tracts, and imaginative literature.⁸ Analogously situated within a milieu that equates female virtue with silence and female heroism with endurance, the character Pamphilia is required to conceal her songs and sonnets at the core of the concentric circles – garden to chamber to closet to cabinet – that mark her as the prototypical “Renaissance” woman writer. Yet, this apparently inviolable triad of chastity, silence, and obedience depends upon a series of potentially volatile contradictions, the most fundamental of which is the counterintuitive extension of an economically motivated demand for chastity in elite women, who functioned as conduits for property exchanges amongst the landed aristocracy, to “*all* women, irrespective of their class status.” The corresponding ideological contradiction asserts female silence as “a necessary sign of the (invisible) property of female chastity.” The final contradiction, the strained conflation of women’s speech and writing, provokes the question: “Could not writing be construed in opposition to public speech rather than in conjunction with it?”⁹

Mary Ellen Lamb makes precisely this argument for women’s writing from the era, taking special note of Wroth’s ongoing negotiation of her contradictory class and gender positions. Lamb lists five strategies employed by women who aspired to become writers in a culture that demanded textual silence as proof of their chastity and obedience. Women writers could represent themselves as impelled to write, and even to publish, by outside forces (eager friends or divine intervention), and thereby retain their aura of appropriately chaste passivity. They could act as translators, thus effacing their authorial agency by functioning as conduits for men’s words (although Lamb notes, “[i]n a time when religion was inextricably connected to politics, translating religious works was often a political act,” and hence less an effacement than a subversive assertion of the woman translator’s authorial agency). Women, barred from “instruct[ing] men in religious matters” on the strength of the Pauline injunction, “I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence” (1 Tim. 2: 12), were encouraged to address “alien others, such as Catholics or atheists.”¹⁰ Moreover, “[b]ecoming an alien other also created a space for women’s speech,” the eccentric and prolific prophet figure Eleanor Davies exemplifying this authorial strategy. Finally, as Lamb stresses, “[t]he most important factor enabling women’s authorship of original works . . . was

a location *outside the pale*, rather than at the margins of the class most affected by the discourse of gender difference" (emphasis added).¹¹ This category included women anomalously at the pinnacle of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England's patriarchal culture, such as Elizabeth I and her cousin Mary, Queen of Scots, and women traditionally banished from patriarchal cultures, including sexually and socially "fallen" women such as Wroth.¹²

Nevertheless, the English woman writer during the early seventeenth century, though contained by her patriarchal culture, was not unimplicated in the larger ideological, social, and political movements of her day, particularly England's halting drive towards imperialist expansion. To situate these writers "outside the pale" of patriarchal propriety therefore does not address the imperialist connotations embedded within this cliché. During Wroth's era this designation was derived from the presence of English settlers in Ireland, whose colonial outpost was known as the Pale.¹³ Restoring these geographical and historical coordinates accordingly positions the English woman writer as hegemonic in an imperialistic sense even as she occupies the subaltern role with respect to patriarchy.

Similarly, Josephine Roberts asserts that "[a]t the heart of the *Urania* lies one of the most powerful political fantasies of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe – the revival of the Holy Roman empire in the West." Roberts links this political fantasy to incipient anglocentric imperialism, which began with the consolidation of Scotland, England, Ireland, and Wales as Great Britain during the reign of Elizabeth I's successor, James I. She further links it to the Bohemian crisis of 1619, which involved heated debates over the English sovereign's role as defender of the beleaguered Protestant faith during the Thirty Years War (1618–48). Roberts finally interprets this political fantasy, and particularly "Wroth's own presentation of Amphilanthus as Holy Roman Emperor," as a "flattering tribute" to William Herbert, the third earl of Pembroke, who headed the Puritan, anti-Spanish faction that contested James I's stance of non-involvement in the Bohemian crisis.¹⁴ Herbert, the model for Amphilanthus, was also Wroth's cousin, lover, and father of her two illegitimate children.¹⁵

What Roberts fails to mention is that the idealized Holy Roman empire presented as the field of action in *Urania* was in fact ruled by the Ottoman empire from the middle of the fifteenth century, when Constantinople fell to Mehmed the Conqueror, until the end of the seventeenth century, when the Treaty of Karlowitz initiated the Ottoman retreat from the regions Wroth describes. George Sandys's *A Relation of a Journey begun An: Dom: 1610*, which was published in 1615 and therefore was accessible to Wroth

during the period she composed *Urania*, is explicit about this historical layering. Describing the regions of Arcadia, Sandys juxtaposes their ancient splendor – recovered in Renaissance romances such as Wroth’s *Urania* and her uncle Sir Philip Sidney’s *The Countess of Pembroke’s Arcadia* (c. 1590) – with what he deems their present ruin.¹⁶ Yet, Sandys’s topography “nowhere recognizes Turkish or Arab jurisdiction.”¹⁷ Underlying the imaginary geography of Wroth’s text, as in Sandys’s, is the powerful subtext of Ottoman imperialism in eastern *and* western Europe and the western European imperialists’ counter-response as expressed through the wish-fulfillment of romance.

How does this geopolitical palimpsest – or layered inscription – position the emblematic woman writer of Wroth’s *Urania*? To answer this question, we must assess the poetic discourses and gendered counterdiscourses featured therein. A number of poets, female and male, populate the first part, which may be described as a lyric sequence embedded in a prose frame.¹⁸ On the one hand, Perissus, Steriamus, Leandrus, Dolorindus, and Philarchos, the royal males whose incessant political and sexual (con)quests criss-cross the narrative, epitomize the clichéd courtly lover of Petrarchan discourse and Sidnean romance. Perissus (the “lost one”), who leaves a sonnet lamenting his metaphorical tortures as an unsatisfied lover in a “pretty roome” on a “prettie table” after the fashion of Sidney’s *Arcadia*, exemplifies this type.¹⁹ While he withdraws to a cave to lament his lost love in the abstract, his chaste lover, Limena, experiences excruciating emotional, physical, and, it is suggested, sexual tortures at the hand of her jealous husband. Through Urania’s initial rebuke of Perissus’s inaction, and more so through Limena’s graphic representation of her actual tortures, Wroth exposes the hollowness of the male courtly lover’s litany of his metaphorical tortures.²⁰

On the other hand, although female poets in *Urania* similarly mourn their losses, their discourse moves away from Petrarchan clichés into themes as various as uncertain identity, heroic constancy, and female community.²¹ The first poem in the romance, by its eponymous heroine, initiates this subversive relationship to Petrarchism. The reader, primed to read Wroth’s romance through the lens of her uncle’s, is led to interpret Urania’s initial lament as a sign of the bereft courtly lover who has been abandoned to her “sad thoughts.” The climax of this lament – “Alas Urania,’ said she, ‘(the true servant to misfortune); of any miserie that can befall woman, is not this the most and greatest which thou art falne into?” – also suggests Urania has become a stereotypically fallen woman following this betrayal. Yet, as her string of rhetorical questions continues, the reader learns she

is not lamenting a lost lover, but her lost identity: "Can there be any neare the unhappiness of being ignorant, and that in the highest kind, not being certaine of mine owne estate or birth?" Further undermining the discourse of courtly love, towards which the first lines of the romance tend, she places her concern over her uncertain identity in a maternal context: "Miserable Urania, worse art thou now then these thy Lambs; for they know their dams, while thou dost live unknowne of any" (*UI*, 1). Throughout the romance, her analysis persists as a pragmatic counterdiscourse to the excesses of courtly love.

In general, however, the female poets in Wroth's romance lie somewhere between Perissus's abstraction and Urania's pragmatism. In a reading that intersects productively with my focus on Pamphilia's cabinet, Lamb posits the ancillary character Liana as exemplary of the contradictions constituting women speakers and writers in the romance, where women's discourse may be produced only under conditions of "[i]nternal compulsion." Like the aforementioned Limena, Liana is subject to the tortures of a male guardian (in this case, her father) for her loyalty to a potentially false lover. Like Pamphilia, she "describes her compulsion to speak through an image of an over-filled cabinet." Lamb extends this analogy to all women poets in the romance, and to Renaissance women's authorship generally: "Written 'truth,' too, cannot be forever contained; but must burst forth, like a cabinet filled with verses, into public view, whether that public is the audience of a manuscript or of a published work." Here the image of a cabinet seems "evocatively female" in its essential(ist) closure and its potential excess.²²

Yet, as I have argued, Pamphilia's cabinet signifies her contained subjectivity in a more complicated way than this analysis suggests. To start, it represents not only the subversive voice of the "object that speaks," but also the potentially hegemonic stamp of western European imperialism. Moreover, it is premised less on the model of essential feminine excess than on the model of control characteristic of emerging bourgeois subjectivity.²³ It therefore indicates a subject of authority as well as a subject of submission. Pamphilia presents a particularly salient figure for analyzing the ambivalent position of the Renaissance woman writer, as she is represented as "being excellent in writing" (*UI*, 62), a designation that takes precedence over her title as ruler. Unlike the majority of female poets in the romance, she consistently defines her discourse in terms of writing rather than in terms of song and/or speech. Even when she refrains (as a proper Renaissance woman should) from translating her poetic musings into writing, she imprints such poems in her mind; these poems are fully transcribed in the romance and remain a monument not merely to this character's cultural

agency, but more so to her creator's (*UI*, 146). Finally, Pamphilia, alone of all the female poets in the romance, singles out the sonnet for her poetic productions, an elite form usually reserved for men.²⁴

Pamphilia's choice of the sonnet for her poetic compositions, a form conventionally defined as a little room, thus reinforces her cabinet as the locus for women's subversive writing as "objects that speak" in the romance.²⁵ At the same time, this cabinet evokes the colonial cabinets that were the height of fashion in early seventeenth-century England. As Michael Drayton remarks in his *Poly-Olbion* (1613), "nothing [is] esteem'd in this lunatique Age, but what is kept in Cabinets."²⁶ Such cabinets were notoriously eclectic, containing love poems, religious tomes, and portrait miniatures alongside scientific instruments and imperialist artifacts, as in Hans Holbein's *The Ambassadors* (1533).²⁷ The relationship between items in such cabinets was therefore associative rather than exclusive. That Pamphilia's cabinet is revealed to contain sonnets and portrait miniatures does not preclude imperialist connections, but rather links its contents to the fashion for signifiers of western European imperialism.²⁸ A similar logic of inscription and erasure points to a cluster of effaced imperialist referents in Wroth's romance: most notably the Ottomans, who at the peak of their imperial power presented an ambivalent precedent for the "belated" English imperialists.

THE RENAISSANCE WOMAN WRITER AND IMPERIALISM SOUS RATURE

If we return to the poem that introduces Pamphilia as a woman writer constrained by her contradictory position as an "object that speaks," we may begin to specify her similar location within competing ideologies of empire. This introductory poem is motivated by her contained subjectivity, which requires her to repress her indecorous agency as a speaking subject by delivering, then burying her poetry. Celebrated in the romance as "the most silent and discreetly retir'd of any Princesse," Pamphilia represents the ideal Renaissance lady (*UI*, 61). The flip side to this ideal presents her solipsistically "breath[ing] out her passions, which to none shee would discover, resolving rather so to perish, then that any third should know shee could be subject to affection" (*UI*, 62). The poem thus encapsulates the violent self-division characteristic of the contained woman writer, with its verse recasting the Petrarchan lover's emotional torment into striking images of death and destruction. Beginning with the sublimated violence of a fairly conventional Petrarchan image, "Heart drops distilling like a

new cut-vine / Weepe for the paines that doe my soule oppresse" (*UI*, 62), it concludes with a disturbingly graphic scene of eyes "[w]hich never weepe, but killingly disclose / Plagues, famine, murder in the fullest store, / But threaten more" (*UI*, 63). Pamphilia's rhetoric in this poem contrasts significantly with her rival Antissia's relatively sedate images of loss and sorrow, despite the latter's characterization as the prototypically improper woman.²⁹

The discourse of sublimated violence defining Pamphilia's designated role as a decorous woman and a contained writer also informs the wider framework for her unique agency in the romance as "the loyallest Lady." Together with "the valiantest Knight" (*UI*, 48), none other than the double-loving Amphilanthus, she is meant to release the remaining ladies and knights from the enchanted House of Love on the Mediterranean island of Cyprus. The enchantment begins well before we encounter Pamphilia in the narrative, when *Urania*, Parselius, and their companions flounder on the Cyprian shores, an event which "much troubled them, considering the barbarousnes of the people who there inhabited" (*UI*, 46). Yet, this enchantment introduces Pamphilia as an absent presence whose violent struggle as a contained woman writer disciplines her to the corresponding roles as quasi-divine redeemer and conventionally "proper" role model. The scene also contains a second, far more suppressed absent presence, one which links Pamphilia's conflicted role as a woman writer to the Renaissance discourses of empire the first part of *Urania* puts under erasure (*sous rature*), which means to "delete and leave legible at the same time."³⁰

This second absent presence is briefly introduced with the allusion to the "barbarous people" of Cyprus (*UI*, 47), who are otherwise completely evacuated from the scene of the enchantment, henceforth mediated by a priest of Venus. In the classical Graeco-Roman tradition, reclaimed as the foundation for the West's Renaissance, Cyprus represents the Isle of Love ruled by Aphrodite/Venus.³¹ Historically, however, Cyprus remained an Ottoman stronghold throughout the sixteenth and well into the seventeenth century, with its colonial administration predominantly Muslim and the masses primarily Greek Orthodox Christians, considered a protected minority under Islamic law.³² The Greek Orthodox inhabitants, oppressed for centuries by their rapacious Roman Catholic overlords, welcomed the Muslim invaders as a relative improvement. As the eighteenth-century Cypriot nationalist Archimandrite Kyprianos records, "[t]he Greeks, who to a certain extent preferred to be subject to the Ottoman, rather than to a Latin, power, were even glad in their wretchedness, because so far as concerned their

rites and customs, they escaped the tyranny of the Latins.”³³ A century earlier, no less an authority than Richard Knolles in his *Generall Historie of the Turkes* (1603) presented the conquest of Cyprus in 1571 as a strategic victory for the Ottomans.³⁴ The battle of Lepanto the same year, celebrated by western European writers as a turning point for Christendom in its struggle against the Muslim foe, thus seems a provisional victory at best, for which the Ottomans more than compensated by capturing Cyprus.³⁵

As we might expect, Wroth’s political fantasy of a revived Holy Roman empire ignores Cyprus as an Ottoman stronghold, and indeed as a romance writer she was under no compulsion to adhere to historical details. What remains striking, however, is the imperialist foreclosure that emerges as the enchantment on the island draws to a close, particularly as both closures depend on the development of Pamphilia as the “Loyallest” lady through her role as a contained woman writer (*UI*, 169). In a characteristic gesture of imperialism *sous rature*, the “voyce” delivering the climactic oracle in the enchantment scene on the Isle of Love is layered with a second pronouncement by the King of Cyprus,

who out of love to the Christian Faith, which before he contemned, seeing such excellent, and happy Princes professors of it, desired to receive it, which Amphilanthus infinitely rejoycing at, and all the rest, Christned him with his wife, excellently faire daughter, and Polarchos his valiant Sonne, and so became the whole Island Christians. (*UI*, 170)

This mass conversion to Christianity remains an anomaly in the resolutely classical first part of *Urania*, where enchantments are governed by Venus and where forlorn ladies (including Pamphilia herself) pray to the pagan goddess Diana. Nonetheless, critics have failed to note the competing imperialisms subtending this scene, as in the conclusion that “Wroth’s storm removes her adventurers from the gloss of courtly civilization to (perhaps not coincidentally) the site of *Othello*’s interracial tragedy.” Focusing solely on the English imperialist trajectory between Africa and the Americas, this otherwise astute analysis emphasizes the theme of heresy in the romance without considering the history underlying the Ottoman challenge to Christian hegemony in Cyprus.³⁶ Reading this scene as an instance of imperialism *sous rature*, we might note that just as the Moor shades into the Turk at the conclusion of *The Tragedy of Othello* (5.2.361–65), so too does Wroth’s *Urania* dramatize the suppression, not of a subdued colonial other, but of an immensely powerful imperial alternative.

To summarize, the anomalous conversion scene on Cyprus encompasses the multiple erasures motivating Wroth's prose romance, including (but not limited to) gender, class, religion, and race. Moreover, this scene fully implicates Pamphilia, precisely through her role as a proper Renaissance woman, in Amphilanthus's imperialist project to incorporate the "barbarous" island of Cyprus into his revived Holy Roman empire. That this empire projects a patently imaginary geography does not detract from its incorporation of female agency, particularly through writing, into the ideology of imperialism. Rather, Pamphilia's retreat, and by extension Wroth's, as an active public agent paradoxically enables her participation in these expansionist discourses.

As previously mentioned, the first part of Wroth's prose romance (the only part she published during her lifetime) constituted a particularly grave breach of early modern English patriarchalism. In a frequently cited exchange, Edward Denny, baron of Waltham, damned Wroth as a "Hermaphrodite in show, in deed a monster / As by thy words and works all men may conster" and advised her to "Work o th' Workes leave idle bookes alone / For wise and worthyer women have writte none."³⁷ In return, she emphasized his uncertain class status, his drunken excess, and his asinine reasoning.³⁸ However, Wroth could not directly challenge Denny's sexualized rejoinders, such as his grossly vaginal image of "common oysters such as thine gape wide / And take in pearles or worse at every tide," because to answer with an equally crude phallic image would brand her an unacceptably improper woman according to the double standard of her era. The *ad feminam* attack on Wroth and the related suppression of her romance resonated throughout the seventeenth century, with Margaret Cavendish, duchess of Newcastle, defending herself against similar attacks by rehearsing Denny's scurrilous closing couplet.³⁹ Notwithstanding Wroth's resultant reticence to publish her writings, she persisted in expanding *The Countess of Montgomery's Urania* by an additional 240,000 words.⁴⁰ This manuscript extends the romance of empire Wroth introduced in the published *Urania* beyond the binary opposition of the Holy Roman and Ottoman empires into the central Asian realms of Tartaria and Persia.⁴¹ It also shifts towards an openly imperialist ideology of proselytizing Christianity, which the published *Urania* more ambivalently puts under erasure. This marks a significant displacement as the central Asian realms are enlisted for a revitalized universal Christian polity, which consequently becomes less certainly based in western Europe.⁴² Wroth in her manuscript continuation thereby complicates the imaginary geography within which she previously negotiated the contradictions a gendered imperialist identity

posed for early modern women in England, including arguably its “first” Persian woman.

Like the first part of *Urania*, the manuscript showcases the peerless couple, Pamphilia and Amphilanthus.⁴³ However, while this second part includes a number of satisfactorily married couples – especially Urania and Steriamus – Pamphilia and Amphilanthus remain bound to “the hell of deceit,” the latter apparently destroyed at the end of the published *Urania* (*U1*, 660). In the manuscript, such deceit drives the two paragons to marry against their deepest desire for each other: Amphilanthus weds the princess of Slavonia and Pamphilia weds Rodomandro, the king of Tartaria. Kim Hall, focusing on the imbrication of race and gender in the English Renaissance, pinpoints Rodomandro’s anomalous position as Pamphilia’s mate. Refining her central thesis that “the introduction of racial difference serves to distinguish between types of women without affecting the status of men,” she views the “sunn-burnt” Rodomandro as the exception proving this gendered rule.⁴⁴ Rodomandro’s position as “an exquisitt man in all things, and a Christian” (*U2*, 46), along with the positioning of Pamphilia’s realm between Europe and Asia, allows for this mixing. His “blackness” nevertheless remains contingent on Pamphilia’s wavering favor. As such, he displays the requisite “hands soe white” of the European upper class even as he remains marked by the shifting early modern English economy of race–gender (*U2*, 42). On the one hand (literally), “Rodomandro is allowed to be both black and beautiful (if not favored),” thus ranking him above the serving-class “black-moor” from the first part of *Urania*. On the other, such “strategies of color” highlight “how a social order seemingly based solely on class is profoundly – if invisibly – racialized.”⁴⁵

That Rodomandro, the king of Tartaria, is defined as “a Christian” does not close the conversation about his position as Pamphilia’s mate (*U2*, 46); rather, his status as an Asian Christian, and potentially a Christian convert, raises numerous questions about the intersection of religion, race, and empire within the romance.⁴⁶ As a group of forlorn ladies reports, while traversing the Aegean they “were sett on by piratts, and their husbands carried away prisoners . . . to serve the great Sophy of Percia against his traiterous neece and all the Christian Villaines” (*U2*, 199, 200). When Pamphilia determines to make the return trip across the Aegean with Amphilanthus, she and her party find themselves similarly set upon by pirates. Whereas “[t]he Captaine was commaunding to pull downe the Morean Coulers, and hange out the Percians” to deflect the pirate’s depredations, Amphilanthus insists on displaying his party’s true colors and bolstering their courage as Christians (*U2*, 201). His rejection of the Persian

thus sets the stage for the reappearance of the Sophy (the western misnomer for the Safavid Shah Abbas I) some thirty folio pages later (fifty-seven pages in the modern edition). Following Wroth's characteristic pattern of deferred narration, the intervening pages merely glance at the conflagration consuming war-torn Asia (*U2*, 220), which dangerously touched upon the realm of Pamphilia. The narrative similarly downplays the countervailing presence of "the bravest of Asian princes . . . the Kinge of Tartaria" at Pamphilia's side (*U2*, 222–23). At the same time, the insistent Christianity characterizing the second part of *Urania* increasingly asserts itself, with references to "a true Christian knight," "soe cruell and unChristian-like an Action," "the Christian world," and a "Christian buriall" (*U2*, 236, 240, 244, 255). Hence, as the story of the Persian Sophy's designs on Pamphilia – the realm and its queen – resumes, Tartaria has been positioned as simultaneously Asian and Christian.

It is significant that the Persian narrative is reintroduced towards the end of the manuscript with Pamphilia's recollection of her first encounter with "the brave Tartarian," Rodomandro, a moment paratactically linked to her "first incounter" with the Persian Sophy. As Pamphilia continues,

A love letter itt showld have binn, and was in a strange kinde, for if deny'de, with such brutish threatning, fitter for Turcks to deal with then tender Christian Ladys. I soone answerd his letter, which came from the Usurping Sophie of Percia, and shewing the answer to the brave Tartarian and my Counsell, I had their approbation to itt, and soe returnd the messengers. (*U2*, 258)

Wroth's use of ambiguous pronouns to identify characters whose names are generally offered long after their bearers appear in the romance creates the false impression that the king of Tartaria presented this "barbarous" love letter to Pamphilia. While the balance of Pamphilia's report clarifies the connection between the barbarous Turk and the usurping Sophy, Rodomandro as king of Tartaria remains tainted by his potential alliance with the threatening Islamic powers. Nevertheless, Pamphilia strives to secure him for a Christian pincher movement against the Islamic powers by announcing, "[h]is Countrie likely to bee molested with such a warr as was beegining, all Christendom Joining to assist the rightfull hiere and the rarest creature living, soe as all Asia in flames by this time" (*U2*, 258).⁴⁷ His role thus seems reminiscent of the early medieval hope that the thirteenth-century Mongol conquerors of central Asia would convert to Christianity, supplemented by the late medieval fantasy that Tamerlane (also known as "Timour the Tartar") would embrace Christianity in overrunning the advancing Ottoman empire. Of course, neither Tamerlane nor the Mongols became

Christians, instead preferring Islam.⁴⁸ What is even more significant is that Rodomandro's role as the eastern proponent of Christian expansionism resonates with early modern attempts to join forces with Shi'a Persia against the Sunni Ottomans, an alliance most vigorously (if unsuccessfully) pursued by the notorious Sherley brothers.⁴⁹

PERSIAN EMBASSIES AND URANIA, PART II

"Sherlian discourse," according to Mohammad Nezam-Mafi, stages the self-fashioning Renaissance man and his imperialist analogue for "a bifurcated audience – Persian observers and English readers." Involving "both discursive and mimetic duplication," such "re-creations" encompassed Anthony and Robert Sherley's masquerade as Persian ambassadors, refracted through a series of pamphlets, travelogues, and imaginative works composed by members of the Sherleys' party and disseminated by imperialist propagandists such as Samuel Purchas.⁵⁰ As Nezam-Mafi amplifies, "Playing to a bifurcated audience – English readers, Persian observers – the Persian mimesis exposes ambiguous practices in which the author duplicates the Orient in a restraining embrace." This mimesis thus extracted costs even as it presented possibilities. In the latter case, "Persia, for the Sherleys . . . became a landscape for the recasting and remaking of the Self." In particular, Robert Sherley seems "both a beneficiary and victim of the Sherlian discourse which defined Persia as a land of facade and artifice." As such, he stands for those "liminal figures, outcasts on the threshold of two cultures, and examples of travelers 'gone native'" who pressed this discourse's epistemological limits. Nezam-Mafi pairs Robert as a liminal figure with his Persian counterpart, Uluch Beg (subsequently known as Don Juan of Persia), "a Persian companion of Anthony [Sherley]'s who abandoning the Persian Mission in Spain, converted to Catholicism and in 1604 wrote a book detailing his experiences."⁵¹ I shall argue, however, that Lady Teresa Sampsonia Sherley (to whom Nezam-Mafi refers only in passing and always in her role as Robert Sherley's wife) more fully exemplifies the liminal role claimed for Robert Sherley as "the first 'Persian' in England."⁵²

The Sherley brothers – particularly Anthony and Robert – initially won renown (or, to some, notoriety) for being the first English men to be received as ambassadors, albeit self-styled ones, at the Persian court. Anthony Sherley, already censured by Queen Elizabeth for being "marked with a strange brand" and following "a strange shepherd,"⁵³ has been described as a dreamer and an opportunist, a visionary and a liar, a nonpareil and a fraud.⁵⁴ Following the foiled expedition to Ferrara sponsored by the earl of Essex,

Anthony capriciously redirected his attention to Persia in the spring of 1598. With his motley party of English, Dutch, French, and Italian retainers, including his younger brother Robert, he made the perilous expedition across hostile Ottoman territories. Upon arriving in the Persian capital of Qazvin, he chanced upon the ascendant Shah Abbas I *en route* from his decisive victory over the Uzbek Tartars.⁵⁵ Although various commentators later played up Anthony's role as ambassador, it is clear he merely found himself at the right place at the right time, though he was able to manipulate the occasion to his advantage.⁵⁶ The Shah seemed to favor him with his confidence, even as Anthony concedes the conversation tended towards military reconnaissance rather than the expected interest in "our apparell, building, beauty of our woemen, or such vanities."⁵⁷ Within six months of his arrival at the court of Shah Abbas, he would be sent as Persian ambassador to the Christian crowns of western Europe to promote an alliance of their combined forces with the Persian Shi'as against the Ottoman Sunnis. The bulk of Sherlian discourse at the turn of the seventeenth century thus focuses on Anthony's exploits, though his failure to fulfill his charge resulted in his eventual eclipse by his younger brother, Robert, the subject of most English works on the Sherley brothers after 1607.⁵⁸ Samuel Purchas's "A briefe memoriall of the travels of . . . Robert Sherley," published in 1613 as "the last in a series of tributes strictly contemporary with their exploits," fittingly (if misleadingly) launches the "Sherley myth" that persisted into the twentieth century with the bombastic claim, "The mightie Ottoman, terror of the Christian World, quaketh of a Sherly-Fever, & gives hopes of approaching fates."⁵⁹

Robert, who most frequently appears in earlier Sherlian discourse as "Sir Anthony's brother,"⁶⁰ was left behind in Persia as a hostage ensuring his elder brother's return (or, in Anthony's self-exonerating language, "so deare a pawne").⁶¹ Despite his desperate letters, two of which were intercepted by English agents in Turkey, Robert languished unclaimed in Persia for over eight years (as opposed to the bare half-year Anthony spent there).⁶² During this time, he adopted Persian customs, served in the Persian army, and married a Persian wife, leading Thomas Middleton to celebrate him as "this famous English Persian" and Thomas Herbert to remember him as "the greatest Traveller in his time."⁶³ Despite intense pressure to embrace Islam, he remained a staunch Christian, though Roman Catholic rather than Anglican. By 1608, as his situation in Persia deteriorated due to his brother's extended absence, he similarly sued to be named Persian ambassador to western Europe. His itinerary took him to Cracow, Prague, Rome, Barcelona, Madrid (where he records a potentially murderous encounter

with his degenerate brother, Anthony), and finally to England.⁶⁴ While in Rome, he exemplified the ambivalence of Sherlian discourse, which to reiterate involves “both discursive and mimetic duplication,” by appearing “[i]n oriental dress and wearing a turban to which was affixed, in lieu of the Mohammedan crescent, a huge golden crucifix (a gift from the Pope).”⁶⁵ It is with reference to this scene that Nezam-Mafi concludes, “[t]he first Persian of rank to reach English shores is an Englishman who must act the part. Robert Sherley’s mimetic performance is a determinant moment. The first corporeal Persian, for the English audience, is an Englishman’s phantasm.”⁶⁶ While in England during his first embassy of 1611–13, and later during his second embassy of 1624–27, he enacted this disorienting masquerade through the diplomatic imbroglio over whether he would remove his turban in front of King James, the challenge to his legitimacy as Persian ambassador with the arrival of another embassy headed by Naqd Ali Beg, and the presence by his side of his Christian(ized) Circassian wife, alternately described as a “cousin Germaine” or “niece” of the Shah.⁶⁷ Again, Lady Sherley’s role in early modern Anglo-Persian relations intrudes as an equally “determinant moment,” though one ignored by subsequent commentators. Her presence in England epitomizes the masquerade characteristic of Sherlian discourse precisely because it is layered with the feminine masquerade mandated by English and Persian patriarchal cultures.⁶⁸ This conjunction of gender and empire as masquerade leaves its traces on the Persian narrative of Wroth’s *Urania*.

Lady Teresa Sherley first appeared in English culture through Anthony Nixon’s *The Three English Brothers* (1607), sponsored by Thomas Sherley, who had just returned from his three-year ordeal in a Turkish prison.⁶⁹ The bulk of the pamphlet enlarges upon Thomas’s exploits, followed by a truncated version of Anthony’s adventures and a final postscript on Robert Sherley’s “marriage to the Emperour of *Persia* his Niece,” also rendered as “his Marriage with the King of Persia his cousin Germaine.” In this pamphlet, Nixon replaces the previous non-representation of Lady Sherley with a series of influential misrepresentations: her status as a close relation of the Shah, the Shah’s promotion of her marriage to Robert Sherley, and the birth of her children with Robert in Persia, with the Shah standing as their godfather. This cluster culminates in the celebration of Robert Sherley as a champion of western Christendom, who not only fights against the Ottoman Turks (albeit in the Persian army) but also “labours the King very much to christianisme, to which (it is said) he lends such attentive care, that he doubteth not, but by Gods assistance and his good perswasions, he may in time bee brought to become a Christian.” As has been frequently noted,

these misrepresentations fed into the fantasy shared by western Christians from Canterbury to Rome that the “Persian Sophy” was a closet Christian, or at least inclined to accept the spread of Christianity in his realm. What has been ignored in such analyses is the gendered discourse of empire Nixon deploys to introduce Lady Sherley:

In these warres against the Turkes, this yonger brother [Robert] purchased such honour and estimation, as the cousin Germaine to the King of Persia (beeing the widowe of a Duke in that country) entred into such a liking of his worthinesse, as shee resolved (with Andromache) to rest her whole estate upon his prowess: saying, Tu dominus, Tu vir, Tu mihi frater eris.⁷⁰

Andromache was the wife of the fallen defender of Troy, Hector; after the Trojans’ defeat she was “awarded as a slave and concubine to Achilles’s son” and carried away to Greece.⁷¹ The comparison of Lady Sherley with Andromache thus embeds the fundamental “Western ideal of imperialism” into Sherlian discourse through a specifically gendered analogy.⁷²

John Day, William Rowley, and George Wilkins’s stage play of 1607, *The Travailes of the Three English Brothers*, based either on Nixon’s pamphlet or on a shared source (perhaps Thomas Sherley himself), further elaborates the gendered discourse of empire that constituted Sherlian discourse during Robert Sherley’s lifetime and the Sherley myth after his death.⁷³ In this play, cobbled out of the facts and fantasies of Sherlian discourse, “the Sophy’s niece” (ostensibly Lady Sherley) appears in two disparate scenes. The first scene presents her discussing “the two English brothers” with her maid in a *tête-à-tête* reminiscent of Shakespeare’s Cleopatra and her maid dissecting Antony’s “parts” or Desdemona and Emilia fretting over Othello. Although the maid is entertainingly bawdy in the manner of Emilia, the Sophy’s niece demurs against news of her uncle’s disapproval of the strangers by “hold[ing] them more worthy for that, for envy and malice are always stabbing at the bosom of worth, when folly and cowardice walk up and down in regardless security” (79). Dismissing a token of affection from the Persian lord Calimath on behalf of his brother, the “warlike Halibeck” (80), the Sophy’s niece greets the heroic and courtly Robert with the encomium, “All Persia sings / The English brothers are co-mates for kings” (81–82). Although to herself she worries about his status as a Christian commoner rather than a Persian noble, upon resuming her dialogue she projects her preference onto one of western imperialism’s foundational couples: Aeneas and Dido (82–83). Purchas picks up this imperialist thread in “A brief Memoriall”:

These indeed, especially Sir Robert (the subject of our present Discourse) I shall honour for that Divina Palladis Arte, that Ulyssean twentie yeeres travell, and getting both Troies Palladium and Achilles his Armour; as also for Jasonian sowing the Dragons teeth indeed (beyond Poeticall Fables) whereby Mahumetans have killed each others, whiles Christendome might have gotten the Golden Fleece, the usuall fruit of peace.⁷⁴

In this encomium, Lady Sherley's presence (here aligned with the unmentioned Medea) has been completely eliminated.⁷⁵

The Renaissance discourse of empire is reprised in the second scene featuring the Sophy's niece as her uncle fumes, "[a]fter our customs, steal our subjects' bosoms, / And like a cunning adder twine himself / About our niece's heart! She once his own, / He's lord of us and of the Persian crown" (112). The Sophy's niece defends herself against her uncle's ire by crying "is affection turned *apostata*?" (114).⁷⁶ Her conversion, though not established in the play, is thus displaced onto the discourse of courtly love. Seemingly incensed that his niece favors the "English Sherley" (113), the Sophy subjects the couple to a trial of their affections involving her imprisonment, Robert's demotion, and his mock execution. Nevertheless, in a passionate speech as much in defense of "Christian love" as of the apparently dead Sherley (119), the Sophy's niece convinces her uncle to endorse her marriage to the English man. Although the Sophy's niece disappears as a concern after this scene, the gendered discourse marking Lady Sherley's entrance onto the English stage remains central to the *Three English Brothers*.

As H. Neville Davies observes, the play presents a "distinctly symmetrical" structure, with a comic scene featuring the character Will Kempe and Harlequin anchoring the play.⁷⁷ Although other critics have suggested that these two characters, with their "coarse, humorous and broadly farcical debates," are "irrelevant" to the larger play,⁷⁸ I maintain they are crucial for the presentation of Lady Sherley as an integral, if effaced, component of Sherlian discourse. The debate between Kempe (who actually encountered Anthony Sherley in Rome) and Harlequin (a stock character of the Italian *commedia dell'arte*) hinges on a series of bawdy puns about Harlequin's wife, who appears on stage but does not speak. When Kempe asks Harlequin, "Now signior, how many are you in company?" Harlequin replies, "None but my wife and myself, sir." Kempe persists, "Your wife! Why, hark you, will your wife do tricks in public?" Harlequin innocently (and hilariously) replies, "My wife can play —," after which Kempe relentlessly puns on the connection between stage play and sexual play (105). Although this scene bears no direct connection to the action of the rest of the *Three English Brothers*, its presentation of female desire as disturbingly

ambiguous inevitably affects the only other scenes with female characters: those featuring the Sophy's niece. If Robert Sherley becomes a hero, Teresa Sherley seems to be a whore.

Hence, by the time Lady Sherley arrived in London during the summer of 1611, she had already been rendered through a pair of dubious, albeit highly popular, representations. By contrast, John Cartwright's eye-witness account, *The Preachers Travels* (1611), critiqued the liberties these works took with the facts, recording,

And farther, the King to manifest his love, gave him out of his *Seraglian* in Marriage, a *Cirassian Lady* of great esteeme and regard. But that hee should have a child in *Persia*, and that the King (a professed enimie to the Name of our blessed Saviour) should bee the God father; this certainly is more fitte for a Stage, for the common people to wonder at then for any mans private studies.⁷⁹

Thomas Coryat, more generously, in *Coryate's Crudities: Hastily Gobbled Up In Five Months Travel* (1611) mentions that he met "Sir Robert Sherley and his Lady, travelling from the Court of the Mogol, (where they had beene very graciously received, and enriched with Presents of great value) to the King of Persia's Court." He continues, "Both hee and his Lady used me with singular respect, especially his Lady, who bestowed fortie shillings upon mee in Persian money."⁸⁰ Conversely, Thomas Fuller intoned, "[s]he had more of *ebony* than *ivory* in her complexion; yet amiable enough, and very valiant, a quality considerable in that sex in those countries," thus situating her as "other" than English, despite her Christian (albeit Catholic) allegiances and her marriage to a celebrated (though also ambiguous) English man.⁸¹ However, beyond John Chamberlain's cursory remark, "Sir Robert Sherley and his lady is come hither again, out of the clouds, I think, for I cannot learn where he hath been all this while," Lady Sherley does not appear in the numerous English documents focusing on her husband's embassies to England. Neither is the birth of their son, Henry, documented in the popular literature on the Sherleys, though he may be the first person of Persian descent born in England.⁸²

The most accurate, though still uncertain, record of Lady Sherley's personal history may be found in a source not available to early modern English readers: *A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia*, a collection detailing the papal missions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that frequently mentions the Sherleys, including Lady Sherley. Although English sources consistently represent her as Christian, the records of the Carmelites suggest she may have been Muslim (and certainly an Eastern Orthodox Christian) prior to her conversion to Roman Catholicism. In fact, Circassians

(or Çerkes) were traditionally Muslim, although Georgians and Armenians remained Christian subjects of the Shah.⁸³ In addition, the Carmelite chronicles present conflicting evidence about her social status, with one report presenting her as a “bought slave” of Robert Sherley and another indicating she was “brought to the Persian Court by her paternal aunt, who had become a favourite wife of Shah ‘Abbas.” Furthermore, in the English sources she appears most often as a passive appendage of her husband (though the diplomatic records indicate she filed a petition with King James to protect her husband against a rival Persian ambassador, Naqd Ali Beg), whereas the Carmelites present evidence that she was an accomplished and capable woman, as when,

a band [of Robert Sherley’s Persian detractors] fell on the caravan, and, after binding the arms of the servants, tied [Robert] Sherley to a tree and tried to make him drink poison: at that moment a sword fell from the hands of one miscreant and Sherley’s wife, like a true Amazon, bounded on it and proceeded to thrust and cut and kill some of the band, putting to flight the rest.⁸⁴

She fittingly chose to be remembered as an Amazon in her funeral inscription: “Theresia Sampsonia Amazonitis, Sampsuffi Circassiae Principis filia.”⁸⁵

Finally, although the English tradition offers a description of Lady Sherley’s life after her husband’s demise with Thomas Herbert’s *A Relation of Some Yeares Travaile* (1634), Herbert’s emphasis on Robert Sherley’s end as a result of the Shah’s ingratitude runs counter to the more reliable details provided by Carmelite missionaries in Persia.⁸⁶ According to their records, upon Robert and Teresa Sherley’s return after their final English embassy, Teresa was subject to intense persecution by Persian men who attempted to appropriate her wealth by forcing her into a second marriage and accusing her of apostasy against Islam, a crime traditionally punishable by death. The Carmelite chronicles conclude,

When the Count [Robert Sherley] heard this, he was so much upset that it was sufficient to bring on him a very serious illness, from which he died at the end of 15 days, while the Countess [Teresa Sherley] remained always courageous in spirit and resisting the many blows which were aimed at her from all sides.⁸⁷

Naturally, the English Protestants would not play up the Catholic heroine Teresa Sherley had become for the Carmelites, nor would early modern English readers necessarily have had access to this information about her later life.⁸⁸ However, with only Samuel Chew acknowledging, “[w]hatever the claims of the Sherley brothers to be remembered as heroes, there can

be no doubt that in Lady Teresa Sherley we have a heroine," she has been unaccountably expunged from the critical record.⁸⁹

Given this revised genealogy of Sherlian discourse, one that accounts for the integral role Lady Sherley played in seventeenth-century Persian embassies to England, how can we connect Wroth's Persian narrative in the second part of *Urania* to the combined masquerade of gender and empire the former signifies? If we rely on empirical evidence, salient connections to the Sidneys framed Sherlian discourse from the moment Anthony and Robert launched their infamous adventures. As William Parry, who identifies himself as a "Gentleman, who accompanied Sir Anthony in his Travels," indicates in *A New and Large Discourse on the Travels of Sir Anthony Sherley, Knight, by Sea, and over Land, to the Persian Empire* (1601), the Sherleys' adventures began when "first landing at Vlishing [Flushing], we were honourably received and entertained of Sir Robert Sidney, Lord Governor of that garrison."⁹⁰ Robert Sidney, Mary Wroth's (née Sidney) father, frequently sent letters from his post in Flushing to his family in England. It may have been that he mentioned the eccentric person of Anthony Sherley, who was already notorious in Elizabethan circles for accepting a knighthood from the king of France. The presence of Thomas Herbert, a kinsman of Mary Wroth's, as chronicler of Robert Sherley's final mission to Persia continued to impress the Sherley tale on her personal history.⁹¹ Moreover, as Vali Baghal-Kar emphasizes, Sherlian discourse "must have had a powerful appeal to the public" because of its wide dissemination. As evidence he cites "the anonymous play, *The Wise Men and All the Rest Fools* (1619) (iii.2), [where] Insalsito says, "This lady has received a book from a friend of hers that went over with Robert Sherley into Persia."⁹² Wroth, with her family's political connections and her familiarity with travelogues and popular theater, could plausibly stand for this curious lady. Certainly, the Persian narrative of the second part of *Urania* bears traces of Lady Sherley's complicated masquerade of gender and empire, which finds a particular resonance not only in the abstracted character of the "True Sophy" (whose portrait directly references Lady Sherley's appearance in England), but also in the revised designation of Pamphilia as "the Easterne starr" (*U2*, 132).⁹³

Hence, although the conclusion of *Urania* dwells on the homosocial connection between Rodomandro, the king of Tartaria, and the usurping Persian Sophy, the introduction provides a distinctly feminine framework for this Persian narrative. The first mention of Persia in the manuscript continuation – a theme entirely absent in the published romance – occurs when a forlorn lady identifies herself as "daughter to the King of Tartaria"

and continues, “my mother was a Persian” (*U2*, 9). While the balance of this lady’s story devolves into the romance’s obsession with constant women and the men who betray them, the preliminary reference to Persia in the context of this “mixed” marriage presages not only Pamphilia’s later union with the king of Tartaria (this lady’s brother), but also the dichotomy of Christian Tartaria and Muslim Persia that persists as the romance’s most egregious historical anachronism and, hence, its most hopeful wish-fulfillment. The assertion of the “true” female versus the “usurping” male sovereign of Wroth’s imaginary eastern geography further provides a gendered frame related to Pamphilia’s status as queen of her eponymous realm.⁹⁴ Specifically, the “True Sophy of Persia” is niece to the “usurping Sophy of Persia,” who nevertheless represents a tyrannical uncle rather than the magnanimous one who granted Pamphilia her crown (*U2*, 54). As Roberts stresses, this mode of inheritance from childless uncle to niece (especially when eligible nephews abound, as in Pamphilia’s case) was virtually unknown in Renaissance England, though Elizabeth’s status as a “female prince” allowed for some imaginative liberties with the actual system of patrilineal inheritance.⁹⁵

This anomaly becomes magnified with the scenario of the daughter of the former ruler of Persia becoming the true heir, as opposed to her uncle. As noted in Chapter 1, the mode of succession in Islamic empires did not allow for the anomaly of a “female prince,” though women exercised significant political power in other roles. Hence, according to information about patterns of succession in the Persian and Ottoman empires, readily available to Wroth in histories such as Knolles’s *The Generall Historie of the Turkes* and travelogues such as Sandys’s *Relation of a Journey begun An: Dom: 1610*, the true heir in the Persian context would be an uncle rather than a daughter. That Wroth’s “true Sophy” is a Christian Persian seeking succor from the West nonetheless provides sufficient motivation for Wroth’s refiguring of history, linked to her ongoing concern with establishing female agency at the highest level. We have already noted the anomaly of a Christianized Persian sovereign who, though ardently desired by western Europeans throughout the early modern period, never existed. Shah Abbas I, most frequently suspected of harboring Christian tendencies, was in fact operating according to political expediency, as his later persecution of Christians confirms.⁹⁶ However, as we have also seen, an example of a Christian Persian heroine was close at hand for Wroth in the person of Lady Sherley. Wroth’s representation of a Persian woman as the “true Sophy” thus encapsulates the ambivalent masquerade of gender and empire fashioning Sherlian discourse.

It is significant that the character Rosindy blazons the contradictory beauties of “the Innocently wronged Sophie of Percia” (*U2*, 165). Brother to Pamphilia and sovereign of Macedonia, his name encodes that of Robert Sidney, Wroth’s father.⁹⁷ Traveling throughout Asia, Rosindy happens upon “a most, most sumptuous Court” (*U2*, 167), graced by “the excelent lady, such a peece of perfect perfections as could nott be equaled on Earthe, much les to bee thought on of beeing surpassed” (*U2*, 167–68). This reiteration – “most, most,” “perfect perfections” – while not uncommon in Sidnean romance, marks a particular point of excess in Wroth’s generally sparer prose narrative. Upon learning the lady “satt in a throne of pure Golde,” topped her crown with “the purest pearle the Orient cowlde afforde,” and otherwise displayed the signs of wealth, magnificence, and luxury, we find ourselves in the exoticized setting Baghal-Kar identifies as the positive pole in the bifurcated view of Persia in sixteenth-century Europe.⁹⁸ As for her person, this lady epitomizes the increasingly contradictory standard of black beauty that remained a possibility in early modern England, even as the formula “black, *but* beautiful” militated against its unfettered realization.⁹⁹ Her brown hair shines “yett butt as gold upon black”; “[h]er apparell of the Asian fashion” provokes awe; yet it is the surprise of her snow-white skin that instigates an encomium whose excess must be quoted in full:

O what? The milky way was durt to that! The snowe on the Mountaine topes, the black sea to itt! What was itt, then? The perfect figure of the most immaculate soule, shining in her skinn. Skinn? O such a skinn as would make a thousand Jasons madd on travaile butt to see, though nott to touch soe pretious a fleecce! Such, O such was and is her skinn, the perfectest of mortall creatures. (*U2*, 168)

This fetish on the female Persian’s skin, which ambivalently alternates between ultra-whiteness and an underlying suggestion of “golden” brown tones, hinges on an analogy already associated with Lady Sherley: the archetypal interloper, Jason, whose mention evokes the orientalized Medea. This symptomatic moment informs the so-called “true” Sophy’s tale of her disinheritance, the subsequent incestuous overtures of her uncle, and her final resolve “to demaund the ayde of all Christian princes (I beeing a Christian my self) to assist mee and deliver mee out of the hands of such wickedness and treacherie” (*U2*, 170). After these rousing words, the Persian female once again retreats to the iconic role of motivating the primary political quest in the second part of *Urania*.

As this narrative draws to a close, Sherlian discourse again comes to the fore through a pair of embassies: one planned from the Christian league to Persia (led by Rodomandro as head of the Asian forces and Parselius

as head of the European) (*U2*, 261), and one from “the Percian estate and Counsell” to the Pamphilia’s court (*U2*, 272). The Persian embassy to Pamphilia comes with a curious request: “you will please to send uss one of your deere blood to governe uss” (*U2*, 273). Naturally, the Christian forces comply, sending none other than Rosindy to rule Persia until the “true Sophy” of Persia is released from her inexplicable enchantment. The Persian narrative in Wroth’s romance accordingly concludes with the realization of the Sherleys’ most extravagant dream: not merely a league of Christian Asians and western Christians against the Ottoman Turks, but an invitation to act as “governour of Percia” (*U2*, 354). As we know, the Sherleys’ plans were met with scorn in Persia and the West. Wroth may have understood such rejection, as she faced similar scorn for her literary efforts. Through her engagement with Sherlian discourse, she aligns herself with the effaced figure, Lady Sherley, whom I have posited as more truly the “first” Persian in England. With her aggressive emphasis on Christian proselytizing and her increasing fetish on whiteness, Wroth simultaneously positions herself on the side of western European imperialism. The stir Lady Sherley created in England, reprised in William Davenant’s 1634 play *The Wits*, thereby finds a significant precedent as part of Wroth’s ongoing effort to negotiate a gendered imperialist identity in both parts of *Urania*.¹⁰⁰

The next chapter shifts from the royal and aristocratic women on whom I have focused thus far to address the complicated agency of middle- and lower-rank Quaker women from the latter half of the seventeenth century. Like Wroth, these women resisted patriarchal mores even as they aligned themselves with anglocentric expansionist discourses. Unlike Wroth, these women actually traveled to the Ottoman empire and bordering Mediterranean regions. The former, though still more powerful than the incipient British empire, was experiencing similar upheavals, such as the mid-century execution of its reigning sovereign; the latter included England’s first colonial outpost in the region, Tangiers, as well as the contested island of Malta. By analyzing early Quaker women’s ambivalent agency as proselytizing and publishing women, this chapter qualifies their commemoration as “mothers of feminism” with the understanding that, especially after the celebrated mission of Katharine Evans and Sarah Chevers to Malta, even the most radical English feminism was lodged within the British imperialist project.¹⁰¹

CHAPTER 3

Early Quaker women, the missionary position, and Mediterraneanism

Early Quaker missionaries, who styled themselves the First Publishers of Truth, initially targeted the “dark corners” of the British Isles in Wales, Scotland, Ireland, and the Isle of Man, though they soon turned their attention to the “New World” (the Caribbean and British North America) and the “Old World” (the Ottoman empire and Catholic Europe).¹ Challenging patriarchal injunctions against their speaking and traveling, middle- and lower-rank Quaker women actively participated in the movement’s inaugural missions to the Mediterranean, considered an “Ottoman lake” during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As one of three women in the earliest mission of 1657, Mary Fisher, a veteran on both sides of the Atlantic, spoke directly with the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed IV (1648–87). Two years later, Katharine Evans and Sarah Chevers pitted themselves against the Inquisition in militantly Catholic Malta. As I have shown elsewhere, English views of Malta during this period shifted from its sixteenth-century designation as “the bastion of Christendom” to its representation in seventeenth-century sectarian literature as the abode of the antichrist from Mesopotamia, under Ottoman rule during this era.² On their return journey, the two women sought to convert Muslims in the vicinity of the first Mediterranean English colony, Tangiers.

By tracing the travels and travails of these Quaker women as they crisscrossed the Ottoman empire, this chapter endorses Fernand Braudel’s “firm conviction that the Turkish Mediterranean lived and breathed with the same rhythms as the Christian, that the whole sea shared a common destiny, a heavy one indeed, with identical problems and general trends if not identical consequences.”³ By the mid seventeenth century, the geopolitical triangulation whereby Protestant England countered Habsburg hegemony through strategic alliances with the Ottomans and their North African regencies had incorporated this contested space.⁴ These efforts also overlapped with England’s initial colonial efforts in the region, which signaled the eventual

shift in the balance of power between the English and the Ottomans. Early Quaker women, perhaps unintentionally, were part of this advance guard.

This chapter resonates, moreover, with Nabil Matar's analysis of "Barbary and British Women," where he examines women in England petitioning for "husbands and breadwinners" captive in North Africa and captive English women "living in the harems of Meknes or Algiers, or serving in the houses of British factors."⁵ Although Matar's focus on gender is salutary, it neglects the significant body of writing produced by Quaker women in the region, whose agency complicates the assumption that only husbands are "breadwinners" and women in captivity are invariably sexualized.⁶ The captivity of the Quaker women upon whom I focus involved neither sexual nor domestic servitude; rather, their resistance to men's attempts to subjugate them became the basis for their agency as "Publishers of Truth," with their intellectual and manual labor supporting Quaker men, including their husbands.⁷

In addition, Matar's analysis of women petitioners from the 1620s through the 1640s incorrectly precludes subsequent women's populist initiatives. The Quaker women from the 1650s and 1660s whom I discuss in this chapter, as well as other radical sectarian women in these decades, challenge the view that "'independent female prophecy' was coming to an end" and women curtailed political activities that brought them "to the public eye."⁸ While the lives of many British women in Barbary must be limned from male-authored records, some gendered subalterns did speak. In particular, sectarian resistance to patriarchal injunctions overlapped with early modern Mediterraneanism, an analogue to orientalism whereby difference is configured as inferiority along a north-south axis.⁹ Such women negotiated an ambivalent subject position as gendered subalterns at home and abroad even as they became harbingers of anglocentric global imperialism. Mary Fisher, as "she that spake to the Great Turk," opens up a discussion of Quaker women in this "missionary position."¹⁰ Katharine Evans and Sarah Chevers's *A Short Relation of Some of their Cruel Sufferings . . . in the Inquisition in the Isle of Malta* (1662) will enlarge this discussion into the related field of Mediterraneanism.

"SHE THAT SPAKE TO THE GREAT TURK": THE FIRST QUAKER
MISSION TO THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

From its beginnings in the 1640s as a radical sectarian movement with strong mystical leanings, the group of seekers who would become the Society of Friends or Quakers championed spiritual equality for women, which

extended to their increasing social parity. As the primary catalyst for this movement, George Fox in his influential *Journal* underscored his commitment to women's fair share in the reception and dissemination of divine inspiration. As he began his spiritual journey, Fox "met with a sort of people that held women have no souls, (adding in a light manner), No more than a goose. But I reprov'd them, and told them that was not right; for Mary said, 'My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.'" As he matured into his itinerant ministry, Fox frequently defended women's public speaking. For instance, when a clergyman attempted to silence a woman with, "I permit not a woman to speak in the church," Fox refuted his contradictory logic, "[f]or the woman asking a question, he ought to have answered it, having given liberty for any to speak."¹¹ Fox sustained this defense in his published tracts, *The Woman Learning in Silence: Or, The Myserie of the Womans Subjection to her Husband, As also, The Daughter Prophesying* (1655) and *Concerning Sons and Daughters, and Prophetesses Speaking and Prophecying, in the Law and in the Gospel* (1661), arguing in the former,

if Christ be in the female as well as in the Male, is not he the same? and may not the Spirit of Christ speak in the female as well as in the male? is he there to be limited? who is it that dare limit the holy One of Israel? for the light is the same in the male, & in the female which cometh from Christ, him by whom the world was made, and so Christ is one in all, and not divided, and who is it that dares stop Christs mouth? (5)

Other tracts by Quaker men, from Richard Farnworth's *A Woman Forbidden to Speak in the Church, The grounds examined, the Mystery opened, the Truth cleared, and the ignorance both of Priests and People discovered* (1655) to George Keith's *The Woman-Preacher of Samaria; A Better Preacher, and more Sufficiently Qualified to Preach than any of the Men-Preachers of the Man-made-Ministry in these Three Nations* (1674), confirmed the movement's commitment to allowing the spirit to speak through women and men alike.¹²

Quaker women likewise defended their imperative "to publish the Truth" through public speaking and printed writing, with over two hundred of their tracts appearing by the end of the seventeenth century.¹³ Margaret Fell's *Womens Speaking Justified, Proved and Allowed by the Scriptures*, first published in 1666 and reissued with a postscript in 1667, marks the culmination of the systematic justification of women's speech, after which gender concerns in the Quaker camp shifted to the newly instituted Women's Meeting.¹⁴ Although Fell, as the most prominent female leader among the

early Quakers, did not venture beyond her local environs, the requirement to speak when the spirit moves and journey where the spirit leads applied equally to men and women.¹⁵ Motivated by their conviction in a transcendent Inner Light, all members of the movement “were under a necessity to express themselves.”¹⁶ In particular, Quaker women, thus authorized to publish their views abroad, were released from societal limits upon their public speaking. In this sense, as Publishers of Truth they were not speaking as women, generally disallowed in seventeenth-century England, but were allowing Christ to speak through them, as were men.¹⁷

Such flouting of patriarchal norms nevertheless met with brutal resistance, exemplified by the response to the first Quakers who challenged the conservative bastion of Cambridge, Mary Fisher and Elizabeth Williams. To quote the account in Joseph Besse’s *A Collection of the Sufferings of the People called Quakers* (1753), “the Mayor grew angry, called them Whores, and issued his Warrant to the Constable to whip them at the Market-Cross till the Blood ran down their Bodies.” The exclusively male Cambridge student body was equally vulgar in its denunciations. Early Quaker women’s activities more often than not led to their gender-specific persecution as “*ugly Whores, Bitches, Jades*, and the like.”¹⁸ Yet, justifications of women’s speech often relied on a similar hierarchy of male headship and female subordination, with Priscilla Cotton and Mary Cole’s condemnation of male ecclesiastics in *To the Priests and People of England* (1655) simultaneously endorsing and deconstructing Christian patriarchy: “Indeed, you your selves are the women, that are forbidden to speak in the Church, that are become women.”¹⁹ Even Fell’s *Womens Speaking Justified* presumes women’s weakness, as in her rebuke, “Mark this, ye despisers of the weakness of Women, and look upon your selves to be so wise: but Christ Jesus doth not so, for he makes use of the weak” (7). She concomitantly endorses men’s headship, as when she claims “[h]ere [1 Tim. 2] the Apostle speaks particularly to a Woman in Relation to her Husband, to be in subjection to him, and not to teach, nor usurp authority over him, and therefore he mentions *Adam* and *Eve*” (9). As Catherine Wilcox reasons, such patriarchal premises “had been kept at bay by the Quakers’ eschatology rather than abolished by it,” reinforcing radical sectarian discourse as the “last days” lingered on.²⁰

It is against this background of ambivalent gender politics amongst the early Quakers, along with the violent response of the authorities to this movement, that Mary Fisher launched her mission to “clear her conscience” before the Ottoman sultan.²¹ Her message, which allowed for the legitimacy of the Prophet Muhammad, vividly highlights the connections between Islam and Protestantism in the early modern period, particularly in the

contested region of the Mediterranean. English attention to the Ottoman empire was at its height when Fisher marched to the sultan's camp in 1658 and would not peak again until the nineteenth century. The English in the latter period disdained the Ottomans as the "sick man" of Europe and rallied to plunder the corpse; in the early modern period, however, the English, along with the rest of Europe, viewed the Ottomans with admiration and trepidation.²² As Fox confirms, "While I was prisoner in Lancaster Castle [1665] there was a great noise and talk of the Turk's overspreading Christendom, and great fears entered many."²³

English awe of the Ottomans in Fisher's day coincided with two synchronous, and possibly related, trends: the proliferation of radical sects during the English Revolution and the translation of the Qur'an into English. The execution of King Charles I in 1649, followed by civil war, lapse in state censorship, and collapse of traditional institutions, cleared the way for the emergence of a radical "third culture," primarily lower-status sectarians who opposed mainstream Anglicanism and orthodox Puritanism.²⁴ The first English translation of the Qur'an also appeared in 1649, slipping through the censor's hands to circulate within a milieu charged with religious controversy and open to radical trends.²⁵ Conservatives condemned English radicals as "Protestant Mahometans," conscious of the appeal the Islamic model of religious toleration and iconoclasm held for nonconformists in the period.²⁶ In particular, the connection between Quakerism, one of the most radical of the mid-seventeenth-century sects, and Islam was perceived by their opponents and pursued by Quakers themselves. Intriguingly, the earliest use of the term "Quaker" for those who first styled themselves the Children of Light (and subsequently the Society of Friends) was an invective evoking the Prophet Muhammad's experience of revelation. Using gender-specific language, antagonists initially used the term to describe,

a sect of woemen (they are at Southworke) come from beyond the Sea, called quakers, and these swell, shiver and shake, and when they come to themselves (for in all this fitt Mahomett's holy-ghost hath bin conversing with them) they begin to preach what hath been delivered to them by the Spirit.²⁷

The myth of "Mahomet's Holy Ghost" had wide currency in the West from the medieval era into the early modern period, appearing in polemical texts such as Hugo Grotius's *De Veritate Religionis Christianae* and popular productions such as Shakespeare's *Henry IV, Part I*.²⁸ What seems so compelling about this early description of one of the most radical movements during the mid-seventeenth century, particularly in terms of gender politics, is the

linkage between these women's resistance to the injunction to maintain silence in public and stereotypical views of Islam. In other words, resistant English women might as well be Muslims from the Protestant patriarchal perspective.

Quakerism's engagement with Islam continued during the civil war period and into the Restoration as the movement consolidated its doctrine and became an institutional religion.²⁹ Fox found himself drawn to the uncompromising monotheism of the Qur'an and its tolerant moral values, citing both in his address *To the Great Turk, and his King at Argiers*, published in 1680.³⁰ This is a remarkable tract, one that accepts Islam on its own terms and takes the Ottoman sultan to task for failing to meet the high standards set out in its holy book. Fox cites the Qur'an over thirty times in the course of six quarto pages, attesting to the influence of the 1649 translation. He also avoids typecasting the Turks as infidels, instead including them within the larger community of faith. Nonetheless, despite its openness to Qur'anic principles, Quakerism never abandoned its unilateral approach to conversion.³¹ Christianization, though discreetly masked, accordingly becomes the final thrust of Fox's 1680 address to the Great Turk. Citing the Gospels for the first time, Fox appeals to the sultan to embrace the Inner Light characteristic of Quakerism: "And God by his Prophets said, *That he would pour out of his Spirit upon all Flesh*: And Jesus Christ said, *That God was a Spirit, and they that Worship him, must Worship him in Spirit and Truth*."³² Fox's ostensibly universalist tract thus concludes by reiterating Christian primacy.

Motivated by this policy, at least three Quaker missions set off to the Near East in the late 1650s, though Fisher's was the most dramatic. Having braved Cambridge, Boston, and Barbados, where she suffered imprisonment, scourging, and exile, Fisher was convinced the Great Turk was "the one man in Europe who was most in need of her message."³³ Driven by this conviction, she departed England in 1657 with three men and two women.³⁴ By the end of her trip, the Inquisition had imprisoned two of her male companions; the remaining three were detained by authorities at various Mediterranean ports and returned to England without completing their mission. Clearly, the reception of this group was less than hospitable and often hostile. John Luffe, later hung by the Inquisition in Rome, records that during his stay in Smyrna (Izmir), "[t]he sound [of our] coming is gone through this town among Turks and Jews and all: I am their [wo]nder and gazing-stock, but the Lord is a strong tower."³⁵ Often fellow expatriates in the Ottoman empire, rather than the natives, proved the missionaries' worst enemies. The English ambassador, Sir Thomas Bendish, like other English

officials, condemned Quakers as troublesome, scandalous, and insufferable. It was the English officials who instigated deportation orders against the missionaries and frequently imprisoned them.³⁶

Despite these severe obstacles, Fisher made her way into the camp of Sultan Mehmed IV in Adrianople (Edirne) around June 1658.³⁷ Ottoman affairs during this period were tense, the long struggle with Venice over the island of Crete draining Ottoman coffers and the war between the pasha of Anatolia and the grand vizier undermining Ottoman unity. Facing external and internal dissension, the young sultan moved his court from Istanbul to his westernmost capital, accompanied by his able and ruthless grand vizier, Köprülü Mehmed. The sultan's camp was magnificent, as befitted "Lord of all the Emperours of the World from the East even to the West."³⁸ By contrast, Fisher stepped into this scene of power and magnificence as the humble custodian of a "message to the King from the Most High God." While we cannot be sure if the sultan admitted the Quaker woman to his council chambers out of amusement, he did grant her a respectful welcome. The mood in the Ottoman court of the time tended towards misogyny; preceded by the long reign of the sultanate of women (see Chapter 1), Mehmed IV and his advisors presumed female inferiority and unfitnes to rule. Indeed, the grand vizier's chief piece of advice to the sultan was "never to give Ear to the counsels and advices of Women."³⁹ Thus, Fisher was out of place in the sultan's chamber not merely as a *harbi*, a Christian from outside the Islamic world, but primarily as a woman.

Fisher spent the first moments of her audience speechless, though not in awe of the sultan's magnificence, which she scorned, but in obedience to the Inner Light, which she trusted would guide her speech. Like other Quakers, renowned for their capacity to "wait on the Lord," she had faith "it would be given her in that hour, what she should speak."⁴⁰ An account of her exchange, drawn from contemporary sources, details,

He [the sultan] then bad her *Speak the Word of the Lord to them and not to fear, for they had good Hearts and could hear it*. He also charged her, to *speak the Word she had to say from the Lord, neither more nor less, for they were willing to hear it, be it what it would*. Then she spoke what she had upon her Mind.

The Turks hearkened to her with much attention and gravity, till she had done; and the sultan asking her, "whether she had anything more to say?" she asked him "whether he understood what she said?" And he answered, "Yes, every word," and further said, "that what she had spoken was truth."⁴¹

The sultan accorded the Quaker woman every courtesy, inviting her to remain under his protection; when she refused his invitation, he offered her

safe passage. Fisher would later contrast the magnanimity of the Ottomans with her countrymen's mean-spiritedness: in her estimation, "[t]he English are more bad, most of them."⁴²

This interview, delivered in the context of Ottoman military dominance and cultural hegemony, was not the one-sided affair later English missions to the Near East would be. The sultan had admitted the Quaker woman to his court, and he expected to have an exchange. As such, after Fisher issued her speech, she was questioned in kind: "She having no more to say, the Turks asked her, *What she thought of their Prophet Mahomet?*"⁴³ Although this was not the Inquisition, Fisher, like her compatriot John Luffe, might have been hung for her reply.⁴⁴ Felicitously, her words reflected the broad-mindedness and tact that informed, and may have influenced, Fox's subsequent letter to the Great Turk:

She answered warily; *That she knew him not; but Christ the true Prophet the Son of God, who was the Light of the World, and enlightened every Man coming into the World, him she knew.* And concerning *Mahomet* she said, *That they might judge of him to be true or false, according to the Words and Prophecies he spoke;* saying farther, *If the Word that a prophet speaketh come to pass, then shall ye know that the Lord hath sent that Prophet; but if it come not to pass, then shall ye know that the Lord never sent him.* The Turks confessed this to be true; and *Mary* having performed her Message, departed from the camp to *Constantinople*, without a Guard, whither she came without the least Hurt or Scoff.⁴⁵

Fisher would recall her experience in the Ottoman camp with warmth, recognizing the humanity and extolling the graciousness of the sultan and his entourage: "though they be called Turkes, ye seed of them is near unto God, and their kindnesse hath in some measure been shewne towards his servants."⁴⁶

Fisher nevertheless remained marginalized on several counts. Hailing from the lower echelons, she was literally out of place as a "masterless woman" with neither a husband nor an employer to vouch for her. Figuratively out of place in England as a publishing woman, she had been beaten and imprisoned for her public speech and printed writings. Finally, in the Ottoman empire she was out of place as a foreign Christian woman who trekked across the countryside to speak with the sultan. Having "cleared her conscience" before him, Fisher returned to England, married, raised several children, and involved herself with the separate women's meeting.⁴⁷ Yet, when she died in 1697, she was famous in Quaker circles as "she that spake to the Great Turk." As I have demonstrated, the ramifications of her encounter with the Ottoman sultan extend beyond her personal fame to the volatile gender politics of the era. Anticipating the "missionary position"

that Evans and Chevers exemplify, this encounter also highlights the belatedness of English imperial efforts in the Mediterranean, where English Protestantism did not even register as an alternative to Islam.⁴⁸ By contrast, Evans and Chevers's travels show the increasingly hegemonic stance of the English in the region. Even as they follow Fisher in resisting gender restraints at home and abroad, they depart from her embrace of cultural alterity with their belligerent attitude towards the "other," whether Catholic or Muslim.

EARLY QUAKER WOMEN AND THE MISSIONARY POSITION

Most frequently remembered for their lengthy imprisonment by the Catholic Inquisition on the Mediterranean island of Malta, Katharine Evans and Sarah Chevers typify the multiple displacements of early Quaker women as Publishers of Truth.⁴⁹ Evans, a married woman from the middling strata of society, was a practiced agitator for the Quaker cause by the time she fell into the hands of the Inquisition in 1659. Motivated to travel by an unrelenting missionary zeal, Evans declared, "[w]heresoever the Lord did send me, into what Land or City, or place soever, if they did put me out never so oft, he would make me go till I got victory."⁵⁰ Her first venture was into the British Isle of Man, from whence she was violently expelled by an armed soldier in the middle of the night and transported on a departing ship. In the aftermath of this forced expulsion, the mid-seventeenth-century polemicist John Whiting affirmed, "the Lord promised her to carry her before the mighty men of the earth, to bear His name before them, and she should have the victory wheresoever she went."⁵¹

Evans aimed next for Alexandria, then possibly Jerusalem.⁵² Although seventeenth-century English patriarchal norms deemed that a woman should leave her home only three times in her life – to be baptized, to be married, and to be buried⁵³ – Evans set out with a female companion rather than with a male chaperone. (Chevers, like Evans, was a married woman from the middling strata.) Providentially, as it appeared to the women, the Knights of St. John, who governed the militantly Catholic island of Malta, intercepted their ship and brought them into the jurisdiction of the Inquisition. Shaped by their experience of revolutionary protest in Interregnum England, the two women uncompromisingly voiced their religious and political convictions upon their arrival. As expected, they were apprehended by the Maltese authorities, who incarcerated them for over three years. A Quaker mission to the Near East in 1661 brought Daniel Baker, a London Quaker and former navy captain, to their aid. Baker approached

the Lord Inquisitor of Malta, English merchants in the region, and the British government at home, pleading for the two women's release, which was actually secured by prominent English Catholics in 1662.⁵⁴

As veteran Publishers of Truth, Evans and Chevers documented their mission and imprisonment in Malta through a series of narratives, visions, verses, and epistles, which Baker compiled as *This is a Short Relation of Some of the Cruel Sufferings (For the Truths sake) of Katharine Evans & Sarah Chevers, in the Inquisition in the Isle of Malta* (published in 1662).⁵⁵ The resultant text functions as a stylistic anthology encapsulating the full range of "rhetorical strategies and modes of discourse" characteristic of early Quaker women's writing, including "inspirational epistles to Friends, prefaces to Friends' books, appeals to the unconverted, prophetic warnings to authority, rebuttals to attackers, and personal testimonies of persecution and of faith."⁵⁶ Nonetheless, Evans and Chevers's *Relation* is neither short as Quaker tracts go, running to over one hundred quarto pages, nor is it simply their personal *Relation of their sufferings [which] is come from their own hands and mouths*. Instead, Baker, as compiler, takes Evans and Chevers's *Relation* into his own hands: not simply by ordering the text – which begins with his preface, is followed by a selection of narratives and letters from Evans and Chevers, and concludes with Baker's account of his sufferings in the Catholic lands of the Mediterranean – but by framing the women's writings with his often divergent concerns.⁵⁷ The following explication of Evans and Chevers's counterstrategies highlights the ambivalence of the "missionary position" they negotiated, which involved both resistance to domestic patriarchal containment and complicity with incipient anglocentric global imperialism.

Not surprisingly, Baker and the two women whose tribulations he relates part company most noticeably in matters of gender, with the former's introductory "Epistle to the Reader" exemplifying this conflict. In the introductory epistle and his closing testimonial, Baker focuses on his displacement from his "Native Countrey, Kindred and Father's House" (91). He also stresses his loss of patriarchal privilege as a persecuted sectarian by identifying with the biblical figure of Joseph, who was dispossessed of his patriarchal birthright by his jealous brothers. Joseph later rose to power as an exile in a foreign land and redeemed his people from political and moral bankruptcy, foreshadowing the eschatological role Baker sought to fulfill. "I am *Joseph* your Brother," Baker proclaims as he introduces and concludes *A Short Relation* (91, cf. sig. A4).

Baker's concern with patriarchal privilege results in his vacillation between endorsing the negative connotations associated with "woman" in

Protestant theology and defending women's public speaking. Hence, while he follows Quaker practice in allowing both "the Sons and Daughters of men" to act as Publishers of Truth (sig. A2), he ultimately concedes,

the Lord hath chosen the foolish things of this life to confound the wise, and that the living God Eternal hath chosen the weak things, to confound and bring to nought the things that are mighty, subtil, and potent; yea, base things which are so deemed despicable, and contemptible, yet behold God hath chosen them, and things that are not approveable in the sight of the prudent of this world, even to bring to nought things that are. (sig. A2^v)

Unlike Quaker polemicists Cotton and Cole, who deflect the negative connotations attached to the abstraction "woman" away from historical women, Baker assumes a straightforward correspondence between "gender" (woman) and "sex" (women).⁵⁸ Women thereby appear in Baker's "Epistle" as "weaker vessels" provisionally empowered based on the Christian paradox that allows the weak to confound the mighty for God's glory. Baker is by no means an outright antagonist of women's speaking, like the Anglican minister John Bewick who asserts "the daughters of God have no part nor fellowship with the sons of God; for God hath excluded them, as hath been shewed."⁵⁹ However, because he justifies women's speaking by equating "woman" and women, Baker reconfirms the patriarchal privilege of his "Father's House" (91).

Contrasting with Baker's attempts to contain women's discourse through Protestant patriarchal logic, Evans and Chevers in their testimonials do not apologize for their public speaking, though they stress the gendered opposition they encountered for publishing their views abroad.⁶⁰ In their first testimonial, the two women undercut Baker's authority as "relator" by emphasizing their active resistance to the patriarchal oppression they encountered in Malta. As they stress, the inquisitors persisted in pressing on them the traditional virgin/whore dichotomy, demanding they align themselves either as "honest women" fit for a "Nunnery" or as loose women deserving punishment (2). The two women emphasize the priests' insistence on fixing them within patriarchal kinship systems governed by "the Names of our Husbands, and the Names of our Fathers and Mothers, and how many children we had" (4). (Baker is similarly interrogated upon his arrival in Malta, though from the position of patriarchal identification rather than subordination [79].) The priests additionally demand clarification of Fox's relationship to Evans and Chevers, casting him as a "father" in the ecclesiastical and patriarchal sense. Caught in this double bind, the women

are damned if they represent themselves through husband/father figures, and damned if they don't.⁶¹

Evans and Chevers continue to resist patriarchal dichotomies by turning the charges laid against them back onto their persecutors, a practice also pursued by Quakers on trial in England.⁶² Whenever the inquisitors represent them as stereotypically "mad" and "foolish" (18, 24), they respond by using the terms of this invective to disarm their accusers: "They said, *We were foolish women*. We said we were the Lord's fools, and the Lord's Fools were right dear, and precious in his sight, and wo to them that do offend them" (24). Evans and Chevers do not simply abject themselves, however, as the status of "the Lord's fools" is one the priests also covet: "He said, *they* [the priests] *were the Lord's fools*, and shewed us their deceitful Gowns, and their shaven Crowns, and said *they did wear it for God's sake, to be laught at of the world*" (24). The two women dismiss the priests' attempt to claim this paradoxically privileged position of subordination by pushing them to admit they wear their garments, "not . . . for God's sake," but "*because of their Superiors*" (24). Their parenthetical reiteration of the contradictions in the priests' discourse highlights this strategy of resistance: "mark, and before it was for God's sake, as he said" (24). In Margaret Ezell's apt formulation, as Evans and Chevers recount their inquisition, "[e]very conversation is a triumph for the women."⁶³

Despite this rhetorical coup in their struggle with the Catholic authorities, Evans and Chevers remain susceptible to specifically gendered punishments. For instance, immediately after the above exchange, Evans declares,

He [the priest] told *Sarah, I was a Witch, and that I knew what was done at London*, and he would come to me no more, he said, Because when he did tell me a company of lyes, I said, *I had a witness for God in me, which was faithful and true, and I did believe Gods witness*. (25)

Elsewhere the two record similar threats to burn them as witches, a punishment inflicted primarily upon women throughout the early modern period.⁶⁴ Yet, by pursuing a strategy of turning the tables on their patriarchal opposition, the two women ultimately figure their persecutors as the true demonics: "The Diviners did wax mad, and did run as at their wits end, from Mountain to Hill, and from Hill to Mountain, to cover them . . . some of them did gnash with their teeth, and even gnaw their tongues for pain" (25). This image of the mad priests becomes the definitive representation of patriarchy in the women's narrative.

Evans and Chevers further deploy their trademark strategy of turning the tables by asserting an authoritative prophetic voice against the patriarchal

equation of women's silence with their virtue. As missionaries who define themselves as "good women" (20), yet whose express purpose was to disseminate Quaker doctrine through public preaching, they had to negotiate the Pauline epistles demanding women's silence, which in the seventeenth century included print productions along with the more familiar domains of church, state, and marketplace. Quaker women generally chose one of two avenues to justify their public interventions. On the one hand, like Elizabeth Hooton – accorded the double-edged accolade of "the first of her Sex among the Quakers who attempted to imitate Men, and Preach"⁶⁵ – they thundered their pronouncements through the masculine personae of Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and Daniel. On the other hand, and this is the ideal Baker promotes, they claimed the paradoxical position of weak feminine vessels channeling the divine word. Although Fell offers a middle ground to this dichotomy of "masculine voice" and "feminine vessel" in *Womens Speaking Justified* – where she adduces the Old Testament Hulda, Miriam, and Hanna, and the New Testament Elizabeth, Mary, and others – few sectarian women of the era embraced such role models.⁶⁶ Typically, Evans and Chevers identify with male prophets from the Old and New Testaments, particularly Daniel, Moses, Luke, and John. Disavowing worldly learning, in keeping with the Quaker polemic against class and gender bias in seventeenth-century English schooling, Evans affirms:

Dear Friends and People, whatsoever I have written, it is not because it is recorded in Scripture, or that I have heard of such things; but in obedience to the Lord I have written the things which I did hear, see, tasted and handled of the good Word of God, to the praise of his Name forever.⁶⁷ (12–13)

Here she claims a direct relationship to divine knowledge even as she mocks her captors' charge that she and Chevers "*did not know true Latine*" (13). Literal comprehensibility does not concern these women, motivated by their belief in an Inner Light available to all regardless of educational background, which was largely determined by class and gender.⁶⁸

Although Evans and Chevers do not claim descent from female prophets of the Old and New Testaments, they stress the feminine dimension of their mission through their ambivalent role as "traveling" women. In early modern England a "traveling" or "travailing" woman connoted both a wandering woman and a woman suffering in childbirth.⁶⁹ Evans and Chevers's prophetic discourse strategically vacillates between these definitions, often blending the two in order to justify their position as missionary women suffering for their public speaking. For instance, Evans sets her representation of the apocalyptic woman who "travelled in pain ready to be delivered

of a Man-child" (12), a representation she delivers through the persona of John the Evangelist, alongside the observation that "all this time my dear Sister in Christ Jesus was in as great affliction as I (in a manner) to see my strong travel night and day" (13). She later reclaims the Pauline allegorization of women's birthing experiences to establish her authority as a traveling woman disseminating God's word: "And *Saint Paul wrote to the Galatians, saying, My little Children, of whom I travel in birth till Christ be formed in you*" (40). Similarly, Chevers declares her "soul travels for the Seed of God's Kingdom to be sown throughout all Nations" (59), simultaneously evoking her activities as a missionary woman and confirming Evans's reclamation of the Pauline appropriation of women's birthing experiences.⁷⁰ Chevers goes on to justify her outspokenness in Malta (and, earlier, in the British Isles) by linking maternity to missionary activity: "My dear Babes and Lambs," she advises, "feed of the sincere Milk of the Word of Life, that you may grow up in it, and wax strong in spirit to praise the Lord and to glorifie him who is worthy" (59). Occupying the aporia of the pun "travel"/"travail," these two women negotiate an ambivalent subject position to justify their public preaching and itinerant lifestyle.

Such conflicting gender politics are featured in the selection of letters following the extended narrative of the women's struggle with the Inquisition.⁷¹ In these letters, particularly those to their husbands and children, Evans and Chevers eschew the role of wifely silence and obedience mandated by the Pauline household code (1 Tim. 2: 11–12; 1 Cor. 14: 35).⁷² Evans in her letter "to *her Husband and Children*" only briefly affirms her affection for her family; most of the letter instructs them in the ways of godliness, which she illuminates through her heroic resistance in Malta. Moreover, in assuming the authoritative voice of spiritual teacher, she delivers her advice to her husband and children in the imperative voice, commanding them to "*keep a diligent watch over every thought, word and action, and let your minds be staid continually in the Light*" (53). In a second letter to her husband and children, she prescribes, "Take no more upon you then you are able to perform in the Spirit of moderation and meekness, for that is in the sight of God of . . . great prize" (60). Ultimately reversing gendered expectations, she presents an analogy that equates domesticity with spirituality, instructing her husband and children to improve

your Talents as wise Virgins, having Oyl in your Vessels, and your Lamps burning, and clothed with the long white Robes of Righteousness, ready to enter the Bed-Chamber, and to sup with the Lamb, and to feed at the Feast of fat things, where your souls may be nourished, refreshed, comforted, and satisfied, never to hunger again. (53–54)

Evans thus displaces the patriarchal model of a woman's relationship to the domicile back onto her husband so she may claim the unorthodox role of spiritual instructor.

Chevers also instructs her husband and children in her letter to them, though she stresses even more directly her primary allegiance to her religious calling over the claims of domesticity. Her salutation to her husband encodes this division between earthly and heavenly husbands: "*My Dear Husband, my love, my life is given up to serve the living God, and to obey his pure Call in the measure of the manifestation of his Love, Light, Life and Spirit of Christ Jesus*" (56). Her prayer for her husband and children similarly displaces their domestic concerns onto her eternal ones: "*Therefore doth my soul breath to my God for thee and my Children, night and day, that your minds may be joined to the Light of the Lord Jesus, to lead you out of Satans Kingdom, into the Kingdom of God, where we may enjoy one another in the Life Eternal, where neither Sea nor Land can separate*" (56). In the balance of her letter, she, like Evans, uses the imperative to effect a gendered role reversal when instructing her husband in the ways of godliness.

Although both Evans and Chevers address other letters to male and female Quakers, the most significant letters for an understanding of the manifold contradictions constituting the "missionary position" are those Chevers addresses "*to God's Elect Church in England and Ireland*" (67–72) and "*Another Letter from Sarah Chevers, to friends in Ireland, to be read among the assemblies of Saints in Light*" (86–88). These letters are important not so much for what they say, which is the standard blend of exhortation and instruction, but for what they don't say, which points towards the role missionary women played, however unintentionally, in promoting anglo-centric expansionism on a global scale beginning in the "dark corners" of the British Isles, especially in Ireland. During the era of the English revolution, Ireland was ruthlessly "pacified" by Cromwell's New Model Army, which entrenched a devastating and persistent English imperialist presence on its soil.⁷³ Quakers in Ireland, while not overt supporters of English militant imperialism (in fact, they often ran afoul of the largely Baptist and Presbyterian colonial administrators), were nonetheless implicated in a vanguard cultural imperialism asserting Protestant religiosity over Catholic and English customs over native Irish.⁷⁴ Evans and Chevers's Mediterranean experience, though not comparable to the entrenched colonialism in Ireland, likewise depended on the "expansionary thrust" of the English into this region from the late sixteenth century onwards.⁷⁵ As Judith Gardiner observes of Fell's contemporaneous calls to the Jews, justifying women's speech could easily lead to ethnocentric results.⁷⁶

What of Baker's relationship to this overdetermined subject position? We have noted his patriarchal framing of the women's narrative and have indicated his editorial interventions. As a male relator, he ostensibly occupies the dominant role in this gendered dynamic. However, even as he concludes *A Short Relation* with a graphic description of his confrontation with Catholicism in Gibraltar – thus privileging his testimony over Evans and Chevers's – he considers himself feminized in relation to the divine. Moreover, as a navy captain, Baker participated directly in early English forays into the Mediterranean. Hence, he potentially dominates in a colonial sense as well. Yet, Baker, like other Quaker sailors in the Mediterranean, became feminized from a military perspective by refusing to fight the Muslim enemy. Thomas Lurting's *The Fighting Sailor Turn'd Peaceable Christian* (1710), which famously records this seaman "would rather go to Algiers [as a slave] than kill one Turk," publicized the first stages of the Quaker revolt against militarism.⁷⁷ In following suit, Baker eventually endured three years as a slave in Algiers, from 1679 to 1682.⁷⁸ His embrace of the dichotomous gendered roles of the "missionary position" in his coda to Evans and Chevers's *A Short Relation* of 1662 foreshadows his more thorough refusal of traditional masculinity almost two decades later.

Nonetheless, even "gender bending" remains differentially distributed in sectarian discourse. For instance, Baker, in his final endorsement, directs Evans and Chevers "to their kindred and Fathers House" (51), undermining their strategy of displacing patriarchal authority to establish themselves as spiritual instructors. He similarly closes his final endorsement of Evans and Chevers's letters by positioning himself as husband/father not simply to the women, but to their writing: "And so I being as it were constrained to publish the acceptable Words . . . seeing no man ever hated his own Flesh; and he is worse than an Infidel that provideth not for his own Family, especially them of his own House" (67). Alluding to that portion of the Pauline code specifying the husband's prerogative as head of the household (1 Tim. 5: 8), he claims the patriarchal privilege of monitoring the women's words. In their letters to Baker, Evans and Chevers refuse this hierarchy, instead figuring him as a humble eye-witness to their heroic struggle: "O my dear, precious and endeared one!, thou meek Lamb, thou innocent Dove, who dost bear the likeness, beauty and brightness of that unspotted one that is come in the Volume of the Book to do the Will of God" (76). The women's response transforms Baker from a head of household into a meek dove for whom they must vouch.

Baker nevertheless has the last word in *A Short Relation*, which concludes with an account of his personal sufferings in the Mediterranean,

particularly the Spanish outpost of Gibraltar. As Mack points out, his language epitomizes the idiosyncratic, even excessive, stance characterizing male prophetic discourse of the period: "Who am I, oh Lord! or what was my Father's House, or what is the Land of my Nativity, that I (a poor afflicted and despised Worm!) should be raised up to see and perceive what mine eye, mine eye in the Eternal Power and pure Life beholds!" (88).⁷⁹ He here presents himself as abased and supported by patriarchal privilege. Likewise, his oppositional stance seems much more spectacular than the comparatively staid matrons Evans and Chevers, who continue to wash clothes and knit stockings as they thunder forth their prophecies with "the shout of a king" (23), a claim rendered in bold Gothic type. Baker, in striking contrast, strips bare to show his contempt for "the Whorish Church of Rome," turning his "back-part upon the Priest" at Holy Thursday Mass before rending his garments from top to bottom and casting his hat on the ground (103). "Going naked as a sign" in this manner, as Richard Bauman establishes, signified "the performance of an intensely private action in public, motivated in this case by the desire to proclaim an ideological message."⁸⁰ As Mack underscores, this mode of prophetic performance was largely confined to male sectarians.⁸¹

Despite his spectacular protest, Baker was not imprisoned in Gibraltar, but left the next day for his "Native Countrey, Kindred and Father's House" (91; cf. 102). However, as a radical sectarian he discovered that his patrimony was not secure, either at home or abroad. His final testimony consequently comes from "Newgate [Prison in London] *this 5th. Month, the 18th. day, 1662. where he suffereth Bonds, together with many Brethren of Truth, for one and the same Testimony of the Lord Jesus, not for evil doing or speaking, but against the same*" (104). Baker, too, finds himself caught in the multiple contradictions structuring the "missionary position" as he vacillates between patriarchal privilege, spiritual abjection, social subordination, and apocalyptic triumph. Yet, in his longing for his "Father's House," he aligns repeatedly with the renewed patriarchal control that would become the norm in Restoration England.⁸² Evans and Chevers, like other radical sectarian women, could not feel completely at home in their "Father's House," either in England or abroad. Still, in enacting their more radical protest against the gender hierarchies of this paradigm, they reveal their complicity with its imperialist aspect as English Protestant proselytizers in Malta and, by extension, in Ireland. We must finally turn to this aspect of Evans and Chevers's mission when evaluating the Mediterraneanism that would manifest itself most fully during the English occupation of the island beginning in 1799 and not ending until 1964.⁸³

MEDITERRANEANISM AND THE MALTESE INQUISITION

The imaginary geography of Malta that emerges in English printed texts during the civil war period of the 1640s, through the uneasy tenure of the republican “rule of saints” in the 1650s, and into the restoration of limited monarchy in the 1660s, presents a significant departure from the previous, if guarded, admiration of the island in plays such as Christopher Marlowe’s *The Jew of Malta* (first performed in 1592; first published in 1633) and histories such as Ralph Carr’s *The Mahumetan or Turkish History* (1600), Richard Knolles’s *The Generall Historie of the Turkes* (1603), and George Sandys’s *A Relation of a Journey begun An: Dom: 1610* (1615).⁸⁴ Beginning with *Newes from Babylon: Of a New-Found Prince, that as soone as he was borne, spake, and wrought Miracles by word of mouth. Sent from thence to the Grand Master of Malta, by his Lieger Ambassador resident there, and from Malta disperst into most parts of Christendome* (1637) to the multiple editions of *A Short Relation of Some of the Cruel Sufferings (For the Truths Sake) of Katharine Evans & Sarah Chevers, in the Inquisition in the Isle of Malta* (1662, 1663, 1715), the anglocentric discourse charting the island takes a turn towards the supernatural rather than the cynical, the apocalyptic rather than the empirical. As I shall argue in the balance of this chapter, seventeenth-century English pamphlets about purported prophets of Malta provide a hitherto unexamined basis for Evans and Chevers’s construction of themselves as prophet figures. At the same time, as prophets “of Malta” – in the sense Emily Bartels specifies when situating Marlowe’s title character within a grid of “colonialist competitions” – Evans and Chevers promulgate the discourse of Mediterraneanism to support the expanding British global imperial project even as they challenge patriarchal norms at home and abroad. Building on the paradigm of the “missionary position,” my reading of their *Short Relation* reveals that “to be of Malta” cannot simply be deconstructed to mean “in effect, not to be, originally, of Malta” (102).⁸⁵ As Evans and Chevers become prophets “of Malta,” they inadvertently reveal the presence of an indigenous “other” who continues to resist Anglo-Protestant proselytizing in the Maltese homeland.

The aforementioned pamphlet, *Newes from Babylon*, encodes the anxiety of a nation on the brink of a religiously inflected war by displacing the horror of the antichrist not simply onto the East, as in orientalism, but more disturbingly onto the borders of the West, as in Mediterraneanism.⁸⁶ Significantly, it appeared in print during a year of crisis leading to a decade of war in the British Isles:

In 1637 a papal agent was received at Whitehall. The Puritans blamed Laud for this policy, and for England's failure to give support to the Protestant cause in the Thirty Years' War. Simultaneously critics of the state Church were savagely punished. In 1637 the lawyer William Prynne, the Reverend Henry Burton, and Dr John Bastwick were mutilated, heavily fined, and imprisoned for life.⁸⁷

The Ship Money crisis and the introduction of the Anglican Prayer Book into Scotland, which directly sparked the first of many civil wars during this era, also occurred in 1637.

The pamphlet begins by evoking "[t]he unparalleled pride and ambition of *Lucifer*" in inducing "the Birth of a Newfound Antichrist born in *Babylon, in Caldea or Assyria*" (sigs. A3, A3^v). Citing scriptural prophecy to corroborate the reputed birthplace of the antichrist in Mesopotamia, under Ottoman rule during the early modern period, it seeks to address "the mayn question," which "is, how the supposed news of this Bable of *Babel*, should be spread and rumour'd through the Christian World" (sig. A4). Malta thus becomes a repository not merely of the news of this monstrous birth, as in the introductory "Letter to the Great Master of *Malta*, wherein is advertised to the Princes of Christendom, of the Birth of Antichrist" (sig. A4^v); instead, it transmutes into a place of strangeness itself. Presuming a lapse in the historical memory of the island as a bastion of Christendom, the pamphlet proceeds, "Yet because mention is made of *Malta*, and of the Grand or Great Master there, and that many of the Readers are ignorant what *Malta* is, or what place or dignity the Great Master bears, it is not amisse that something touching these points be described" (sig. C2). The reader learns that "Malta is an Island in the Mediterranean Sea, farre within the straights, almost betwixt that part of the World called *Africa*, and the Island or Kingdome of *Sicilia*, the naturall borne people there are black, (but they are Christians)" (sigs. C2–C2^v). A hasty survey of St. Paul's association with the island, the defense of Malta against the Ottomans in 1565, and the vow of the Knights of Malta "in defence and service of their faith against all *Mahometans, Pagans, or Infidels* whatsoever" confirms it as a liminal space in the seventeenth-century English imagination (sig. C3). Here a Protestant "infidel" could be persecuted as easily as a Muslim; here an antichrist might be decried as readily as a defender of Christendom celebrated.

In 1641, with the war between England's king and its parliament impending, a related tract was published under the title, *New News and Strange News from Babylon, or, The copy of a letter which was sent from the master of Malta, to a gentleman and kinsman of his resident here in England: wherein is related the birth of a very strange Prophet, with his manner of living, actions,*

and great wonders performed by him: Also his departure from thence, threatening with terrour and feare the Countries Desolation. The title of this tract, which begins descriptively but ends prophesying doom, encapsulates the transition from the empiricism of the early seventeenth-century historiographers to the apocalypticism of radical sectarian discourse from the civil war period. A five-page pamphlet imbued with dread of “very many strange things,” it describes the birth of a prodigy who horribly recapitulates the life of Christ: a monstrous rather than a miraculous birth, an itinerant ministry with “a douzen or fourteen uglie, and illshapen fellows” as disciples, and a career of perverted prophesying (1–2). Echoing the Book of Revelation, it warns: “at his death there should be warrs, and rumours of warrs, in so much that all the westerne countreys shall be laid desolate, but this Countrey shall flourish like a bay tree even in the middest of the winter of misfortunes” (2). Clearly, the Malta being constructed for the radical sectarian reader through these layered associations appears thoroughly abominable, with none of the residual admiration constituting the earlier “double vision” of the island. It is easy to see, moreover, how the fear of the English people in their divided island is being mapped onto this monstrous projection. Other tracts from the period similarly evoke the primal fears that political instability instantiated in prophetic writing of the period. *News from the Great Turke. A Blasphemous Manifestation of the Grand Seignior of Constantinople, against the Christians; of his entrance into Christendome, and the Particulars of his Great Armie* (1645) translates the continental view of Malta as a bastion of Christendom, even as it concludes with terrifying pessimism. Despite the preparations of the Catholic powers, “[i]n the meane time, the Great Turke goeth on his way, bringing all under his Power where he comes, whilst they feed themselves with these offers” (5). The title page of this tract indicates it was “*Published by Authoritie*; that all Christians may take notice of the great Pride and horrid Blasphemy of the *Turkes*.” In sum, Malta falls in these prophetic tracts from its vaunted position as the ultimate defense of Christendom against Ottoman expansionism, which could extend even to the Americas.⁸⁸

Such disdain of perceived Maltese corruption by the middle of the seventeenth century is reflected in the merchant Samuel Boothhouse’s *A Brief Remonstrance of Several National Injuries and Indignities perpetrated on the Persons and Estates of publick Ministers and Subjects of this Common-wealth, by the Dey of Tunis in Barbary: By reason of the Captivity of an English Ship by the Friers Hospitalers, commonly called Cavaliers of Malta* (1653), which emphasizes the decay of the glorious Knights of the sixteenth century into the crass pirates of the seventeenth century. Boothhouse condemns “the

unexampled insolence of the *Friars Hospitallers* (now assuming the title of *Cavaliers of Malta*) who by their institution ought not to offend any *Christian banner*" (sig. A2–A2^v). The Knights have become little better than Turks and seem strikingly similar to the royalists the English republic had replaced.⁸⁹ Finally, on the eve of the first edition of Evans and Chevers's *A Short Relation*, a pamphlet appeared with the title *Europes Wonder: or, The Turks Overthrow . . . With a great Victory lately obtained against the Turks, by His Majesty the King of Great Brittain's Royal Navy, under the command of the Right Honourably the Lord G. Montagu: The entring of the Famous Port of Guienne, the taking of the Strong Fort of Agria; & the coming of the Knights of Malta and Venecians to the assistance of the English Fleet; with a brief Narrative of their Bloody Fight, and the chief particulars thereof* (1661). Printed in the Hague, this tract collects "several *Prophecies of Paul Grebner*," "a laborious *Devine*" who published at least two other apocalyptic tracts during the previous volatile decade (1). Like Richard Hakluyt, though in a prophetic rather than an empirical mode, Grebner functions as a propagandist for a new mapping of the Mediterranean with the English fleet in the lead.⁹⁰ Malta's transformation into an island of prophecy, whether deriving from the island or directed towards it, thus coalesces as part of the accelerating British imperialist efforts in the Mediterranean.

As such, by the time Evans and Chevers began their unintentional journey towards Malta, the imaginary mapping of the island from a radical sectarian perspective had shifted to a region primed for prophecy. As we have seen, prior to Evans and Chevers's thoroughly documented sojourn, such prophesying for an English audience was associated with Maltese monstrosity, as in the infamous antichrist from the tracts of the 1630s and 1640s, and Maltese corruption, as in the tracts of the 1650s and 1660s focusing on the Knights in their decline. The full-page title for the first edition of Evans and Chevers's *Relation* accordingly constructs an itinerary for their inadvertent landing in Malta based on the Mediterraneanist logic of aggrandisement and deprecation. In the first of three paragraphs, Malta is presented as a place of intense pain, cruelty, and death, with the word "suffering" reiterated three times within the first sentence. The "Inhabitants" of the island are characterized as inhospitable apostates. Yet, Malta as an imaginary geography for Christian missionaries, and particularly missionaries from radical Protestant strains such as the Quakers, offered a positive significance as, to reference the second paragraph of the title, the island where "Paul suffered shipwrack there among the barbarous people," as recorded in Acts 27 and 28. While some scholars have quibbled over the association of St. Paul with Malta, the view of the island as one of the earliest and most

sustained sites of Christianity – from 59 CE, approximately five centuries before Christian missionaries began their conversion of the Anglo-Saxons (597 CE) – was firmly entrenched in the early modern geographies of the region. This precedent would certainly appeal to Quaker missionaries such as Evans and Chevers, who like other radical Protestants sought to restore the “primitive church” of Paul’s era to replace the accretions and distortions of the Roman Church. Evans and Chevers thus become manifestations of Paul, with the Maltese people caught in the Mediterraneanist stasis of “barbarous people” from over 1,600 years ago. Concomitantly, the two English women emphasize their calling to “save” the Maltese people. They declare upon disembarking from the ship, “there came many to see us, and we call’d them to repentance, and many of them were tender; but the whole City is given to Idolatry” (3). Evans and Chevers continue to condemn the Maltese in this vein as part of their proselytizing project. Being cast into the prison of the Inquisition thus fits perfectly, if not congenially, into their layered mapping of the island as an archetypal site of present cruelty and past purity.

Given the layered geography of the tract’s title page, how does Malta figure in the narratives, prophecies, and poetry produced by Evans and Chevers for this compendium? To start, the vantage point assumed in the primary narrative is very much that of a “walker” rather than a “voyeur.”⁹¹ This narrative moves from Plymouth in the south of England, to Leghorn on the northwest coast of the Italian peninsula, towards Alexandria with a significant deviation into the Grand Harbor at Malta, to the house of the English Consul on the island, into the streets of the harbor city where the two women distributed Quaker pamphlets, and eventually to the council chambers of the Inquisition. However, their movement towards the central space of their *Relation* – “an inner room in the Inquisition” (6) – is not open to radical alterity, as we saw with Mary Fisher (“she that spake to the Great Turk”). Despite the English Consul’s clear warning that “there was an Inquisition” in Malta (3), Evans and Chevers persist in their illegal proselytizing. Moreover, up to this point in their narrative the Maltese people remain objects of deprecation even as Paul’s mission remains a topic of aggrandisement. Perhaps because they were “[u]nused to Mediterranean crowds,”⁹² the sight of “the walls of the City . . . full of people” with “some [who] stood on the top of the walls” to observe the arrival of the “Dutch ship” in which they traveled presents the first of many moments of cultural dissonance (2, 3). Rather than expressing incomprehension or a desire to comprehend Maltese culture on its own terms, the English women assume the waiting crowd stared “as if something had troubled them” (2). In the

balance of their narrative, the Maltese people intrude only as anonymous pronouns: “them” (3), “they” (31), and “some” (37).

The gendered spatial motif of the Maltese nunnery, to which Evans and Chevers are frequently invited, furthers this representation of corrupt confinement in the name of religion. Their enclosure in an unbearably “hot room” (8, 13), which also becomes a highly gendered space as the language of domesticity imbues their missionary activity, directly counters the promised place of honor in the nunnery if they convert to Catholicism (75). The Inquisitor’s recourse to “[a]ll the men and women of Malta” continuously praying for their conversion correspondingly stigmatizes the native population as wicked (14). When the Inquisitor appears as the head of the penal panopticon – in their words, “the Inquisitor came up into a Tower, and lookt down upon us as if he would have eaten us” (29) – we reach the climax of this proto-feminist/proto-imperialist “epic.”⁹³ By the conclusion of the 1662 narrative, “Written in the Inquisition-Prison in the Isle of *Malta*” (44), Evans and Chevers are predicting their arrival in Rome to complete the path of Paul (41).

Having become a *cause célèbre* in the wake of their published relation, Evans and Chevers’s release was obtained through English Catholics contacted by Fox.⁹⁴ Despite his claims otherwise, Baker’s role in their release was minimal. As we have noted, after three weeks in Malta, he departed for Gibraltar, was imprisoned upon his return to England in early 1662, and eventually enslaved in Morocco from 1679 to 1682. Because the women were not detained until they died, as implied by the 1662 title page, the 1663 edition offers a revised title page to celebrate “[h]ow God at last by his Almighty Power effected their Deliverance.”⁹⁵ In this edition Malta is conflated with the Inquisition as a place of “Great Tryals,” “Cruel Sufferings,” and “Confinement.” The reference to St. Paul is noticeably absent from this title, which not only confirms Malta as a malign locale in the English imagination, but further effaces the agency of the two Quaker women, who identify primarily with masculine prophets. The penultimate “[B]rief Account of their further Tryals, and how God at last by his Almighty Power effected their Deliverance, and brought them again into the Land of their Nativity” (228–77), written alternately by Evans and Chevers, provides an outward itinerary from Malta, to Tangiers (where the two women again sought to proselytize the “natives”), and lastly to England.⁹⁶ At Tangiers, they strove to convert “the *Moors* their Enemies” (259), but were prevented from doing so by the Governor of the besieged fort.⁹⁷ The structural revisions to the tract nevertheless curb the subversive prophetic voice achieved by the two women on Malta, with *A Short Relation from George Robinson, of*

the Sufferings that befel him in his Journey to Jerusalem having the last word here.⁹⁸

The containment of Evans and Chevers's radical agency as women missionaries, which overlapped with their complicity in the beginnings of the anglocentric imperialist project on a global scale, continues in the third edition, retitled *A Brief History of The Voyage of Katharine Evans and Sarah Cheevers, to the Island of Malta* (1715). This title page restores the emphasis on "the Island of Malta, Where the Apostle Paul Suffer'd Shipwreck," though the focus on the Inquisition in this Enlightenment history is subordinated to a linear chronology of the women's experiences. Stressing that "[t]he former RELATION, out of which the following HISTORY is collected, was with much Difficulty written, by the Hands of these poor Sufferers, Katharine Evans and Sarah Cheevers, in the Cruel Inquisition of Malta, wherein they were deprived of Ink and Paper for the greatest Part of their Confinement there" (iii–iv), the editor demotes the women from the position of authorship by substantially revising their account. Basing his comments on the restored patriarchalism of the second period of Quakerism and the intensifying skepticism of the Enlightenment towards prophetic discourse, this editor treats Evans and Chevers's narrative as mere "source" material for a "history" that effaces the women's agency as "Publishers of Truth." As the editor of the third edition condescends in his "Preface to the Reader," "The Historical Part hereof being thus interwoven in their Letters and Epistles, and brokenly related through the whole, render'd it very obscure and hard in the former Impression to come to a true Understanding thereof: tho' considering the great Disadvantages they had in their close Confinement, it was probably done as well as they could" (iv–v). Even the women's first-person voice is rendered in the third person! Thus, while they are quoted selectively in this "history," their representation of their heroic resistance, providential power, and discursive agency is effectively muted. Moreover, only their narrative accounts are mined for quotes, whereas their doctrinal pronouncements, manifested through their visions, dreams, and verse, are completely erased.⁹⁹ Ironically, just as Evans and Chevers confronted the Maltese people with the imperialist combination of absolute incomprehension and complete confidence in the superiority of their foreign cultural system, English male editors progressively mute the women's material and discursive agency by deeming their original work incomprehensible and subordinating it to the arguably masculinist historical method. Hence, the silencing of the Maltese people by Evans and Chevers in their original narrative and the silencing of Evans and Chevers by subsequent male editors together epitomize the complicated cultural, economic, and social

parameters of the “missionary position” on the eve of England’s accelerating imperialist project.

The next chapter similarly focuses on the shift towards the Enlightenment, beginning with the emergence of rationalist feminism at the end of the seventeenth century and moving towards the more fully achieved imperialist project of the eighteenth century. By the turn of the eighteenth century, therefore, the qualifier “proto-” no longer applies to “feminist” or “imperialist” in the English tradition. A number of these first feminists initiated the enduring model of feminist orientalism by rejecting the patriarchalism of earlier male travel writers while retaining their imperialist biases. Nevertheless, a counterdiscourse from a few early feminists – first and most fully, the playwright and prolific prose writer Delarivier Manley; subsequently and perhaps more influentially, the celebrated travel writer Mary Wortley Montagu – challenged the projection of patriarchal abuses onto the Islamic world. As we shall see, Manley highlighted in her public stage plays and her popular prose fiction how abuses such as domestic immurement and polygamy, *contra* developing orientalist tendencies, actually characterized *England’s* patriarchal culture on the eve of the Enlightenment.

CHAPTER 4

The female wits and the genealogy of feminist orientalism

In a frequently cited essay, Joyce Zonana characterizes “feminist orientalism” as the displacement of “the source of patriarchal oppression onto an ‘Oriental,’ ‘Mahometan’ society, enabling British readers to contemplate local problems without questioning their own self-definition as Westerners and Christians.”¹ This articulation of feminism and orientalism is epitomized by Mary Wollstonecraft’s *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), which pronounces,

Thus Milton describes our first frail mother; though when he tells us that women are formed for softness and sweet attractive grace, I cannot comprehend his meaning, unless, in *the true Mahometan strain*, he meant to deprive us of souls, and insinuate that we were beings only designed by sweet attractive grace, and docile blind obedience, to gratify the senses of man when he can no longer soar on the wing of contemplation (emphasis added).²

Wollstonecraft’s *Vindication*, that is, confirms the tendency within anglo-centric feminism towards the displacement of patriarchal oppression from the normative “freeborn” English woman onto an orientalized other.³ Such distancing premises the self-definition of the English nation as exclusively western and Christian, with its normative woman incorporated into the cultural and racial exclusions constituting the generic, though implicitly masculinist, subject position. As “the founding text of Western liberal feminism,” Wollstonecraft’s *Vindication* thus presents “the fullest explicit feminist orientalist perspective.”⁴ Yet, to assume that feminist orientalism begins with Wollstonecraft, or that the alliance between feminism and orientalism is inherent to the English tradition, ignores the previous century of feminist debates. As I shall argue, this omission of the “first feminists” from the end of the seventeenth century through the first quarter of the eighteenth century results in an overly monolithic view of feminism and orientalism as both emerged into increasing prominence.⁵

Billie Melman, in her survey of early modern English women and the “Middle East,” addresses this ideological instability by demonstrating that “in the eighteenth century there emerged an alternative view of the Orient which developed, during the nineteenth century, alongside the dominant one.”⁶ Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, who traveled to the Ottoman empire as an ambassador’s wife from 1716 to 1718 and composed a series of literary letters about those travels, most famously voiced this alternative.⁷ Melman concludes Montagu innovated a “paradigm of similarity in difference” to counter the orientalist patriarchal stereotype of the eastern woman as ineluctably other. Montagu and her successors “developed a geography of the Western (and Eastern) identity that was far more complex than the so-called orientalist geography.”⁸ However, this survey not only dismisses seventeenth-century Quaker women’s accounts of their itineraries through the Ottoman empire (see Chapter 3) as outside a “secular tradition of female travel”; it also fails to register writers such as Delarivier Manley, who, along with the other “female wits” and feminist polemicists of the turn of the eighteenth century, challenged the patriarchal orientalist travel writers of the previous century.⁹

In responding to such elisions, this chapter traces the uneven articulation of feminism and orientalism in late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century English feminist debates, as well as in the plays and prose fiction of the era’s women writers. As I propose, to appreciate the scope of Montagu’s achievement, we must recognize how it is embedded in the *œuvre* of her immediate precursor, the playwright and popular prose writer Delarivier Manley, as well as in the travels of earlier British diplomats’ and merchants’ wives.¹⁰ My focus on the neglected Manley rather than the iconic Montagu thus resituates the “paradigm of similarity in difference” identified by Melman within the intertextual dialogue between those late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century English women entering the formerly male-dominated worlds of the London theater and the literary marketplace. This chapter also places this body of imaginative writing within a genealogy encompassing the feminist polemics at the turn of the eighteenth century and the masculinist travel narratives of the seventeenth century. In documenting this genealogy, I therefore seek to avoid promoting Manley as a new icon for studies of feminism and orientalism in early modern England. Instead, Manley and Montagu together articulate a counterdiscourse to orientalist patriarchalism and its corollary, feminist orientalism, even as both writers fail to offer the genuinely “transcultural perspective” Zonana recommends.¹¹

THE LONGUE DURÉE OF FEMINIST ORIENTALISM

Instantiated by the masculinist travel literature of the seventeenth century, the image of the “oppressed” Muslim woman became the basis for the uneasy marriage between English women’s protests against gender oppression at the turn of the eighteenth century and their complicity with the orientalist and racist ideologies that supported England’s emerging global empire. In the decades prior to Quaker women’s missions to continental Europe, the Americas, and the Ottoman empire, English women were barred from foreign travel. As Fynes Moryson pronounces in *An Itinerary . . . Containing his Ten Yeeres Travell* (1617), which begins in the British Isles and winds through the breadth of the Ottoman empire, such itineraries were interdicted for his female counterparts, deemed “for suspicion of chastity . . . most unfit for this course.”¹² However, this ban on English women’s travel did not preclude their presence in the spate of travelogues written by English men such as Moryson. In particular, the lot of purportedly enslaved Muslim wives was frequently compared with that of “freeborn” English women, who were celebrated in the patriarchal discourse of the period as living in a “paradise” for gender relations.¹³ As Kenneth Parker points out, the embellished reports of the Ottoman sultan’s absolutist domestic and expansionist foreign policies “reinforced a pre-existing stereotype of the Turk, as [to quote the *Oxford English Dictionary*] ‘a cruel, rigorous, or tyrannical man; any one behaving as a barbarian or savage; one who treats his wife hardly; a bad-tempered or unmanageable man. Often with alliterative appellation, *terrible Turk*.’” Although Parker does not draw attention to the gendered dynamic shaping this definition, the texts by male travelers he adduces attest to the salience for nascent English feminism of defining a “Turk” as “one who treats his wife hardly.”¹⁴

William Biddulph presents a typical example of this conflation of patriarchalism and orientalism in *The Travels of Certain Englishmen into Africa, Asia, Troy . . . and to Sundry Other Places* (1609).¹⁵ In this frequently reprinted text, Biddulph sets the stage with the dictum that western women should feel grateful for their gendered status quo because, according to him, Muslim women must subsist as virtual slaves.¹⁶ As he intones to his intended audience in England, “Here wives may learn to love their husbands, when they shall read in what slavery women live in other countries, and in what awe and subjection to their husbands, and what liberty and freedom they themselves enjoy” (85). In a paradox constitutive of orientalist patriarchal discourse then – and now – Biddulph evokes the image of the industrious, albeit enslaved, eastern woman to threaten what he describes as the “many

idle housewives in England” (89). More ominously, after detailing the purported ritual by which a Muslim man upon his return home is greeted with servile bows from his wives, Biddulph predicts, “[i]f the like order were in England, women would be more dutiful and faithful to their husbands than many of them are” (95). Similarly, William Lithgow, in *The Totall Discourse, of the Rare Adventures, and Painefull Peregrinations of Long Nineteene Yeares Travayles* (1632), opines that Turkish wives “are not far from the like servitude [of slaves], for the men (by the Qur’an) are admitted to marry as many women as they will, or their ability can keep.” Lithgow offers another instance of the negative comparison with the orientalized woman to keep English women in their place.¹⁷

A rare exception to the unrelenting patriarchal orientalism in seventeenth-century English male travel writing, Joseph Pitts, enslaved for sixteen years in the Ottoman province of Algeria, roundly critiqued the misrepresentation of Muslim gender mores by writers such as Biddulph and Lithgow. In *A True and Faithful Account of the Religion and Manners of the Mohammetans, with an Account of the Author’s Being Taken Captive* (1704), he counters,

It hath been reported that a Mohammetan may have as many wives as he pleaseth, and I believe it is so [*sic*], yet there is not one in a thousand hath more than one wife, except it be in the country, where some here and there may have two wives, yet I never knew but one which had as many as three wives.¹⁸

In fact, the Qur’anic injunction limits men to four wives, and only insofar as they can treat all four wives equally – an impossibility Islamic feminists argue renders this injunction moot.¹⁹ Hence, even Pitts’s defense relies on an orientalist misconception. Barring this limited exception amongst English male travel writers, the spurious image of Muslim wives as slaves remained one Montagu felt compelled to correct in her *Turkish Embassy Letters*, as when she views “the Turkish women as the only free people in the empire” because they control their persons and property upon marriage (72).²⁰ As the genealogy I have traced thus far reveals, the orientalist patriarchal discourse elaborated by English male travel writers of the seventeenth century set the terms against which the first feminists at the turn of the eighteenth century necessarily established their counterdiscourse.

The “first feminists” in the English tradition, according to Hilda Smith, tended to be educated, primarily middle rank, and often politically conservative women whose perception of their relative inequality *vis-à-vis* their male cohort contributed to their program of “women’s rights.” As arguably “England’s first feminist,” Mary Astell stood at the forefront of those writers

from 1690 to 1710 who emphasized her countrywomen's oppression as wives.²¹ She sought to provide alternatives to patriarchal marriage in her inaugural manifesto, *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies* (1694), which presented a controversial blueprint for Protestant England's first female college. This treatise was followed by *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies, Part II* (1697) in response to patriarchal resistance to her initial proposal. Astell's final feminist treatise, *Some Reflections upon Marriage* (1700), developed her ongoing critique of the double standard structuring English gender relations. Throughout her *œuvre*, Astell challenged the deep-seated social liabilities constraining English women during the early modern period, the most devastating of which was the doctrine of "coverture," whereby wives remained under the "authority and protection" of their husbands.

As the seventeenth-century compendium *The Lawes Resolutions of Womens Rights* (1632) details, "[e]very feme covert [or married woman under English common law] is *quodammodo* [in a certain way] an infant, for see her power even in that which is most her own," a list which includes the husband's ownership of her inheritance, wages, and rents. This condition of legal nonage continued until the end of the nineteenth century, when the British Parliament finally passed the Married Women's Property Act.²² By contrast, Montagu stresses that Muslim women were under no such disadvantage, as "those ladies that are rich having all their money in their own hands, which they take with them upon a divorce with an addition which he [the divorcing husband] is obliged to give them" (72).²³ Montagu, like Manley, was intensely aware of the constraints the doctrine of coverture placed on women, as she possessed no property of her own during her marriage despite having been born into a wealthy aristocratic family.²⁴ Manley, for her part, had been seduced into a bigamous marriage by her conniving elder cousin, whom her father had appointed as her guardian, but who betrayed this trust by confiscating her estate as her *de facto* husband. In terms of women's economic rights, then, Islamic law as applied in the Ottoman empire was far more advanced than England's common law for almost a century past the publication of Wollstonecraft's *Vindication*.

Much admired by the younger Montagu, Astell was asked in 1724 to prepare a preface for the *Turkish Embassy Letters*. As she records, "[t]he noble Author had the goodness to lend me her M.S. [manuscript] to satisfy my Curiosity in some enquirys I made concerning her Travels." Astell therefore had access to a sound cross-cultural critique of English marriage customs, with specific reference to the relative benefits of Islamic law. In her preface, she condemns the malice and ignorance of "Male Travels," including the

patriarchal orientalist writers surveyed above. Against their aspersions, she urges her readers to “be better Christians than to look upon her [i.e., Montagu, and by extension Astell] with an evil eye.”²⁵ Although Astell adheres to a Christian standard, set in opposition to the largely eastern tradition of the “evil eye,” she refrains from explicitly establishing Islam as a negative foil. In addition, while in her earlier polemics she equated English women’s oppression under patriarchy with slavery, figured “strictly as a metaphor,” she here refrains from casting Muslim wives as literal slaves, unlike the patriarchal orientalist travel writers.²⁶ This rhetorical choice is significant, as the polemic Astell initiated at the end of the seventeenth century was soon displaced by a number of unambiguously orientalist feminists.

An Essay in Defence of the Female Sex . . . Written by a Lady (1696) complicates the retrospective view of a feminist consensus in early modern England.²⁷ Although described as the “first imitation” of Astell’s *Serious Proposal*, the pamphlet counters Astell’s “Christian Platonist belief” with “the language of political libertarianism” characteristic of the 1688 Whig Revolution.²⁸ As Vivien Jones in her survey of eighteenth-century feminisms concludes, by “[u]sing a recurrent analogy with anti-slavery arguments . . . the writer points out the hypocrisy of a legal system based on rights of liberty and property which are denied to half the population.” Nonetheless, such “anti-slavery arguments,” when applied to the Islamic as opposed to the transatlantic case, purvey a form of orientalism specific to emerging liberal feminism.²⁹ In particular, after pursuing an astute historicist, as opposed to the traditional moral, etiology for female subordination, the author of *An Essay in Defence of the Female Sex* determines,

As the World grew more Populous, and Mens Necessities whetted their Inventions, so it increas’d their Jealousy, and sharpen’d their Tyranny over us, till by degrees, it came to that height of Severity, I may say Cruelty, it is now at in all the Eastern parts of the World, where the Women, like our Negroes, in our Western Plantations, are born slaves, and live Prisoners all their Lives. (210)

This negative comparison of the paradoxically oppressed “freeborn” English woman with the women who “are born slaves” in the “Eastern parts of the World” uncritically repeats the orientalist fallacies of earlier male travel writers, who instituted the division between the supposedly despotic gender relations in the Islamic world and the reputedly paradisaical conditions for women in England. The *Defence’s* references to eastern despotism and “our Negroes” thus carries a double valence rooted in the specific historical conditions of late seventeenth-century England. On the one hand, as Nabil Matar demonstrates, the slavery of English men (and women) still had

currency in Islamdom; on the other, the model of racial slavery St. Clair Drake documents concurrently emerged to support England's accelerating imperialist project.³⁰ In vacillating between these imperialist registers, the *Defence* establishes its feminism by positioning the imagined slavery of Muslim wives and the actual slavery of Africans in the "New World" in diametrical opposition to the "freeborn" English(wo)man. Rather than advancing a comparative feminist critique of global male supremacy, the author of the *Defence* allies herself with the orientalism of her countrymen to advance the imperialist thrust of English feminism.

The feminist orientalist opposition between Turkish women's "natural" slavery and the "unnatural" constraints English patriarchy placed on ostensibly "freeborn" English women was reiterated in polemical, literary, and legal texts from the end of the seventeenth century through the eighteenth century. In the same year as the aforementioned *Defence*, Elizabeth Singer Rowe prefaced her *Poems on Several Occasions* (1696) with the declaration, "We complain, and we think with reason, that our *Fundamental Constitutions* are destroyed; that here's a plain and an open design to render us meer *Slaves*, perfect *TURKISH WIVES*, without *Properties*, or *Sense*, or *Souls*; and are forc'd to Protest against it, and appeal to all the World, whether these are not *notorious* Violations on the *Liberties of Free-born English Women?*" At mid century, *The Hardships of the English Laws in Relation to Wives* (1735) cited the alleged despotism of "the Grand Seignior in his Seraglio" to argue "[t]hat the Estate of Wives is more disadvantageous than *Slavery* itself." Likewise, John Duncombe, in his wry defense of female writers, *The Femi-niad* (1754), contrasts "[t]he freeborn sons of *Britain's* polish'd isle" with "that dreary plain, / In loathsome pomp, where eastern tyrants reign, / Where each fair neck the yoke of slav'ry galls, / Clos'd in a proud seraglio's gloomy walls, / And taught, that level'd with the brutal kind, / Nor sense, nor souls to women are assign'd."³¹

Yet, it bears repeating that this increasingly hegemonic orientalist discourse, particularly when linked with nascent English feminism, continued to be contested during the early decades of the eighteenth century. From the late sixteenth century, the English frequently allied with the Ottomans and other Islamic powers in their struggles with competing western empires, such as the Habsburgs (see Chapter 1). The 1699 Treaty of Karlowitz did not result in an immediate decline of the Ottoman empire, though it did mark the farthest extent of their westward expansion. This transitional period from the turn of the eighteenth century accordingly presents a shifting balance of power, not a *fait accompli*, for the faltering empire of the Ottomans and the emerging empire of the British. The feminist orientalist

debates of the period analogously hinge not simply on the emergence of English women as public writers, particularly for the stage, but also on the representation of eastern, especially Muslim, women as “oppressed” foils for “freeborn” English women. As we shall see, Manley, by going against the grain of emergent feminist orientalism, details numerous scenarios to undermine this false dichotomy, which actually confines English women who are co-opted by imperialist allegiances into supporting patriarchal agendas.

THE FEMALE WITS OF 1696 AND THE DRAMA
OF CULTURAL DIFFERENCE

Manley first appeared as a public writer in 1696 as one of several women who presented a cluster of original plays in one season – a “first” for English theatrical history. These plays include Catharine Trotter’s *Agnes de Castro*; Mary Pix’s *Ibrahim, the Thirteenth Emperor of the Turks* and *The Spanish Wives*; and Manley’s *The Lost Lover; or, The Jealous Husband* and *The Royal Mischief*.³² Anticipating Montagu’s *Turkish Embassy Letters* by a generation, these female wits, according to Jacqueline Pearson, “found Turkey and other Islamic countries profitable for images of power relations between the sexes, for potentates, harem women, sultanas, mutes and eunuchs.”³³ As Bridget Orr concurs, “female playwrights of the 1690s were interested in the seraglio not just as a site of sexual oppression but as a means of exploring the peculiar power of Oriental ‘cabals of women.’”³⁴ Expanding this parallel, I submit that those women whose works number among the “at least forty plays” for the London stage between 1660 and 1714 “set in Asia or the Levant” located themselves within the genealogy of feminist orientalism detailed above. Hence, these plays do not invariably reiterate patriarchal representations of the harem, nor do they present unambiguously feminist challenges to patriarchal orientalism. Rather, they vacillate between the consolidation of feminist orientalism and the counterorientalist challenges from within the feminist camp. As the genealogy of feminist orientalism reveals, dramatizing “the *enslavement* of women in exotic despotisms” (to add crucial emphasis) provides only one side of the debate amongst the “first feminists” at the turn of the century: the explicitly orientalist side epitomized by *An Essay in Defence of the Female Sex*.³⁵ On the other side, Manley disputes the orientalist assumption that slavery is inherent in eastern women’s experience, and therefore foreign to the condition of “freeborn” English women. As she testifies, domestic immurement – including *de facto* polygamy – actually determined the condition of English women such as herself.

In specifying the uneven articulation between feminism and orientalism during this epochal theatrical season, I begin with the immediate afterlife of Aphra Behn, virtually the sole woman dramatist for the public stage from 1670 to 1689. As Paula Backscheider documents, the 1696 publication of *The Histories and Novels of the Late Ingenious Mrs. Behn* seven years after Behn's death, along with the debut performances of Behn's *The Younger Brother* and Thomas Southerne's adaptation of her *Oroonoko*, "made the 1695–96 season unique – absolutely unique – in British history." Moreover, *The Histories and Novels* includes at least one source for the 1696 plays, the Iberian intrigue *Agnes de Castro* (first published in 1688). Incorporating Behn into the company of the 1696 female wits results in the calculation that "[o]ver one-third of all the new plays that season were by women or adapted from women's work." As Backscheider emphasizes, this achievement had not been matched by the end of the twentieth century!³⁶

Behn bequeathed an ambivalent literary persona to the women writers in her wake, who were equally inspired by her prolificacy and deterred by her reputation for profligacy. These female wits also followed Behn in dramatizing cross-cultural difference to negotiate their transgressions of patriarchal norms. Along with the more familiar epithet "Astrea," for instance, Behn by the end of the seventeenth century carried the more dubious designation of "Loves great *Sultana*."³⁷ The Restoration allegory of Charles II's court by way of western fantasies about the Ottoman sultan's seraglio carried over to the stage debut of Manley, Pix, and Trotter, who purposefully defined themselves as heirs of Behn.³⁸ Moreover, like her, they often wavered between their oppositional stance as women writers and their complicity with an anglocentric discourse of empire.

As the first production from the female wits to be staged, Catharine Trotter's *Agnes de Castro* – based on Behn's novella of the same name – locates alternately misogynist and feminist stances towards gender politics in the "exotic" setting of the Iberian peninsula. Trotter's dedicatory letter, where she defends herself as a woman writer, frames the published version of the play. Manley's commendatory poem also establishes Trotter as part of a burgeoning canon of women writers.³⁹ The play nevertheless departs from this feminist framework by developing a highly misogynist portrayal of the female villain, Elvira, as the primary instigator of its tragedy. This interpretation marks a distinct departure from Behn's novella, where Elvira, though a scorned woman, is not the primary force behind the plot's intrigues. Trotter's representation of Elvira and her brother, Alvaro, further introduces an orientalist element into the Iberian setting of the play, one completely overlooked in scholarship on the female wits. In particular, the

villains, El-vira and Al-varo, are the only characters whose names evoke the residual Islamism of seventeenth-century Iberian culture.⁴⁰ The feminist heroines of the play, Agnes and Constantia, bear unambiguously Roman names. The heroes' names, Antonio and Lorenzo, are similarly Italianate rather than Islamic. Trotter's focus on this orientalized Iberian setting can be traced not only to largely masculinist English literary fashions at the turn of the century, but also to the material conditions of early English imperialist efforts, albeit failed ones, in Islamic regions: her father died, when Trotter was only five years old, "on a expedition to Tangiers in 1684." She therefore had a personal stake in the ventures of the Turkey Company.⁴¹ Such connections to the East also touched the lives and writings of Pix and Manley.

Mary Pix's 1696 *œuvre*, which includes a novel and two plays, broaches more directly the link between feminism and orientalism.⁴² Her debut play, *Ibrahim, The Thirteenth [sic] Emperour of the Turks*, is by her own admission based on "Sir Paul Ricaut [Rycaut]'s *Continuation of the Turkish History*," the influential compendium begun by Richard Knolles in 1603.⁴³ In her preface to the play, Pix reveals the relatively easy access a woman of her class – like Trotter and Manley, fallen gentry – had to standard scholarly sources such as *The Turkish History*, which in her case she read "at a Relations House in the Country." However, she also emphasizes the gendered status of writing in early modern England when she remarks, "for I am very sensible [of] those that will be so unkind to Criticize upon what falls from a Womans Pen." Specifically, because she no longer had *The Turkish History* at hand, she erred when listing Ibrahim as the thirteenth of his lineage. In confirming her historical claims, she duly corrects this lapse, pointing out, "I never saw the Book afterwards till the Play was Printed, and then I found Ibrahim was the Twelfth Emperour" (sig. A3). The unsigned prologue to the play, presumably by Pix, also stresses the firm basis of her play in historical scholarship and the fickle support for women's writing at the end of the seventeenth century.

Ibrahim's reign (1640–48) corresponded to the peak of the sultanate of women, "in which strong-willed women wielded power" in a manner excoriated by Ottoman and western European men alike.⁴⁴ Like Hürrem and Safiye in the sixteenth century (see Chapter 1), Kösem, mother of Ibrahim, and Turhan, mother of Ibrahim's eldest son Mehmed IV (1648–87), were linchpins in the battles over succession that rocked the Ottoman court of the mid seventeenth century. In a parallel Rycaut emphasizes in his chapter on "The Reign of Sultan Ibrahim, Twelfth Emperor of the Turks," England was experiencing similar struggles over succession during this period: first,

with the execution of Charles I by the Puritans in 1649 and, subsequently, with the Exclusion Crisis barring the Catholic James II from the throne in the late 1670s. In this historical narrative, “the coming of a Foreign Prince” (49) – in the Ottoman case the Tartar Khan who stood next in line for succession should the reputedly impotent Ibrahim fail to produce an heir – is presented as a grave danger to the integrity of the empire. Such concerns were rife in England during the same era as collateral heirs – specifically, the German Hanovers – were poised to ensure a Protestant, though not a lineal, succession in England. Ibrahim’s sensual dissipation while sultan, following his imprisonment as heir apparent, also resonates with the excesses of Charles II’s Restoration court, which English commentators frequently blamed for the crisis that led to the forced abdication of James II.⁴⁵

Throughout the chapter on Ibrahim in *The Turkish History*, women behind the throne become a disruptive force resulting in the assassination of the sultan, who is pointedly compared to Charles I (79). Nonetheless, it bears repeating that shifts in patterns of succession in the Ottoman court resulted not from women’s wiles, as misogynist commentators east and west have presumed, but from structural changes in Ottoman society. As Leslie Peirce documents, the shift to a centralized government meant “[s]eniority [in succession] . . . replaced the concept of the will of God exercising itself through one of several sons besting his brothers for the throne, often in open conflict.” As a result, collateral heirs were placed in “the *kafes*, or ‘cage,’ where they lived in fear of their lives” until that uncertain day when they might rule as sultan.⁴⁶ The poem prefacing the chapter on Ibrahim in *The Turkish History* dramatizes this scenario: “I that of Ott’man blood remain alone, / Call’d from a Prison, to ascend a Throne. / My easy mind I bend to soft Delights, / Hateing th’unpleasent thoughts of Naval Fights. / Till mad with wanton Loves, I fall at first / Slave to my owne, then to my peoples lust” (48). The chapter’s finale tempers the moral judgment of its epigraph with political cognizance of the consequences involved in sequestering the heir apparent: “’tis no wonder, if wanting the advantages of seeing and practising in the World, he should neither have studied men, nor been experienced in the Art of Government” (79). This analysis is not applied to the condition of similarly sequestered women, though English feminists from Astell to Wollstonecraft frequently drew parallels to the condition of constrained men (particularly sheltered aristocrats) and the generality of women. In “Sir Paul Ricaut’s *Continuation of the Turkish History*,” women remain schemers, sexual objects, and besmirched victims.

Pix’s dramatization of Ibrahim’s dissipation and destruction presents a crucial link between the confirmed patriarchalism of the historical record

and the potential orientalism of the feminist response. She directly borrows Rycaut's representation of the political scheming of "the Queen-Mother"; the sultan's "excessive use of Women"; his powerful and perverse mistresses, including Shechir Para [Sheker in Pix]; and the cunningly resistant, but finally defeated mufti's daughter (50, 51, 58, 76). The play nevertheless confuses the historical record by recasting Sheker Pera as formerly "Favourite Mistress to *Ibrahim*," now his procuress, whose Iago-like malice rebounds on Morena, the naïve daughter of the mufti. Further complicating this familiar plot is Sheker Pera's deflected anger over Amurat's refusal to reciprocate her aggressive desire. Amurat is "General of the Emperours Forces" (sig. A4^v). He, of course, is in love with the virtuous Morena. In another significant deviation from the historical record, the devious eunuch and devoted servant of Sheker Pera, Achmet, enables the string of rapes, rebellions, murders, and suicides closing the play. Pix's propensity to seize "every opportunity to defend women against attacks upon their character and intelligence" therefore hinges on Amurat's gallant disavowal of polygamy in his courtship of the virtuous Morena. As he declares, "though our Law allows Plurality of Wives / And Mistresses, yet I will never practise it" (9). Edna Steeves concludes that this revision constitutes a feminist critique of patriarchal privilege.⁴⁷ Yet, this privilege is clearly projected onto the Islamic other in the characteristic pattern of feminist orientalism: displacement, followed by distancing, which enables self-definition. Pix's debut play enacts the shift from heroics to sentiment by drawing together the emergent discourses of feminism and orientalism in a distinctly Whig performance.⁴⁸ Whereas Manley explicitly contests this feminist orientalist conjunction, Pix may be one of its earliest formulators.

The partisan logic of feminist orientalism informs Pix's play from its first scene, which proposes the courtly love ideal as intrinsic to western European culture and hence a foil for the supposed sexual tyranny of the East.⁴⁹ This staging begins with the sultan inspecting a group of twenty choice virgins Sheker Pera has gathered for him; he finally indicates his consort for the evening by dropping "his Handkerchief, which the Lady falling prostrate, kisses, and takes up, and is led off by two Eunuchs" (4). Montagu scoffed at such orientalist fantasies in her *Turkish Embassy Letters*, remarking that "the Sultana Hafise, favourite of the last Emperour Mustafa [I]," assured her "that the story of the Sultan's throwing a handkerchief is altogether fabulous" (113, 116). As Malcolm Jack indicates in his gloss to this passage, "[t]he reference is to an incident, recorded by Rycaut, in which the . . . Grand Signor [purportedly] threw his handkerchief to one of the women in the Seraglio as a sign that she should come to his bed"

(178, n. 225). As Montagu clarifies, Rycout and his ilk “never fail to give you an account of the women, which ’tis certain they never saw” (104). Yet, in Pix’s play this gesture frames a patently feminist orientalist conclusion: “How different . . . is this from the *European* stories; / I have read there, twenty Heroes for the Ladies / Burn and die, here twenty Ladies for the Hero” (4). Coming from Sheker Pera – who in Pix’s play combines the political agency of the sultan’s mother, the sexual dissipation of his concubines, and the patriarchal identification of his procuress – this negative comparison becomes tragically intensified. Echoing Pix’s novel of 1696, *The Inhumane Cardinal*, it also becomes intertwined with anti-feminist conclusions about the untrustworthiness of female confidantes (in the novel, a betrayal lodged in the “exotic” milieu of Catholic Italy).

Morena, by contrast, qualifies as a feminist heroine, first, due to her education, which elevates philosophy and history over the “little Arts to please” condemned from Astell to Wollstonecraft and, second, by her commitment to inviolable chastity in the manner of its Roman exemplar, Lucretia (19). Hence, as in Trotter’s *Agnes de Castro*, a dichotomy emerges in Pix’s debut play between the misogynist representation of the orientalized villainess, Sheker Pera, and the potentially feminist representation of the idealized Morena. Again, nomenclature reinforces this dichotomy, with Sheker Pera identified as a Turkish name in Pix’s source and Morena being of Latin origin.⁵⁰ Morena, moreover, is explicitly linked with the Roman Lucretia, whom Stephanie Jed establishes as a foundational figure for western patriarchal culture.⁵¹ Pix hinges her drama on a historically accurate representation of the Islamic law whereby a woman born Muslim cannot become a slave concubine, correcting the fallacy perpetuated by seventeenth-century English male travel writers who labeled Muslim wives as slaves. However, she purveys the feminist orientalist fallacy that the patriarchal abuse of women is essentially Islamic. Her second play for the 1696 season, *The Spanish Wives*, confirms this view by setting the inherently oppressive patriarchal norms of Iberian culture, with its Islamic roots, against the reputed freedom of English women. While *The Spanish Wives* conceivably deconstructs this antithesis by rendering the Spanish governor the most tolerant male character in the play, such complexities do not temper the orientalism of Pix’s *Ibrahim*.

Pix concludes her debut play by condemning Ibrahim in explicitly orientalist and patriarchal terms as simultaneously “cruel” and “[e]ffeminate” (33), providing no hint of the historical context for this sultan’s failings. She thus departs significantly from Rycout’s *Turkish History*. Sheker Pera, confused with the historical Ibrahim’s “*Armenian Mistress*” (35), remains an

irredeemable villain as she bellows her dying curses. By contrast, Shechir Para clearly acts on the sultan's orders when she appeals to the mufti's daughter; she is not motivated by her own desires, but by her inescapable duty. Indeed, Rycout represents Shechir Para, after the meretricious bribe of "a Diamond of considerable value," being "overcome by . . . [the mufti's daughter's] Maiden Modesty" (77). She returns to the sultan with the explanation that the mufti's daughter refused his offer to enter the imperial harem knowing any children resulting from their union would be condemned to the same horrendous incarceration experienced by Ibrahim. Here the sultan intrigues only with his vizier in assaulting the mufti's daughter, whereas in Pix the arrangements are all Sheker Pera's. Finally, although plausibly feminist in her scholarship and self-assertion, a combination Manley later locates in the celebrated Muslim woman narrator of *1001 Nights*, Morena is crowned with the virtue of "Roman Ladies" rather than with Islamic values (38). Pix's feminist orientalism would deem the latter a contradiction in terms.

Situating Pix's debut play within the uneven articulation of feminism and orientalism at the turn of the eighteenth century thereby complicates the assessment that her "presentation of the Ottomans, like the account provided a decade later by Montagu, is markedly feminocentric."⁵² Instead, the character Morena's violent end recapitulates the patriarchal foundation of western culture in reiterating the Lucretia motif. By privileging the gendered model of Roman virtue, this play also perpetuates the orientalist opposition between the "oppressed" eastern woman and the "freeborn" western woman characteristic of emerging liberal feminism. In the end, Pix's elision of the multifaceted roles for women in the Ottoman court through her clichéd representation of Sheker Pera fails to offer a subversive late seventeenth-century female wit, an early eighteenth-century female power broker, or a powerful erotic feminist. By setting this villainess against the implicitly Greek, even Roman, or at least not fully Turkish Morena, she dramatizes the feminist orientalism contested simultaneously by Manley and subsequently by Montagu.

DELARIVIER MANLEY'S COUNTERORIENTALIST DEBUT

As I have proposed, Manley anticipated Montagu's challenge – not only to traditional patriarchal orientalism, but also to emerging feminist orientalism – beginning with her debut on the London stage in 1696 through the peak of her popularity as a prose writer in the early eighteenth century. The preface to the printed edition of *The Lost Lover*, Manley's debut play

for the 1696 season, situates her as a “first feminist” through its emphasis on women’s disabilities under patriarchy, a topic Manley pursued in her next three plays, her autobiographical writings, and her scandal chronicles. In this preface, Manley excuses “the little success” of her first play with the explanation that she was “so great a Stranger to the Stage,” having “lived buried in the Countrey.”⁵³ Manley’s internal exile, as she indicates in subsequent works, resulted from the bigamous marriage into which her guardian and cousin, John Manley, had lured her. Her resultant status as a socially and economically “fallen” woman kept her immured in the country for some years before she determined to make her living with her pen. Although she seems to concede defeat to her male critics by claiming, “I am now convinc’d Writing for the Stage is no way proper for a Woman, to whom all Advantages but meer Nature are refused” (sig. A^v), she finally protests that the failure of her play resulted from the hostile response of male chauvinists and not from any literary fault: “I am satisfied the bare Name of being a Woman’s play damn’d it beyond its own want of Merit” (sig. A2^v). This protest against patriarchal critics, who could include male-identified women, is repeated in Manley’s preface to her second play for the 1696 season, *The Royal Mischief*, where she demonstrates how the same “warmth” (i.e., sexual openness) condemned in her plays is praised in Dryden’s.⁵⁴ This critique of the double standard becomes a central motif in her dramatic *œuvre*.

A similar ambivalence towards women’s writing for the public stage appears in the preface to *Letters Written by Mrs. Manley*, also published in 1696 in the wake of Manley’s theatrical debut. Although signed, “Your Formost Admirer, and Most Devoted, Humble and Obedient Servant, J. H.” (sig. A4^v), the preface might plausibly be Manley’s because she elsewhere assumes a divided authorial persona in her self-representations.⁵⁵ This preface features her as a hot property in the battle of the theaters that raged in the late 1690s: “whilst Sir Thomas Skipwith and Mr. [Thomas] Betterton are eagerly contending, who shall first bring you upon the Stage, and which shall be most applauded, your Tragick or Comick Strain” (sigs. A2–A2^v).⁵⁶ However, it also represents her as falling from the patriarchal ideal by participating in the public trade of playwriting: “That Honour, Esteem and Friendship I had for Sir Roger Manley, (who has left a kind of Immortality behind him, in his Books, his Memory, and his extraordinary Daughter) . . . I confess, has most warmly oppos’d your design of Writing Plays; and more, that of Making them Publick” (sig. A3). This critique of women’s public writing finally devolves upon itself, with the anonymous writer apologizing several times for publishing Manley’s *Letters* without her

permission, especially for exposing them through the profitable medium of print (sigs. A2^v, A4).

Hence, if the preface to the *Letters* is Manley's, it offers an astute deconstruction of the opposition to women's writing; if J. H. is someone (a man?) who pirated Manley's writings, it still inscribes the potentially productive ambivalence towards women's writing in the late seventeenth-century literary marketplace.⁵⁷ Finally, if, to follow Backscheider's persuasive argument, Manley in *The Lost Lover* mocks the Orinda model whereby proper women disdain publication and confine themselves to pastoral genres à la Katherine Philips, the apparent contradiction in this preface might challenge the new limits set on women's literary production by the end of the seventeenth century.⁵⁸ For Manley, as for Behn, propriety did not determine their public writing. The preface's final assessment of Manley accordingly blends praise and regret: although the *nonpareil* of her sex, neither Fortune nor Nature "made you her choicest Favourite," a passage which concludes with the pointed question: "Why did she [Fortune] not place you in a Station as exalted as your Merit?" (sig. A4). This exculpation echoes the implicit critique of patriarchal abuse informing Manley's preface to *The Lost Lover*, a critique she would make explicit in her succeeding prose *œuvre*. The fact that *English* patriarchy condemned her to a domestic immurement based on *de facto* polygamy becomes the foundation for all her feminist writings.

Although Manley's *The Lost Lover* has received slight and often dismissive critical attention, this play is crucial for understanding the debate over feminist orientalism at the end of the seventeenth century. It is also important for tracing the development of Manley's counterorientalist critique, which later influenced Montagu's *Turkish Embassy Letters*. This play, which combines the libertinism of Restoration "wit comedy" and the pathos of eighteenth-century "sentimental comedy," hinges on the stock characters of the rustic country gentleman, the fortune-hunting rake, the amorous widow, the mild virgin, and the scorned mistress. The main plot follows two imminent May–December marriages: one between Lady Young-Love, "an Old Vain Conceited Lady," and the young rake, Wilmore, and the other between Sir Rustic Good-Heart, "an Ill-bred Country Gentleman," and Lady Young-Love's daughter, Marina (sigs. B2^v, B2). The plot is resolved by the more suitably matched Wilmore and Marina. However, as in most comedies of the era, a scorned mistress, Belira, intrudes to disrupt this neat symmetry. Ostensibly a stock character, she appears eminently justified in her rage against the rake, Wilmore. This subversion of the normative patriarchal marriage through a sympathetic representation of the "fallen woman" allies Manley's feminism with her precursor, Behn.

Manley's most significant departure from male Restoration playwrights and her fellow female wits, as Candace Brook Katz points out, involved recasting the opposition between "the 'deserted mistress,'" who "is almost invariably a dark, exotic, passionate, sexually experienced woman" and the favored "fair, witty, virginal, and rich ingenue."⁵⁹ While Katz uses the notion of "the dark woman" in the metaphorical sense, and therefore does not develop its racialized implications, Manley's reversal of gendered expectations in *The Lost Lover* additionally presents a counterorientalist edge, despite the patently English setting of the play. This orientalist topos emerges most directly, not in the character of Belira – though I concur that her rebellion against constraining gender norms resurfaces in the main character of Manley's subsequent play – but in the caricatured "old jealous Husband," Mr. Smyrna, who is identified as "a Turkey-Merchant" (1, sig. B2). Smyrna (Izmir), as Sonia Anderson documents, was the English merchants' base of operations in the Ottoman empire. Anderson references Paul Rycaut, who functioned as England's commercial representative in Smyrna from 1667 to 1678 and, as we have seen, published a widely read history upon which the female wits based their orientalist dramas.⁶⁰ Hence, unlike those male historians, including Rycaut, whom Montagu excoriated for being "very fond of speaking of what they don't know" (85), Manley does not represent the jealous husband as a stereotypical eastern despot in the orientalist sense; rather, she locates the possessive impulse of the marriage market in those English men who enriched themselves on foreign markets. This move to locate orientalist projections in their western male progenitors may be considered counterorientalist in the sense Lisa Lowe has specified for Montagu: dissent within the tradition, which in Manley's case involves turning the tradition on itself.⁶¹

Manley's next play, *The Royal Mischief*, develops this counterorientalist stance by fashioning an explicitly eastern heroine to highlight the trademark struggle of the first feminists for personal, political, and sexual agency. Based on *The Travels of Sir John Chardin into Persia and the East Indies* (1686), this play elaborates the history of Levan Dadian, the prince of Colchis in the Black Sea region bordering the Persian empire.⁶² Chardin frames this historical digression from his personal narrative with the appraisal, "if I might have my choice, I should rather chuse the Chains of a *Turk* then the fetters of a *Colchian* Lady."⁶³ Women of the Black Sea region, Chardin opined, were "the wickedest Women in the World, Haughty, Furious, Perfidious, Deceitful, Cruel, and Impudent. So that there is no sort of Wickedness which they will not put in Execution, to procure Lovers, preserve their Affection, or else to destroy 'em" (85). In his estimation, the men seem equally

wicked. Capping the list of vices deemed virtues in this region – including “Concubinage, Adultery, Bigamy, [and] Incest” – Chardin emphasizes “this is the greatest Wonder, that this Wicked Nation should maintain, that to have several Wives and Concubines is justifiable: for say they, they bring us many Children, which we sell for ready Money or Exchange for necessary Conveniences” (85). Yet, as Ronald Ferrier maintains, Chardin’s description of Colchis, and the larger Black Sea region, cannot be reduced to knee-jerk charges of orientalism – nor, as I shall argue, can Manley’s dramatization of this setting in *The Royal Mischief*. Rather, Chardin adduces his first-hand knowledge of the region to deconstruct the dichotomy positioning the East as absolutely other to the West.⁶⁴ His perpetuation of traditional patriarchal oppositions impels Manley’s deconstruction of his stereotypical representation of the eastern woman.

As Chardin knew from direct experience, the Black Sea region, notorious as the font of the slave trade extending into the Persian and Ottoman empires, was neither completely Islamic nor completely “oriental.” Rather, as he records, “[t]he Religion of the *Colchians*, has formerly as I believe, been the same with that of the *Greeks*” (93). Throughout the Black Sea region, various modes of Christianity co-existed, and sometimes mixed, with the dominant religion of the Islamic empires of the Persians and Ottomans. Moreover, the people of Colchis cannot be reduced to the racial codes that defined western European imperialism during the nineteenth century, which post-colonial critics have analyzed in terms of the opposition between “dark” easterners and “white” westerners. As Chardin explains, the “Black-Circassians” he discusses are those whom “the [western] *Europeans* call *Huns*” (106), historically situated between Asia (beginning in Mongolia) and Europe (establishing themselves in the central and southeastern regions around 370 CE).⁶⁵ Indeed, for Chardin the barbarity of the Black Sea region derives primarily from the autonomy of its women, as witnessed by his disgust at “the custome in this Savage Country, that the whole Family without distinction, Males and Females, Eat all together” (88). Finally, the Black Sea slave trade he describes appears more reminiscent of the contemporaneous English model in the Americas, based on the ruling that a child born of an enslaved woman “follows the condition of the mother” to enable white fathers to sell their progeny, than of the Islamic model of slavery, in which a woman can no longer be sold once she bears her master’s child nor does slavery persist through generations.⁶⁶ Given this complex array of cultural factors, we should be wary of reducing the Levan Dadian episode to “an exemplary instance of Oriental barbarousness” or assuming it represents a clearly Islamic scenario.⁶⁷

To summarize, in this episode Chardin attempts to address the deleterious influence of women's sexual and political agency on the patriarchal state, which in the Colchian case resulted in its absorption into the Persian empire. He begins by defining Levan Dadian as "Valiant, Generous, a Person of great Wit, indifferently just and more happy in his Undertakings."⁶⁸ Levan's potential to become "an excellent Prince" is nevertheless thwarted by "the Custom in his Country of Marrying several Wives, and those near Relations . . . which transported him to such Excesses as render'd him unworthy of all *Encomiums*" (133). Chardin deflects blame for Levan's downfall onto Darejan, whom he describes as "extremely beautiful, but wicked and ambitious beyond Imagination." Initially the wife of George – "the Sovereign Prince of *Libardian*" and Levan's paternal uncle and guardian – she soon becomes the younger man's second wife.⁶⁹ Chardin exculpates Levan for his role in this prohibited marriage, deeming him "over-rul'd by" Darejan's wiles. His fall accelerates when he repudiates his first wife "after he had caus'd her Nose, her Ears and her Hands to be cut off." Justifying this heinous act through the false charge she "had committed Adultery with the Vizier," "he caus'd this *Vizier* to be stopp'd into the Mouth of a *Cannon* at the same time he maim'd his own Wife" to cover up this falsehood. As Chardin assesses, "there was nothing of Incontinence that had been committed between her and the *Vizier*; only that he sacrific'd his Wife and his *Prime Minister* to the Hatred and Jealousy" of Darejan (134). Levan also sacrificed his children from his first marriage so those by his second might reign. His perfidy was repaid by his remaining children "being all Three Paralytick" and his kingdom being absorbed by the Georgian forces under the Persians after his premature death in 1657 (136). Darejan survived as a political player for almost two decades after his death, continuing to advocate for her children against the countervailing forces of the Persian empire.

Manley's response to Chardin's patriarchal rendition of this history begins by shifting the focus from Levan Dadian to the character Homais, a loose representation of the historical Darejan.⁷⁰ In Manley's play, Homais is a "young and beautiful" woman bound in marriage to Levan's "elderly" and "impotent" uncle.⁷¹ As such, she remains confined in her husband's fortress under strict surveillance. Further confined by the libertine discourse elaborated by her erstwhile lover, Ismael, Homais must also confront her objectification in the voyeuristic fantasies he constructs starting in Act II, scene i. She effectively resists this dual confinement by appropriating the language of war, which defines her husband's role, and of male libertinism, associated with her former lover. She thus determines "either [to] die or conquer" in obtaining the object of *her* desire: none other than Levan (214).

Homais here challenges the most fundamental incest taboo in a patriarchal society: neither father–daughter nor mother–son, but that which intervenes between a man and his male heir.

Resonating with the Renaissance ideology of empire (see Chapter 2), Homais's interpretation of the black eunuch Achmet's stunned response features a resonant classical myth: "Thou start'st . . . / Despair surround me, if thy coward blood / Has not forsook thy ghastly face / The gorgon name has turned him to a statue" (213; original ellipsis). Although this episode has been analyzed in terms of Manley's overall challenge to the patriarchal double standard, no previous critic has remarked on its evocation of the beautiful and monstrous Medusa, who hailed from "the Far East, not far from the kingdom of the dead, the land of the Hesperides."⁷² By registering Homais's defiance of traditional patriarchy's foundations through this mythos, Manley anticipates – and undermines – the symbolism later assigned to the horror of feminine desire within a phallogentric symbolic economy. The twentieth-century feminist recuperation of Medusa, particularly in its psychoanalytic strain, largely effaces this figure's eastern provenance. Hélène Cixous, for instance, has been critiqued for framing her feminist revision of Medusa with the imperialist trope, "the dark continent."⁷³ Even though Cixous seeks to challenge Sigmund Freud's original patriarchal imperialist gesture, she replaces it with a feminist imperialist gesture. As we have seen, the foundation of English feminism involved a similar displacement of the source of patriarchal oppression onto the "other" woman. Tracing the genealogy of feminist orientalism to its inception in the seventeenth century reveals that Manley, rather than Cixous, more thoroughly inaugurates the challenge to the Medusa myth because she, unlike Cixous, revises both its phallogentric and its orientalist aspects.

Specifically, after establishing the Islamicized setting of the play with Achmet's flattery, "[o]ur Eastern World is full of Homais' beauty" (213), Homais's proto-feminist protest targets the patriarchal orientalism of the misogynist libertine, Ismael. Mouching this discourse's central cliché, which Manley will challenge directly in her next play, Ismael expresses his supreme contempt for women by stressing the vacuity of their souls:

For virtue in such souls is like their form,
Only exterior beauty, worn to deceive
The credulous world and buy opinions
From the common rout.
But when they meet a lover to their wish
They gladly throw the borrowed veil aside,
And naked in his arms disclose the cheat.

(221)

Cynthia Lowenthal adduces this passage to argue that “[f]emale desire, which Islamic and early British culture demands be as veiled and nearly invisible as Ac[h]met [the stock black eunuch], turns out to be, once loosed in the world, [is] as powerful and real as he is.”⁷⁴ This analysis nevertheless begs the following questions: if Manley in her earlier play, *The Lost Lover*, offers a counterdiscourse of orientalism that returns the fantasy of the despotic patriarch back onto its western male progenitor, does a related counterdiscourse operate in *The Royal Mischief*? In particular, does the excess of Manley’s exotic representations – the viziers, eunuchs, and mutes; “[a] dance performed by indians [sic]” (239); and a tableau rivaling the River Cydnus scene in Shakespeare’s *Antony and Cleopatra* (2.2.191–226) – lean more toward Saidian orientalism or Irigarayan mimicry?⁷⁵ If the latter is the case, as the majority of the play’s commentators have argued, how fully does *The Royal Mischief* challenge the patriarchal orientalist projection of the impassioned harem slave and her obverse, the overseeing phallic mother?⁷⁶

Manley’s play, which we have noted disturbed its first audiences with its excessive “warmth,” begins to elaborate this counterdiscourse by disallowing the misogynist model of virtue Ismael enunciates to marginalize Homais’s desire for political, and not simply sexual, agency. The play confirms the injustice of her domestic immurement and the “royal mischief” that ensues from reducing women to men’s possessions. “I’m a woman,” Homais impresses upon her husband, “made / Passionate by want of liberty. / I’ll learn to wear my fetters lighter, / And if you please, will suit my welcome to it” (218). Moreover, her female foil, the reputedly virtuous Bassima, does not enable the contrast of “dark” orientalized villainess and “fair” westernized heroine in the manner of Trotter’s and Pix’s dramas.⁷⁷ Instead, she resists the adulterous advances of Osman on the grounds of social conformity rather than ethical principles; in a final hypocrisy, she tragically stands on her hollow virtue when he pleads with her to flee to her father’s court to save their lives (236, 248).⁷⁸ Nor does Ismael’s misogyny provide an opposing pole for Homais’s desire, with the purported male exemplar, but actual adulterer, Levan Dadian proving himself a rank hypocrite in his call for “justice” against the falsely accused Bassima and Osman (228, 244). Even Ismael, the Iago-like villain of the play, loses his moral valence as the libertine critic of social hypocrisy when he attempts to blackmail Homais into illicit intimacies, making himself more palatable to her by suggesting she fantasize he is Levan (241).

This subversive redefinition of the “borrowed veil,” initially presented as a synecdoche for the patriarchal double standard, culminates when Homais declares in her defense, “[t]hough some are blacker stained than others

are, / There's none can say their lives were ever fair" (250). Her retort, with its evocation of the underlying racialized economy of courtly love, deconstructs the traditional opposition between the proper "fair" woman and the suspect "dark" woman upon which feminist orientalism depends. It also presages the drama's climax in an orgy of necrophilia, mutilation, murder, suicide, and madness. Hence, as she literally spews curses on her possessive husband – "Thus I dash thee with my gore, / And may it scatter unthought plagues around thee" – Homais simultaneously attempts to draw her hypocritical lover into the ultimate climax – "Thus with my utmost force I'll bear thee with me, / Thus strangle thy loved neck, thus die together" (259). Her enraged and laughing visage, even during her last breath, completely unsettles her lawful husband, the Prince of Libardian. As patriarchal head of the household and state, his closing words accordingly collapse into the predictable response: "Oh, horror, horror, horror!" (261). This final scene of Homais's triumphant rage, which renders her beautifully terrifying and terrifyingly beautiful, dramatically showcases an alternative to patriarchal closure. At the height of English global imperialism during the nineteenth century, the darkened Medusa became the marginalized "madwoman in the attic"; for Manley, at the uncertain cusp of this imperialist project, Medusa takes center stage as her debut play's undisputed protagonist.⁷⁹ The play's refusal to provide the feminist orientalist contrast between the banished "dark" woman who guarantees the "fair" woman's place in a patriarchal society, as in Trotter and Pix, confirms Manley's counterorientalist intervention.

MANLEY'S *ALMYNA* AND THE REFRAMING OF *1001 NIGHTS*

Manley was deterred from writing stage plays for nearly a decade after her 1696 debut, whether due to the satire of *The Female Wits* (1704), the play that mocked her as "*Marsilia*, A Poetess, that admires her own Works, and a great Lover of Flattery" (sig. A4^v), or the opportunities of political pamphleteering, to which she shifted with the 1705 publication of *The Secret History, of Queen Zarah and the Zarasians*.⁸⁰ She nevertheless returned from this hiatus with arguably the earliest literary response to the first full English translation of the Arabic classic *1001 Nights: Almyna; or, The Arabian Vow* (first performed in 1706 and published in 1707).⁸¹ (The English translation, *Arabian Nights Entertainments* [c. 1705/6], was based on Antoine Galland's inaugural translation of the Arabic classic into a European vernacular as *Les mille et une nuits* [1704].⁸²) Ruth Yeazell reads this play as rewriting "the tragedy of harem rivals as an heroic drama of sisterly devotion and sacrifice,"

whereas Bridget Orr cautions that it “interrogates, while it exploits, Galland’s invention of a new Orientalism” for feminist purposes.⁸³ Yet, the assessment that Manley’s play “participates in the construction of feminist Islamophobia” fails to recognize the challenge to feminist orientalism initiated in her debut plays at the end of the seventeenth century and sustained in her early eighteenth-century writings.⁸⁴ As we shall see, the cross-cultural stagings of her *œuvre* culminate in the near anagram – Almyrna/Manley – linking the English woman writer with the proto-feminist Muslim woman narrator, Scheherazade.

Although the extent of Galland’s orientalism remains disputable, his translation of the *1001 Nights* undeniably initiated a paradigm shift by introducing the celebrated Scheherazade, whom Manley refigures as Almyrna, into the western European literary tradition.⁸⁵ The Muslim woman thus becomes the prototype of the educated and efficacious defender of women’s rights and no longer the negative reference point in the manner of patriarchal and feminist orientalism. Concomitantly, as Martha Pike Conant documents, the “prelude” to the outpouring of “oriental and pseudo-oriental fiction” in the English tradition “was sounded in the late seventeenth century by the first English translation of [Giovanni Paolo] Marana’s satire, *The Turkish Spy*.”⁸⁶ While Conant does not draw this connection, Manley maintained that her father, Roger Manley, was “the Genuine Author of the First volume of that admir’d and successful work.”⁸⁷ Hence, even though Manley “was no traveller,”⁸⁸ she shared in the legacy of England’s early engagement with the Ottoman empire via her father, who indisputably authored *The History of the Turkish Empire . . . From the Year of Our Lord, 1676, to the Year 1686* as part of the sixth edition of the compendium started by Richard Knolles.⁸⁹

Despite this evidence, Manley’s 1706 stage play, *Almyrna; or, The Arabian Vow*, remains conspicuously absent from Conant’s enumeration of the outpouring of literature constituting early modern England’s “Oriental Renaissance.”⁹⁰ Manley’s play may well have been inaccessible to this researcher, though her archival digging is deep and many of the texts listed in her oft-cited “Chronological Table” are obscure.⁹¹ However, because this study continues to form the bibliographical basis for work on the “oriental tale” in early modern England, it perpetuates the omission of arguably the first literary response to Galland’s translation. When prefacing the printed version of *Almyrna*, Manley clearly establishes her play’s connection to Galland’s translation, as well as to Dryden’s heroic tragedies: “The Fable is taken from the Life of that great Monarch, *Caliph Valid Almanzor*, who Conquer’d *Spain*, with something of a Hint from the *Arabian Nights*

Entertainments” (sig. A^v). Its appearance on the English literary scene in 1706 and its subsequent disappearance from English literary history accordingly signal equally significant moments for the contested emergence of feminism in England and its ultimate alliance with patriarchal orientalism.

The play, as previously mentioned, features as its protagonist a Muslim woman who anagrammatically reproduces Manley’s name: “*Almyna*, Eldest Daughter to the [Grand] Vizier,” who is the highest-ranking official in the court of “*Caliph Almanzor*, Sultan of the East” (sig. A4^v). Even more so than in her debut dramas, Manley here contests the feminist orientalist dynamic of distancing the “freeborn” English woman from the supposedly enslaved Muslim wife, a faulty image the first feminists at the turn of the eighteenth century derived from the patriarchal travel literature of the seventeenth century. She instead models her title character on Scheherazade, the celebrated Muslim woman narrator who deployed her verbal skills to reform the violent excesses of patriarchy.⁹² Although versions of individual tales from *1001 Nights* found their way into the English literary tradition prior to Manley, with Chaucer’s *œuvre* providing the most thorough selection, she alone conveys Scheherazade’s resistance to the patriarchal sexual, political, and discursive violence featured in the original frame tale (24).⁹³ Hence, Almyna/Manley may be termed the inaugural English(ed) Scheherazade. This is a “first feminist” from a cultural trajectory – one derived from the Islamic literary tradition in the broadest sense and transmitted to the West through an ambivalently orientalist lens – that diverges significantly from the anglocentric path running from Astell to Wollstonecraft.

In addition to casting her central character, Almyna, in the mold of Scheherazade, Manley’s transposition of the original Sultan Shahriyar into the Caliph Almanzor, and of the grand vizier into Almyna’s father completes the parallel with the original frame tale.⁹⁴ Manley nonetheless alters other characters in her source substantially. For instance, Abdalla, the sultan’s brother in *Almyna*, mirrors Shahriyar’s brother, Shahzaman, only in his filial relationship to the older sovereign. In the source text, the younger brother instigates the coupling of desire and death the tales dramatize: in Ferial Ghazoul’s narratological terms, he signifies “a double and a copy” who initiates the binary structure of the narrative; in Daniel Beaumont’s psychoanalytic terms, he represents the failed Lacanian “mirror stage” precipitating his elder brother’s violent Oedipal crisis.⁹⁵ Manley, by contrast, presents the younger brother to the murderous sultan as a rival rather than an ally, relegating the original tale of the cuckolded brother from the play’s central action to a marginal position as interpolated exposition. This rivalry ironically results in Abdalla’s “feminist” function as Almyna’s

defender against his brother's misogynist conviction that women lack souls and are therefore expendable. (It is for this reason, and not for the spectacle of adultery the source text stages, that the sultan in Manley's drama decides to marry a virgin each night and murder her the next day.) Certainly, Abdalla's role in the balance of the play as a caricatured courtly lover and hypocritical seducer tempers his efficacy as an advocate for women. His defense of Almyrna as a woman made virtuous by education, along with Almyrna's claim she was "[l]ed . . . out of that Track of other Ladies, / Whom idle Education often make, / An useless Burden to Creation!" (29), nonetheless supports the rationalist feminist argument regarding "the benefits to men of educated companions."⁹⁶ Manley, through this contradictory characterization, deploys multiple levels of irony to advance her critique of masculinist "defenders of women."

Yet, in her second significant reworking of the original frame tale's main characters, Manley complicates any easy reading of this play as simply promoting the rationalist agenda of the "first feminists," whereby the postulation of reason as "the highest value" was used to challenge "the assumption that women should aim for a distinctively feminine, nonrational ideal."⁹⁷ A detail of *1001 Nights* often forgotten in renderings of the frame tale in our own time is the centrality of the relationship between Scheherazade and her sister, Dunyazade. As Robert Irwin indicates, without the prompting of Dunyazade the narrative cycle would not have proceeded past the frame tale. It is she, not Shahriyar, who repeats the original refrain motivating the "unending narrative" of *1001 Nights*: "Sister, what an entertaining story," to which Scheherazade replies, "What is this compared with what I shall tell you tomorrow night!"⁹⁸ In Manley's play, the title character's sister, Zoradia, does not ally herself with her sister to thwart the abuses of absolutist patriarchy. Instead, she initiates a male-identified contest with Almyrna over Abdalla, the sultan's younger brother. As an unrequited lover, she determines to kill herself as per the sentimental mode that would displace the rationalist discourse of the "first feminists." Hence, although Almyrna ostensibly displays her solidarity with her sister when she decides *not* to marry Abdalla, the shift to sentimentalism trounces this ostensibly "heroic drama of sisterly devotion and sacrifice."⁹⁹

As suggested above, in a notable departure from her source, Manley's heroine intends to stay the sultan's murderous course through rational argument and stoic endurance rather than through the production of narratives and children. (The traditional frame tale concludes with Scheherazade presenting their three children to Shahriyar, born over the course of her three years of storytelling.¹⁰⁰) Yet, once Almyrna delivers her climactic

soliloquy – which begins, “Oh, Glory! thou whose Vot’ry most I seem, / And thou, O Love! whose Vot’ry most I am” (31) – the play veers from the rationalist focus of the “first feminists” towards the accelerating eighteenth-century emphasis on “values that embraced sentimentality and feeling rather than reason.”¹⁰¹ The concluding act thus celebrates Almyna’s humble acceptance of her death in redemption not of her fellow women from the sultan’s necrophilic rage but of the sultan from his resultant ill reputation. When he finally renounces his misogyny by gushing to Almyna, “Look up, my fainting Dear, I am all thine: / For ever thine we’re thus to part no more” (64), the play affirms its embrace of sentimentality over rationalism.

In this sense, as Constance Clark maintains, the sultan may be considered “an exotic version of the reformed rake” and Almyna his redeeming bride in a conclusion critiqued for its generic inconsistency.¹⁰² Yet, this inconsistency must be situated not only in terms of the generic shifts from rationalist polemic to sentimental romance, but more so within the broader ideological contradictions characterizing early eighteenth-century anglocentric feminism in relation to the era’s orientalism. For instance, the misogynist claim against which Almyna argues, “Women have no Souls,” though presented by the sultan as deriving from “our Prophet” (44, 9), in no way reflects Islamic doctrine. Manley’s play, which hinges on this fallacy, might be seen as inserting such hackneyed stereotypes into the English feminist tradition. However, not only do Abdalla and Almyna protest this fallacy, but the Chief Vizier opens the play by condemning the sultan’s actions as “horrid Murder!” accruing from the misogynist creed that labels all women blameworthy for “the faults of One” (1, 3). At no point in the play does Manley present the sultan’s misogyny as essentially Islamic as opposed to supposedly more progressive western norms. By contrast, the Whig Susanna Centlivre, the beginnings of whose immensely successful career overlapped with Manley’s final stab at the English stage, hinges her plays on the assumed “Liberties of an English wife” as opposed to the assumed tyranny of eastern cultures’ gender norms.¹⁰³ As we have seen, in developing her less popular counterorientalist discourse – *Almyna* experienced “a disappointing run of three performances”¹⁰⁴ – Manley challenges this liberal feminist logic by presenting stereotypes such as the despotic sultan and the harem slave precisely to undermine them. The near anagram upon which the play depends – Almyna/Manley – foregrounds this strategy by stressing the identification with the “other” woman rather than the displacement of patriarchal abuses onto her. Going against the grain of emergent feminist orientalism, which would come to dominate women’s drama from Centlivre onwards, Manley in *Almyna* again refrains from establishing an

orientalized other against which the “freeborn” English woman can secure her imperialist self-definition. It is in this limited sense that we may equate Manley with Almyra.

In concluding this chapter and anticipating the next, I wish to underscore my thesis that Manley’s *œuvre* presents the most sustained articulation of the strained relationship between feminism and orientalism during the transition from England’s preliminary to established global imperialist project. Rather than using orientalist tropes to displace oppressive patriarchal practices such as domestic immurement and polygamy onto eastern cultures, Manley in her plays – and, as we shall see in the next chapter, her prose – situated these practices squarely within her own culture. By locating the source of gender despotism in England rather than displacing it onto exoticized cultural others, she eschewed the self-definition characteristic of the seventeenth-century male travelogues and the early eighteenth-century feminist polemics covered at the beginning of this chapter. She accordingly launched the counterdiscourse, subsequently elaborated by Montagu, against English feminism’s ultimately orientalist investments.

*The scandal of polygamy in Delarivier
Manley's roman à clef*

In the previous chapter, I focused on Manley's debut productions for the English stage – *The Lost Lover* and *The Royal Mischief* (1696) and the play that followed ten years later, *Almyna; or, The Arabian Vow* (1706) – to chart her commitment to developing an alternative, however limited, to the intensifying orientalism characterizing the newly formed canon of Whig women's drama in the eighteenth century.¹ Yet, in comparison with the feminist orientalist productions of Mary Pix, who “wrote a dozen plays between 1696 and 1706, all of which were produced on the London stage, and some of which were well enough received to enjoy revivals,” and Susanna Centlivre, who “was the most successful of England's early women playwrights” and “perhaps the best comic playwright between [William] Congreve and [Henry] Fielding,” Manley's attempted deconstruction of this dichotomy did not appeal to a broad audience.² Her preface to the printed version of *The Royal Mischief* begins with a defensive tone that signals the audience's resistance: “I Shou'd not have given my self and the Town the trouble of a Preface, if the aspersions of my Enemies had not made it necessary” (sig. A3). The preface to *Almyna* likewise ends with a tone of resignation at the play's truncated run: “But the Season being far advanced, 'tis hoped, that the publishing of it, may be a Means to prepare the Town against next Winter, for a new and kind Reception of it” (sig. A2). Indeed, her final surviving play turns to native British themes, though her focus on *Lucius, the First Christian King of Britain* (1717) arguably maintains her interest in cultural difference with its focus on religious conversion.³

Manley's career as a prose writer, by contrast, was spectacularly successful. As Jack Armistead and Debbie Davis corroborate, “[i]n 1709, the year before the Tory triumph, she dealt the weakened Whig Junto its most damaging literary blow by publishing *Secret Memoirs and Manners of Several Persons of Quality, of Both Sexes. From the New Atalantis, an Island in the Mediterranean*.” This popular volume, known as *The New Atalantis*, was immediately followed by three companion volumes and went through six

editions by the end of the eighteenth century. As Armistead and Davis conclude, "All four volumes present allegorical anecdotes in which the personages are caricatures of Whig lords and ladies."⁴ Manley's political satire was deemed dangerous enough for the authorities to arrest her, along with the printer and publishers of *The New Atalantis*, on charges of seditious libel.⁵ Indeed, the political ire raised by this volume continued into the twentieth century, when Sir Winston Churchill defended his besmirched forebear, Sarah Churchill, duchess of Marlborough, who was the butt of Manley's satire.⁶ Still, the literary significance of *The New Atalantis* has been overshadowed until recently by the general neglect of early modern women's writing, especially unconventional women writers such as Aphra Behn and Delarivier Manley.⁷

When defining "feminist orientalism," as we saw in the previous chapter, Joyce Zonana posits Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) as "the founding text of Western liberal feminism" and "the fullest explicit feminist orientalist perspective." This definition derives from Wollstonecraft's representation of polygamy as an eastern intrusion into the western domestic sphere.⁸ Likewise, Felicity Nussbaum locates feminist, orientalist, and ultimately imperialist tendencies in this foundational text, which depends on the Enlightenment triangulation of the western European woman as the sole signifier of "civilization" in contradistinction to the ostensibly "primitive" women of Africa and America and the apparently "decadent" women of the Orient. Situating Daniel Defoe's *Roxana* (1724), Sarah Scott's *Millennium Hall* (1762), and Mary Wortley Montagu's *Turkish Embassy Letters* (published 1763) within these coordinates, Nussbaum concludes that "construing the history of women to reflect Enlightenment progress also aims at convincing European women of their right to dominance over the other women of empire."⁹ Yet, by focusing on writings from the 1720s through the end of the eighteenth century, she also presents a truncated view of the eighteenth century, eliding *fin-de-siècle* writers such as Manley.

This chapter thus complicates Nussbaum's claim that "Turkey and Persia, while not literally dominated by England, embodied male prerogative, manifested in polygamy, as *the frightful antithesis* to Christian monogamy and the liberty that eighteenth-century Britain proudly claimed for its women" (emphasis added).¹⁰ It does so by focusing on the uneven articulation of feminism and orientalism during the transitional period between the age of Milton and the early Enlightenment as manifested in Manley's literary engagement with the debate over polygamy in England. However, before turning to Manley's challenge to patriarchal and feminist orientalisms, we

must survey the response to polygamy in Protestant and libertine discourses from the sixteenth through the eighteenth century to establish her radical intervention in this debate. This historical survey is crucial because the dominant assumption in Manley's era – an assumption still operative in ours – was that only England's "others," particularly Muslims, embraced polygamy. Manley may be the earliest English writer to contest this assumption from a specifically feminist perspective.

EARLY MODERN ENGLISH POLYGAMOPHILES

Seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century English models of polygamy tended to be of two sorts: the Puritan polygamy advocated by Milton in his *Christian Doctrine* (composed c. 1658–65) and the libertine polygamy characteristic of Charles II's court. The former, as John Cairncross documents, was rooted in the Reformation tendency to emphasize Old Testament patriarchs over New Testament celibates.¹¹ This tradition manifested itself most completely in the short-lived Münster experiment of 1534–35, when Anabaptists established polygamy as normative for their radical utopia – a dystopia for the women forced into these polygamous marriages.¹² The Münsterites' rationale for taking multiple wives was enunciated and practiced most fully by the Anabaptist leader John of Leyden, who adduced "the examples of the Old Testament patriarchs who walked with God and who had practised polygamy unreprieved." Cairncross aptly labels these views as a product of "the visionary mystical outlook of Old Testament literalism," which would characterize English Puritanism throughout the seventeenth century.¹³

Although not endorsing John of Leyden's excesses, Martin Luther was forced to broach the possibility of polygamy in response to the marital quandary of Philip, landgrave of Hesse, who having tired of his lawfully wedded wife after falling in love with a more desirable woman continued to take the moral high ground regarding adultery: "As Philip put it to the Lutheran preachers, how could he, in all fairness, avoid sin when he could not always 'take a large harem along with him?'"¹⁴ Luther's equivocal response rejects the common identification of Protestantism with Islam and admits the possibility of polygamy for the elect: "Heathens and Turks might do as they pleased. True, some of the patriarchs had been polygamous, but it was because they had a definite reason (such as the need for progeny). A Christian, before adopting polygamy, must first have a calling from God. Plural marriages, therefore, were to be rejected except in case of extreme need."¹⁵ Luther's fellow reformer, Philip Melancthon, remained alert to

the potential collapse of Protestant Christian identity into Islam when he responded to Philip's petition for a bigamous marriage by "stress[ing] the danger that (if Philip were to take a second wife) the enemies of the Gospel would lump the Protestants together with the polygamous Turks and wild Münsterites."¹⁶ Henry VIII's contemporaneous dilemma, for which the possibility of bigamy was also broached, further displays this wavering between Judeo-Christian precedents for polygamy and the potential for Christian identity to blur with that of the encroaching Islamic empire of the Ottomans.¹⁷

While the debate over polygamy went largely underground in England after Henry VIII's divorce from Catherine of Aragon, it redoubled in 1657 with the reprint of *A Dialogue of Polygamy, Written Originally in Italian: Rendered into English by a Person of Quality; and Dedicated to the Author of that well-known Treatise call'd Advice to a Son* (first published in 1563).¹⁸ This translation of the lapsed Catholic monk and afterwards radical Protestant preacher Bernardino Ochino's unorthodox views on Christian marriage presents a figure whose iconoclastic career was sponsored by some of the most prominent men and women of early English Protestantism, including Ann Cooke, the mother of Francis Bacon, and the future Queen Elizabeth, both of whom translated several of his anti-papal tracts.¹⁹ The reprint of Ochino's *Dialogue of Polygamy* at the height of the Puritan resurgence in England represents the extreme limits to which Old Testament literalism, with its inextricable link to traditional patriarchy, tended. Milton's manuscript, *The Christian Doctrine*, as well as his widely publicized divorce tracts, correspondingly represents the culmination of "Puritan polygamy" in the English tradition. As Leo Miller concludes, "The fact is that, while Milton's extended argument is unusual, the concept of polygamy, or legal bigamy, was not so finally rejected in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as it is in our time."²⁰

Another tradition, however, was emerging at the same time that Milton wrote his theological *magnum opus* in response to the Puritans' political defeat: the libertine polygamy associated with the restored court of Charles II. With his numerous mistresses, whom Manley represents in *The New Atalantis* as virtual wives of the king, Charles inspired literary and theological justifications for polygamy.²¹ On the one hand, the poet laureate John Dryden suggests the primal innocence of the kingly libido: "In pious times, ere priestcraft did begin, / Before polygamy was made a sin, / . . . / The Israel's monarch after Heaven's own heart / His vigorous warmth did variously impart / To wives and slaves, and, wide as his

command, / Scattered his Maker's image through the land."²² Unfortunately, this paean to "Charles' philoprogenitive exploits" rings only partially true, as his legitimate marriage with Catherine of Braganza remained childless. This situation, dire for the succession of the English crown, impelled a number of Anglican divines, including the renowned Bishop Gilbert Burnet, to suggest polygamy as a plausible, albeit exceptional, solution.²³ Thus, polygamy had both an allegorical and, though more surreptitiously, a potential legal status during the Restoration.

By the end of the 1660s, the theological and legal debate over polygamy in the English tradition began to manifest itself in imaginative writing. Most notoriously, the republican writer Henry Neville presented a polygamous utopia in *The Isle of Pines* (1668) to satirize what he saw as England's faltering imperial project.²⁴ This text, which offers a view of degenerate English castaways from the perspective of expansionist Dutch merchants, challenges the standard discourse of empire by presenting the English as inept savages in contrast to the customary representation of western Europeans as superior to the natives of the lands they sought to colonize. However, by presenting this radical critique of the discourse of empire through the paradigm of polygamy, this "sexual-imperial fantasy" fails to depart from the conventional patriarchal view of social relations. *The Isle of Pines*, which Adam Beach describes as a "porno-utopia," gained wide currency as the first explicit literary response to the revived debate over polygamy from the late seventeenth through the eighteenth century.²⁵ More so than either the tradition of "Puritan polygamy" or the "porno-utopias" of this discourse of empire, however, Charles II's domestic arrangements lent themselves to explicitly orientalist allegories, the most infamous of which was *The Amours of the Sultana of Barbary* (1689). This allegory features Charles's chief mistress from 1670, Louise de K eroualle, duchess of Portsmouth, as the eponymous Sultana, Charles himself as "Acmat (the Grand Signior)," and England as the Ottoman empire.²⁶ By 1696, the year of Manley's literary debut, "a believer [became] so alarmed at the spread of the pernicious doctrine that he [thought] it worth his trouble to write 'a letter of advice to a friend upon the modern arguments for the lawfulness of simple fornication, half-adultery and polygamy.'"²⁷ This revived debate over polygamy would continue in full force from 1680 through 1750, encompassing the duration of Manley's career. Her intervention, particularly in *The New Atalantis*, therefore marks one of the few, and perhaps the first, sustained literary presentations of the feminist perspective on polygamy in the English tradition. As we shall see, this debate had dramatic consequences for her personal life.

THE "REAL MISFORTUNE" OF POLYGAMY

As Manley asserts in her most explicitly autobiographical fiction, *The Adventures of Rivella* (1714), "Here begins *Rivella's* real Misfortunes; it would be well for her, that I could say here she dy'd with Honour, as did her Father: I must refer you to her own Story, under the Name of *Delia*, in the *Atalantis*, for the next Four miserable Years of her Life."²⁸ This story hinges on her firsthand experience with polygamy, and thus becomes a case study of "the moral collapse" Lawrence Stone locates between the years 1680 and 1720. As Stone records, "[s]tory after story, whether about the making or the breaking of marriage, provide evidence of an abnormally cynical, mercenary, and predatory ruthlessness about human relationships." As he adds, this "moral breakdown" was characterized by "a peculiarly brutal and exploitative quality about gender relations."²⁹ In Manley's case, after being left without the protection of her father and brother upon their respective deaths, she was tricked into a bigamous marriage by her elder cousin, John Manley, who had been appointed her guardian. In *The New Atalantis*, Manley describes herself during this period in her life, which began when she was "wanting of fourteen," as "a prisoner" in her cousin's "guilty house"; she explicitly links her betrayal and abuse to contemporaneous debates over polygamy (224–27).³⁰ The union between herself and her "cousin guardian," who was "more like a father than an uncle," produced one child, whom she decries as "[m]y wretched son" and "a mortal wound to my repose" (224, 226).³¹

In *The Adventures of Rivella*, Manley presents her traumatic experience as an egregious gap in the narrative, though one which may be filled with reference to *The New Atalantis*. Here we learn of "her ruin" from Sir Charles Lovemore, who was conveniently absent during this period in Rivella's life. An admirer of Rivella, he describes John Manley as "Her Kinsman (I chuse to call him so, rather than by that hatefull Name her Husband)" (29, 72). As a consummate courtly lover, Lovemore despises the term "husband" because it deprives him of his claim to his beloved Rivella. Through the distancing device of the male narrator, cast as an unrequited lover of the much-admired Rivella, Manley connects the seductive discourse of courtly love with the realities of exploitation and abuse. However, if Lovemore is seen as a vehicle for Manley's displaced voice, the name of "husband" seems hateful because it is associated with sexual and social betrayal justified by the doctrines of polygamy. As a result, Manley's autobiographical fiction in *The New Atalantis* and *The Adventures of Rivella* does not simply function as "a cover for the satirical representation of contemporary party politics from a Tory perspective," with "[s]exual perversity . . . employed as a metaphor

for political corruption.”³² Rather, Manley deploys the allegorical mode to stress the literal sexual exploitation involved in the scenes of polygamy, incest, and rape she describes, as well as to present multiple layers of political symbolism. This insistence on the multivalence of allegory is crucial for Manley’s continuing challenge to feminist orientalism, which she advances by stressing the literal impact of polygamy in English society rather than its displacement into the realm of the “other.”³³

In the *New Atalantis* – with Atalantis standing for England at the turn of the eighteenth century – Manley begins her extended satire on the Whig principle of “interest” behind the sexual, courtly, and parliamentary politics of her day with a tale of polygamy at the highest levels (5). Boarding one of the ships in early eighteenth-century England’s impressive naval fleet – the fleet that would found the first British empire³⁴ – the allegorical figure Virtue remarks to Astrea, the goddess of Justice, “Did you notice the old seignior, stretched at his full length upon the crimson damask couch? That youth he seemed so fond of, was no other than a woman so disguised” (10). Ros Ballaster identifies “the old seignior” as Arthur Herbert, earl of Torrington (1647–1716), who “led William of Orange’s naval force against James [II] in 1688 and was appointed first lord of the admiralty after the Glorious Revolution.”³⁵ Rather than emphasizing the lord admiral’s naval exploits, which were amply celebrated in contemporary encomiums, Manley highlights the corruption at the base of the great man’s character. In addition to sneaking a cross-dressed paramour on board a battleship, which both Astrea and Virtue condemn using the traditional superstition against women at sea, this ostensible hero appears as a callous seducer and confirmed polygamist. As Virtue reports, the disguised young woman,

dares make no noise, for fear of awaking her parents; he improves the hint, takes advantage of the silent opportunity, swears that he’ll marry her, which the credulous fair easily believes, *because he has already two wives, and does not know but he may as well have toleration to increase them to two hundred*, and without more difficulty, is robbed of her honour, and reputation of honour. (11; emphasis added)

In this opening episode, which evokes the orientalist topos of the eastern despot’s sexual excess only to undermine it, Manley highlights the sexual exploitation inherent in the specifically *English* variety of polygamy. The “Admiral” (9), literally and symbolically at the helm of England’s expanding empire, most fully represents such excess in this suggestive scene.

It is important to stress, therefore, that designations such as “sultana-mistress” (14), “daughter of the *seraglio*” (204), and “Sultanness’s *seraglio*” (264) in Manley’s narrative do not necessarily imply the orientalist

deprecations that would become the norm in the imperialist lexicons of later centuries. Rather, as detailed in Chapter 1, “sultana” in the capacity of *valide sultan* (mother of the sultan), *haseki* (mother of the sultan’s eldest son), and daughter of the sultan were regarded in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries as positions of power and influence, even though such power was increasingly critiqued by Ottomans and outsiders. Such an assessment accurately describes the Ottoman power structure in the period, which did not conform to “modern (post-seventeenth-century) western notions of a public/private dichotomy.” Rather, the view of the family as “intrinsically political” under Islamic law, with Muslim women possessing property rights far exceeding those of early modern English women, provided women of the Ottoman dynasty with a prominent institutional role in the distribution and maintenance of power.³⁶

As previously noted, Manley, who emphasizes her “Liberal [i.e., broad] Education” in “her Father’s House,”³⁷ was conversant with contemporary histories of the Ottoman empire, including her father’s *History of the Turkish Empire Continued, From the Year of Our Lord, 1676, to the Year 1686* and *Letters Writ by a Turkish Spy* (which she claimed as part of his *œuvre*).³⁸ The sort of “sultana-mistresses” to which Manley refers in her scandal chronicle appear in her father’s history as active agents in the Turkish campaign against Hungary, though not always beneficent ones.³⁹ In *Letters Writ by a Turkish Spy*, women’s political roles in the Ottoman empire are similarly highlighted, with a significant parallel to the reign of Elizabeth I.⁴⁰ Hence, the gloss in the modern edition of *The New Atalantis*, “Turkish wives in the seraglio, or harem, were commonly represented as slaves to their husband (Bassa) in this period,”⁴¹ points to an orientalist misconception of the ascendant Ottoman empire during an era when “England was not a colonial power – not in the imperial sense that followed in the eighteenth century.”⁴² The gloss is correct in specifying *representations* of Muslim wives as slaves, a fallacy characteristic of the seventeenth-century male travelogues and subsequent feminist polemics detailed in Chapter 4. It is nevertheless incorrect to assume the “sultanas” in *The New Atalantis* belong to this fallacious tradition, especially because Manley had access to more accurate information about the political roles of women in the Ottoman dynasty. As we assess Manley’s representations of polygamy, we must guard against applying anachronistic interpretations to the potentially orientalist signifiers she deploys. Rather, Manley deliberately evokes the allegories popularized by tracts such as *The Sultana of Barbary* to deconstruct the feminist orientalist opposition of the “freeborn” English woman versus the abject harem slave. Manley, herself a victim of the rampant,

if *de facto* rather than *de jure*, polygamy of the English system refuses to displace this form of female oppression onto the Islamic “other” without first confronting its effect on English women themselves. As she avows, “In Atalantis [i.e. England] there are laws in force against plurality of wives, but they have found an easy evasion from the penalty” (228).⁴³

The next significant instance of polygamy in *The New Atalantis* centers on Mademoiselle Charlot, who represents Stuarta Werburge Howard, “a young girl” placed under the guardianship of the king’s favorite duke by her deceased father (29). Again, Manley highlights political corruption by focusing on highly placed statesmen as the most ardent proponents of polygamy: in this case, the Duke represents “Hans Willem Bentinck, first Earl of Portland (1649–1709), William of Orange’s special envoy to England in 1685 and his closest confidante until 1696.”⁴⁴ However, the story of Charlot simultaneously stands as an indictment of the polygamous manifestation of English patriarchy in relation to parallel, rather than anti-theoretical, incidents in Ottoman history. This infamous episode has received much critical attention: Ruth Perry stresses the seduction of romance as instrumental in Charlot’s deception; Janet Todd highlights “the problematic nature of education,” particularly the disarming of young women into domestic virtue; Ros Ballaster emphasizes that “Charlot’s story is one of a woman’s total subjection to the control of a male patriarch, and her ability to resist or seize control of the text he writes for her life”; and Ellen Pollack sees this episode of “guardian–ward incest” as indicative of the succession crises of the 1680s.⁴⁵ To summarize, the story the Duke scripts for Charlot involves the familiar paradigm of an older male appointed as guardian to a young girl, Charlot’s early education “in the high road to applause and virtue” (30), a shift in the direction of Charlot’s education towards romance (and even erotica) triggered by her guardian’s illicit desires, the incestuous connotations attached to the Duke “as a benefactor, a father, or something more” (34), the Duke’s eventual rape of Charlot, her abandonment, and her death.

What previous critics have not analyzed is Manley’s subversion of the era’s orientalism as she recasts this scene into one condemning the characteristically *English* form of polygamy. For instance, after the climactic moment announcing the young girl’s ruin – punctuated with the clichés, “Thus was Charlot undone! Thus ruined by him that ought to have been her protector!” (39–40) – her education embraces the pragmatics of sexual politics in post-Restoration England. In an important plot development, Charlot “had made an intimate friendship with a young Countess who was a lovely widow, full of air, life and fire,” a character identified as Martha Jane

Temple.⁴⁶ Yet, the romantic tone infusing the letters Charlot exchanged with the Duke fails to move this worldly Countess, “who was bred up in the fashionable way of making love, wherein the heart has little or no part” (40). Her friendship with Charlot extends to introducing the seduced girl to the ways of the world, which she does by making “her read the history of Roxelana who, by her wise address brought an imperious sultan, contrary to the established rules of the seraglio, to divide with her the royal throne” (41). (This is the historical figure whose parallel representations by Ottoman and western European patriarchies was traced in Chapter 1.)

It is important to note that Manley’s representation of Roxelana, or Hürrem, is completely accurate: as Leslie Peirce records, Hürrem was “the first slave concubine in Ottoman history to be freed and made a legal wife.” As such, she functioned as a crucial “political actor” during the peak of Ottoman power precisely in her capacity as Süleyman the Magnificent’s sole spouse.⁴⁷ However, the history of Roxelana was more commonly misconstrued in late seventeenth-century England as contiguous with the orientalist misrepresentation of the harem, or seraglio, as a site of promiscuous excess for the sultan and of illegitimate political meddling by his women.⁴⁸ Defoe’s appropriation of Rox(el)ana’s name as a signifier for exotic prostitution in his eponymous novel is only the most immediate example of the widespread stereotypes surrounding the historical Hürrem’s anomalous position as Süleyman’s wife.⁴⁹ Although Charlot, still deluded by her education in domestic virtue and amatory fiction, fails to comprehend the political aspects of the relations between the sexes, and thereby loses to the pragmatic Countess the opportunity of marrying the Duke, Manley’s accurate depiction of Roxelana as a woman who successfully manipulated her society’s marital politics continues to resonate throughout this episode. Manley thus reveals the polygamous tendencies of highly placed statesmen in England without displacing their exploitative desires onto the eastern other. By presenting an accurate rendition of the history of Roxelana as Süleyman’s only wife, the Ottoman woman becomes the exemplar of monogamous marriage, whereas the English woman suffers under the inequities of polygamy.⁵⁰

The story of the Volpone brothers, who stand for the infamous “William, 1st Earl of Cowper (c. 1665–1723) and Spencer Cowper (1669–1728),” presents the most egregious instance of polygamy in *The New Atalantis* for its combination of sheer malice and precise rationale.⁵¹ William Cowper, who became Lord Chancellor of England, was notorious for his open advocacy of polygamy. Jonathan Swift in *The Examiner* mentions Cowper’s authorship of a pamphlet in defense of polygamy and Voltaire repeats

this information in his *Dictionnaire philosophique*.⁵² Manley confirms the widespread currency of Cowper's pamphlet as crucial to her own seduction through the story of Delia, wherein the bigamous "cousin guardian" attempts to persuade his young charge "to have gone with him into his country, and to seduce or quiet [her] conscience, showed [her] a famed piece that was newly wrote in defense of polygamy and concubinage, by one who was afterwards Grand President" (224, 227). Cowper apparently practiced what he preached, and was reputed "to have lived in perfect amity with two wives."⁵³ Other sources indicate "[i]t was popularly believed that he seduced Elizabeth Culling by means of a sham marriage (Bishop Nicolson's diary refers to Cowper's 'other wife')." ⁵⁴ Certainly, Manley's representation of Hernando Volpone's, and his younger brother Mosco's, polygamous tendencies does not suggest their amatory predations were amiable for their female victims.

This episode begins by situating Hernando's illicit desires for his ward, Louisa (who represents Elizabeth Culling), within the theme of seduction, incest, rape, and polygamy premising the macro- and micro-political critiques within *The New Atalantis*. As the narrator, Madam Intelligence, makes clear, "Hernando had none of those terrible conflicts I before described in the case of the Duke and Mademoiselle Charlot" (115). Rather, the Duke is assiduous in his plan to corrupt his young ward, partly out of his illicit desire for the beautiful girl and partly out of a desire for revenge against his pious wife. As with Charlot, Louisa is disarmed by her education in domestic virtue, in which she was "instructed . . . in all that was necessary to make a young maid set a value upon her chastity" (116). Hernando counters this traditional mode of female education by introducing Louisa to romance through an opera featuring "a woman that had married a second husband, her first yet alive, though unknown to her" (117). This bigamous scenario, "a quite common occurrence in the period of flourishing clandestine marriages before 1753,"⁵⁵ becomes the stage upon which Hernando elaborates his "learned discourse on the lawfulness of double marriages" (117).

Reiterating the argument of Cowper's infamous tract, Hernando, as Cowper's fictional double, attempts to establish that polygamy, narrowed to one man taking multiple wives, follows the purportedly natural tendency of men to be promiscuous and women, in his terms, to be cold (117). Such a statement immediately becomes ironic in Manley's *The New Atalantis*, whose larger narrative features such sexually and politically active women as Barbara Villiers, duchess of Cleveland, and Sarah Churchill, duchess of Marlborough. Hernando's next argument, that "the custom of many

nations and most religions, seemed to declare for him,” lists “[t]he ancient Jews,” “[t]he Turks and all the people of the world but the Europeans” (117–18). Maintaining his sense of superiority, Hernando questions the more “refined” Europeans’ lapse from the apparent virtues of polygamy. Effacing the patriarchal interpretation he had imposed on the opera’s actual representation of *polyandry*, or the marriage of one woman to multiple men, he concludes, “if one or more women, whether married or not, were appropriated to one man, they were so far from transgressing, that they but fulfilled the law of nature.” As Ballaster points out, the play Hernando appropriates for his polygamous seduction is “*The Fatal Marriage* (1694) by Thomas Southerne, based on Aphra Behn’s novella, *The History of the Nun; or, the Fair Vow-Breaker* (1688).”⁵⁶

Not only did Hernando alienate his lawfully wedded wife with “this harangue” (118), but, more to his secret purpose, he alienated Louisa from her potential husband, Wilmot, when the latter made the mistake of agreeing with Hernando’s plea for polygamy. After surprising the distraught Louisa in bed, the implacable Hernando sought “to persuade her to the lawfulness of polygamy,” to which she finally assented, though she prudishly “would not hear a word of concubinage” (120–21). In a scene paralleling the amours of Charles II’s court, Hernando arranges a false wedding with the gullible Louisa, presided over by none other than Mosco Hernando in the guise of an expatriate French priest.⁵⁷ Mosco is concurrently implicated in an unwelcome polygamous scenario with the aggressive female suitor, Zara, who insists on cohabiting with him despite his currently married state (123). Despite their differences, however, Zara, who proposes a polygamous relationship with Mosco, and Louisa, who is tricked into one with Hernando, are equally “undone” and both end up dead (126). In an injustice Manley condemns throughout *The New Atalantis*, the sexual double standard of her day enabled villainous men like the Volpones to be elevated to the highest offices of the realm.⁵⁸

By casting the most explicit scene of polygamy in *The New Atalantis* as rooted in English patriarchal culture, Manley deflects the potential orientalist rationale encoded in Hernando’s recourse to “the custom of many nations and most religions” (117). Through repeated scenes of polygamy, Manley deploys the era’s orientalism not to displace the source of patriarchal oppression onto other cultures, but to locate it at the heart of English culture. She thereby eschews the distance between self and other that defines feminist orientalism. As we have seen, in her dramatic works this identification is achieved by turning the orientalist tradition on itself. In *The Lost Lover*, the domestic despot, who carries the potentially orientalist name

Smyrna, turns out to be an English merchant. *The Royal Mischief* further deconstructs the oppositions structuring anglocentric imperialist discourses by dramatizing, though some may be “black,” none are “fair.” Finally, in *Almyra*, Manley subversively identifies with the title character, arguably the first representation in the English tradition of the Muslim proto-feminist Scheherazade, through a near anagram of her surname. Her ongoing deconstruction of emerging feminist orientalism consequently results in an alternative lineage for England’s “first feminists,” who otherwise appropriated the orientalism of seventeenth-century male travel narratives for their own purposes. In her immensely popular prose work, *The New Atalantis*, Manley establishes a genealogy for polygamy rooted in the social dynamics of early modern England, indicating that the shift towards feminist orientalism culminating in Wollstonecraft’s *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* at the end of the eighteenth century was not determinative at the beginning of the century.⁵⁹ Indeed, Manley traces the deleterious effects of polygamy to her own traumatic experience with her duplicitous “cousin guardian” (224). She accordingly emphasizes polygamy’s integral, rather than antithetical, role in English (sexual) politics.

Manley, unlike Montagu, did not have the opportunity to interact directly with women of the Ottoman empire; hence, she did not possess her successor’s insight that Muslim women at the beginning of the eighteenth century actually possessed far more autonomy within their polygamous marriages than English women in their apparently monogamous ones. As Montagu recognized, women under Islamic law were not disabled by provisions such as those in English common law, whereby “the very being or legal existence of a woman is suspended, or at least it is incorporated or consolidated into that of the husband, under whose wing, protection and cover she performs everything.”⁶⁰ Although Manley falls short of the full alternative to orientalist feminism Zonana recommends for our present day – a “transcultural perspective” involving understanding and alliances between women – she refrains from asserting a fully consolidated feminist orientalism.⁶¹ Instead, she turns to her own culture to deconstruct the dichotomous terms structuring the discourses of patriarchy, against which the first English feminists of the eighteenth century struggled, and of orientalism, with which the majority of these feminists ultimately allied themselves. Her *œuvre*, situated at the cusp of Britain’s global imperialist project, thus challenges at the moment of its emergence the ideology of feminist orientalism that still holds sway in western representations of the “other” woman.

*Coda: Arab women revisit Mary Wortley
Montagu's hammam*

I won't trouble you with a relation of our tedious journey, but I must not omit what I saw remarkable at Sofia, one of the most beautiful towns in the Turkish Empire, and famous for its hot baths, that are resorted to both for diversion and health. I stopped here one day on purpose to see them . . . I was in my travelling habit, which is a riding dress, and certainly appeared very extraordinary to them. Yet there was not one of them that showed the least surprise or impertinent curiosity, but received me with all the obliging civility possible. I know no European court where the ladies would have behaved themselves in so polite a manner to a stranger . . . The first sofas were covered with cushions and rich carpets, on which sat the ladies, and on the second their slaves behind them, but without any distinction of rank by their dress, all being in the state of nature, that is, in plain English, stark naked, without any beauty or defect concealed. Yet there was not the least wanton smile or immodest gesture amongst them. They walked and moved with the same majestic grace which Milton describes of our general mother . . . The lady that seemed the most considerable amongst them entreated me to sit by her and would fain have undressed me for the bath. I excused myself with some difficulty, they being however all so earnest in persuading me, I was at last forced to open my shirt, and show them my stays, which satisfied them very well, for I saw they believed I was so locked up in that machine, that it was not in my own power to open it, which contrivance they attributed to my husband.¹

– Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Adrianople, April 1, 1717

As I suggested in the Introduction, this description of Montagu's unprecedented visit to a Turkish bathhouse – in her Italianate terms, a *bagnio*; in traditional Arabic usage, a *hammam* – has functioned as the launching point for virtually all previous studies of women and Islam in early modern English literature. Elizabeth Warnock Fernea and Leila Ahmed, working within Middle/Near Eastern studies, praise Montagu as “a conscientious

ethnographer trying to communicate the humanity of the peoples of another culture" – one "remarkably free of ethnocentrism" – and as "[t]he only relatively early writer to cast doubt on the common assumption of the oppression of Muslim women and to counter notions of their licentiousness."² Literary critics embracing the post-colonial studies paradigm subsequently debated the degree of complicity with western European imperialism in Montagu's *hammam* scene. Joseph Lew proposes, "Lady Mary drew upon, yet characteristically and self-consciously distanced herself from, an already flourishing Orientalist discourse" and "the discourse described by Said in *Orientalism* was by no means monolithic."³ Lisa Lowe, who makes similar claims, nonetheless cautions, "Montagu's idealization of the liberty of Turkish women . . . which targets and challenges the male orientalist attack on European women, must also be scrutinized for its bias."⁴ Srinivas Aravamudan and Meyda Yeğenoğlu move away from the early celebration to varying degrees of condemnation. Aravamudan determines, "Montagu's praise of Turkish culture is not unlike the more benign biases of cultural relativism typical of the anthropologist's stance"; Yeğenoğlu concludes, "[l]ike many of her male predecessors, Montagu's desire to see the veiled and concealed Oriental woman and the consequent attempt to rip off the veil is one that starts and ends with the question of herself and her identity" (italics in the original).⁵ Other studies adduce Montagu's *hammam* scene to assess the links between orientalism and early anglocentric feminism, on the one hand, and eighteenth-century aesthetic theory, on the other.⁶

In redressing the skewed emphasis on Montagu, I have chosen to refrain from imposing yet another reading of her oft-cited *hammam* scene in this coda. As I have stressed elsewhere, Montagu spends equal space in her *Turkish Embassy Letters* uncovering the intricacies of Turkish poetry.⁷ Hence, the persistent focus on the *hammam* scene confines early modern women's cultural agency to a reiterated patriarchal gaze. Placing Montagu's *Turkish Embassy Letters* in dialogue with her previously neglected precursors has enabled me to challenge the view that women did not write in significant numbers; it has also enabled me to correct the misconception that they did not address issues relating to England's increasing involvement with the Islamic world prior to Montagu's celebrated journey. As I have established, from the late sixteenth century, when Queen Elizabeth engaged in an exchange of gifts and letters with various power brokers in the Ottoman empire, including the mother of the sultan, gender functioned as a crucial term in early modern discourses of empire that did not necessarily place the English in the dominant position. More to the point, the terms

of gender, and particularly of femininity as figured cross-culturally, were shaped not merely by the impositions of antagonistic men, both Muslim and western Christian, but also by women acting as *agents* of exchange.

As part of an influential aristocratic family, Mary Wroth, née Sidney, similarly occupied a privileged position within English society. Yet, she suffered socially and materially for her breaches of patriarchal decorum, which included publishing the first original (versus translated) prose romance and sonnet sequence by an English woman. Moreover, she resisted the bonds of an arranged marriage by maintaining a demonstrably sexual relationship with her first love, and first cousin, William Herbert. It is important to note that as a Sidney, Wroth had access to information about the Islamic empires centered in modern Turkey and Iran, plausibly receiving this information from firsthand sources associated with the Sherley brothers. Her prose romance, in the published version of 1621 and the manuscript continuation, substantially engages with the Islamic world, manifested by Lady Teresa Sampsonia Sherley, arguably the “first Persian” in England. Wroth’s marginalized position as a woman in her culture likely alerted her to the related marginalization of the doubly “othered” Lady Sherley. Wroth’s shift over the course of her two-part romance from a classical to a Christian emphasis nevertheless results in the erasure of Islamic referents from her imaginary geography of Eurasia.

Although Elizabeth never traveled beyond her realm and Wroth did not travel beyond her father’s post as governor of Flushing in the Netherlands, the lower-rank Katharine Evans and Sarah Chevers, along with other Quakers of the 1650s and 1660s, traveled extensively throughout the British Isles, across the Atlantic to the Caribbean and the mainland of North America, into continental Europe as far as the Mediterranean, and into the heartland of the Ottoman empire. Quakers, moreover, produced the bulk of printed writings by English women in the seventeenth century. Yet, as previously noted, their extensive physical and discursive engagement with the Islamic world, when not completely ignored, has been dismissed as irrelevant to the later secular tradition of English women’s travel writing. My analysis of Evans and Chevers’s *Short Relation* in the context of the first missions of English Quakers to the Mediterranean and into the Ottoman empire, which involved at least three other women, establishes these writers as fundamental to any study of early modern English women and the Islamic world. Future research must attend to other middle- and lower-rank women traveling to these regions prior to the eighteenth century, both as serving women (as in Lady Sherley’s return party to Persia), as members of male diplomats’ and merchants’ families (present in the Ottoman empire

from at least the 1650s), and as captives (frequently registered as anonymous figures in the vast literature on the Barbary slave trade).⁸ Unlike early Quaker women such as Evans and Chevers, most of these women were illiterate, or at the very least did not have access to the means of writing, let alone of publishing. However, as with Mary Fisher, whose sojourn as “she that spake to the Great Turk” was largely preserved in writings about rather than by her, attention to women’s cultural agency in this period must extend beyond the positivistic evidence of the individual author.⁹

Delarivier Manley’s career as a professional writer of stage plays, autobiographical fictions, and scandal chronicles ranged from devastating attacks (particularly of her plays) to unprecedented success (as the author of best-selling prose fiction of a political and satirical vein). In turning to her *œuvre*, I conclude by assessing the challenges to the emerging discourse of feminist orientalism at the turn of the eighteenth century, a discourse still dominant in western culture today. While this connection has generally been effaced – starting with Montagu’s *Turkish Embassy Letters* – Manley was an acknowledged influence on the latter writer. To read Montagu in dialogue with her precursors, as I have done throughout this study, and with contemporary Muslim Arab women, as I shall do in the balance of this coda, does not diminish her significance for early modern English women’s engagement with the Islamic world. Rather, this approach resituates her within an extended history of women’s cultural agency through travel and/or writing from the middle of the sixteenth century, when England established formal ties with the Ottoman empire, to the end of the seventeenth century, when the Treaty of Karlowitz positioned the Ottomans as an empire in decline. To trace the activities, both material and discursive, of English women prior to Montagu’s “Turkish embassy” consequently complicates at its roots the still powerful linkage between western feminism and orientalism.

DISPLACING THE ORIENTALIST GAZE IN ASSIA DJEBAR’S WOMEN OF ALGIERS

The balance of this coda sketches an alternative methodology for future studies of early modern English women and the Islamic world that reassesses, but does not dismiss, Montagu’s significance.¹⁰ This approach involves the more radical displacement of the orientalist gaze, which became increasingly hegemonic during the eighteenth century, into the discursive space of contemporary Arab women’s engagement with the material and cultural legacies of western European imperialism.¹¹ Hence, I turn my attention to the Algerian novelist, playwright, poet, and filmmaker Assia Djebar’s

collection of short stories and theoretical reflections, *Femmes d'Alger dans leur appartement* [*Women of Algiers in their Apartment* (1980)].¹² This collection responds to the orientalist art produced at the peak of western European global imperialism, epitomized by the infamous harem scene of Eugène Delacroix's similarly titled painting (1834). It further enables a re-evaluation of the related orientalist tableau Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres memorialized as *Le Bain Turc* [*The Turkish Bath*, 1862]. Ingres was directly inspired by Montagu's verbal portrait of the women's bathhouse in her *Turkish Embassy Letters*.¹³ Looking at the legacy of imperialist orientalism through Djébar's *Women of Algiers* thus results in a historicized dialogical approach to early modern English women's writing from a transitional era when cultural orientalism was not yet premised by material imperialism.¹⁴ This dialogism across cultural and temporal registers underscores the continuing collusion between feminism and orientalism; it also offers alternatives to these paradigms.

Djébar's *Women of Algiers in their Apartment* consists of a series of vignettes composed "from 1958 to 1978" on women and war in the anti- and post-colonial arenas.¹⁵ Its first section, "Today" (3), explores the trauma of the woman warrior deployed during the anti-colonial struggle only to be silenced through the modern tortures of psychiatric confinement as post-colonial Algeria reneged on its promise of freedom for all its citizens.¹⁶ The next section returns to "Yesterday" through a series of stories exploring women's struggle for voice in a traditional society (59). This agency is ambivalently premised on the power of grandmothers to preserve women's history through the oral tradition and to enforce the dictates of patriarchy through the role of proxy a gender-segregated society allows. The final section, "Postface" (131),¹⁷ turns from fiction to theory to elaborate the dynamics of gazing and voicing Djébar establishes as the poles of what she calls her "own kind of feminism."¹⁸ This "Postface" begins: "On 25 June 1832, Delacroix disembarks in Algiers for a short stopover" (133). In fact, Delacroix's stopover, to cite art historian Christine Peltre, "was occasioned by a diplomatic and military mission" during the early years of the French occupation of Algeria, which began on June 14, 1830 and did not end until 1962.¹⁹ Marking this moment as the launching point for her recuperation of Algeria's suppressed history, Djébar reiterates with a difference the male colonist's "intoxicated gaze" at his feminized conquest (134).

This will-to-power was reinforced by the male Algerian's acquiescence to the French man's desire to enter the harem, coding the double jeopardy of the Algerian woman subject to native and colonial patriarchies. Hence, Delacroix's visit was "unique" in that he never repeated the experience and in that such harems were traditionally barred to non-related men.

As Djébar stresses, “Only two years earlier [that is, prior to the colonial invasion], the French painter would have been there at the risk of his life . . .” (137; ellipsis in the original).²⁰ Paradoxically, the product of this act of aggression and transgression is, in Djébar’s estimation, “a masterpiece that still stirs questions deep within us” (135). Djébar thus reads Delacroix and the colonial archive he represents against the grain for her own post-colonial feminist purposes: “these women, whom Delacroix – perhaps in spite of himself – knew how to observe as no one had done before him, have not stopped telling us something that is unbearably painful and still very much with us today” (136).²¹

Such questions revolve around the colonizing male’s dominating gaze, but also delve into the potential passive resistance of the female subjects of Delacroix’s *Women of Algiers*, which Djébar sees as “neither abandon[ing] nor refus[ing] themselves to our gaze” (136). As “we have no right to be” in this harem scene – that is, if we occupy the subject position, even if by default, of the unrelated male – “[t]his painting is itself a stolen [volé] glance” (137, 149). Comparable to Hélène Cixous and Catherine Clément’s *La Jeune Née* [*The Newly Born Woman*] (1975), originally published around the same time as Djébar’s collection, “volé,” from “voler,” “to steal,” takes a subversive feminist cast as it resonates with “voler,” “to fly, to take wing, to soar.”²² Linking anti-colonial nationalism to Algeria’s colonial past, Djébar describes completely veiled women as “white-shrouded wraiths.”²³ (The traditional *haïk* in Algeria consists of a white cloth a woman wraps around her head and body, clasping the cloth together so only one eye shows.) Yet, she also posits this veiled woman as “a potential thief within the masculine space.” This woman “appears there above all as a fugitive outline, half blinded when she can only look with one eye.” At the same time, Djébar casts doubt on the nationalist reforms: “The generosity of ‘liberalism’ has restored to her, in some cases and certain places, her other eye and at the same time the integrity of her gaze [a reference to the modern *hijab*, which allows a woman to show her full face]: thanks to the veil, both her eyes are now wide open to the exterior” (138).²⁴

As several critics have noted, Montagu’s discourse of veiling in her *Turkish Embassy Letters* likewise emphasizes how fully covering the face and body could enable a woman to enter an otherwise hostile patriarchal public sphere. As Montagu declares,

’Tis very easy to see they have more liberty than we have, no woman, of what rank so ever being permitted to go in the streets without two muslins, one that covers her face all but her eyes and another that hides the whole dress of her head, and hangs half way down her back and their shapes are also wholly concealed by a thing they call a *ferace* which no woman of any sort appears without.²⁵ (71)

Yet, Djébar's representation of the costs of accepting a limited gaze, whether through the interventions of colonialism (as in the French policy of forcibly unveiling Muslim women) or through the anachronisms of Islamist nationalism (as in the modified *hijab*), is much more nuanced than Montagu's. She shifts between past and present, tradition and modernity, figured through her oscillation between, in her words, "Arabic sounds – Iranian, Afghan, Berber, or Bengali – and why not, but always in feminine tones, uttered from lips beneath a mask" (1).²⁶ As she concludes,

Thus, there is another eye there [in her rendering of the modern "post-colonial" *hijab* and in the colonial portrait of the harem by Delacroix], the female gaze. But that liberated eye, which could become the sign of a conquest toward the light shared by other people, outside of the enclosure, is now in turn perceived as a threat; and the vicious circle closes itself back up again. (138)

Djébar's solution to the abuses of the new nationalism and "[t]he orientaling look" here interrupts the circuit of the gaze by emphasizing the voices of Algerian women through their oral testimonies in the unofficial languages of indigenous Berber, colloquial Arabic and, perhaps most significantly, the signifying body (146).²⁷

It is therefore Pablo Picasso's explosion of the closed space of Delacroix's harem in his fifteen recensions painted "from December 1954 to February 1955" – which Djébar describes as "[g]lorious liberation of space, the bodies awakening in dance, in a flowing outward, the movement freely offered" (149) – that becomes for her a wedge in this patriarchal and orientalist closure. As she continues,

For there is no harem any more, its door is wide open and the light is streaming in; there isn't even a spying servant any longer, simply another woman, mischievous and dancing. Finally, the heroines – with the exception of the queen, whose breasts, however, are bursting out – are totally nude, as if Picasso was recovering the truth of the vernacular language that, in Arabic, designates the "unveiled" as "denuded" women. Also, as if he were making that denuding not only into a sign of an "emancipation," but rather of these women's rebirth to their own bodies. (149–50)

To read Montagu's *hammam* scene alongside Djébar's explication of Picasso thus reveals the former straining for that liberation of bodies, especially her own body enclosed by English patriarchal norms, even as she retreats from the possibility of fully assimilating herself into this celebration of women's space.

Intriguingly, Montagu's sojourn was originally scheduled to last for two decades. As her friend, Joseph Spence, wrote, "Lady Mary, who had always delighted in romances and books of travel, was charmed with the thoughts of going into the East, though those embassies are generally an affair of

twenty years, and so 'twas a sort of dying to her friends and country." The embassy was cut short after two years due to "[a] combination of national and international problems and Wortley's [Lady Mary's husband's] own fumbling."²⁸ Nonetheless, in the short time Montagu stayed in the Ottoman empire, with the intention of living there most of her life, she began to study Turkish in earnest and donned the full veil (*ferace* and *yaşmak*) to learn about her new home.²⁹ As previously mentioned, Montagu felt this loose body and head covering (including the face) gave Turkish women "more liberty than we [English women of her class] have" (71). Can we imagine that, having acculturated to the Turkish language and mores she praised in her letters, she might have remained in the empire, perhaps having lived there for decades, to become the wife of an Ottoman official if her ultimately incompatible English husband had died?³⁰ Although she considered them slander, rumors abounded that her second child, a daughter born in Istanbul, was the progeny of a highly placed Turk, perhaps even the sultan himself. To complicate matters further, her English-born son, who accompanied his parents as a child on their Turkish embassy, converted to Islam as an adult.³¹ Montagu, after returning to England well in advance of her expected embassy of at least twenty years, hardened into bitterness at the male privileges of her own society. Her subsequent exile to Italy as she separated from her English husband thus became a liminal space for her between East and West.³² Two of her most prized possessions, after all, which she carried with her faithfully, were the Turkish dress she acquired during her travels and the *Turkish Embassy Letters* she continued to polish throughout her long life.

To return to Djébar's *Women of Algiers* – and particularly to her challenge to the masculinist colonial desire for the harem epitomized by Delacroix's and similar paintings – the dialogism that structures these vignettes articulates a post-colonial methodology that allows us to reassess Montagu's potentially colonial, albeit feminist, desire for the *hammam*. Ultimately, this dialogic approach leads us beyond the static tableaux of orientalist artists such as Delacroix, and even beyond counterorientalist productions of westerners such as Montagu and Picasso. As Djébar writes,

Only in the fragments of ancient murmurings do I see how we must look for a restoration of the conversation between women, the very one that Delacroix froze in his painting. Only in the door open to the full sun, the one Picasso later imposed, do I hope for a concrete and daily liberation of women. (151)

This resolution, as previously noted, took Djébar into the oral histories of Algerian women, whether in the farthest reaches of her country – as she insists, "whereas I claimed all of it, including the hinterland, [Albert] Camus

[the canonical French writer of Algeria] only hugged the shore.”³³ It also took her into the musical archives of her ancestors as recorded by western anthropologists, who perhaps did not imagine their project of cataloguing the “Orient” would become the basis for the extended career of Algeria’s most notable woman writer. Yet, Djebbar, ever alert for the violence binary oppositions impose on cultures and psyches, does not neglect the question of the relationship between the Algerian and the European woman, though the paradigm she develops rejects the unilateral imposition of feminist modes from West to East as in feminist orientalism.

The first story in the collection, also titled “Women of Algiers in their Apartment,” traces the interconnected lives of women from various class and ethnic backgrounds in the newly independent Algeria. Although this story is multifaceted, I wish to close this coda by focusing on its central *hammam* scene, which involves the introduction of the western European woman into the space of Algerian women on Algerian women’s terms. As Djebbar reflects in her interview with Clarisse Zimra,

Look at what happens in “Women of Algiers.” It is the Algerian woman who comes to the help of the French one, whereas this was a period when we’d hear, all day long, that “the feminists from the West,” as they were reverently called, had something crucial to give us, Moslem women, a lesson to teach us, ready-made recipes that would save us.³⁴

The central character Sarah’s seemingly Judeo-Christian name therefore becomes, in Zimra’s estimation, “a good example of the presence of Arabic in the French text, the short form for Sarahoui, a people who once came from the Saharan south.”³⁵ Sarah initiates the *hammam* scene in this title story while lying beside her husband, Ali, who has been so emotionally battered by his experiences in the anti-colonial war that he has completely alienated his only son, Nazim. Her musings initially focus on her earlier attempt to mediate between these opposing generations of men by rebuking Nazim for glossing over the trauma of war when he demands his father act the hero (14–15). These musings then drift toward the “thought of a Turkish bath [originally, “un bain maure” or a Moorish bath]” (27, 34), finally leading through an associative logic to her friend’s, the expatriate Anne’s, visit to the *hammam*.

Anne and Sarah, we learn, became close friends while at boarding school as young girls. This scenario reprises Djebbar’s own experience of being one of only “three or four Algerians” in a French-run boarding school of “four or five hundred little girls,” where she forged a lifelong friendship with “the daughter of an Italian settler.”³⁶ This experience in French

schools, facilitated by her Algerian father, who himself was a French language teacher, initiated the profound ambivalence that enabled and frustrated her desire to give voice to her otherwise silenced countrywomen.³⁷ As we return to the *hammam* scene in Djebbar's title story, we learn that Sarah left boarding school to join the anti-colonial struggle, for which she was incarcerated in the notorious French prisons of Algeria (34–35). Sarah, like other Algerian girls and women in these prisons, was tortured "with electricity," whose assault left a "wide, bluish scar . . . all along her abdomen" (44, 34).³⁸ This scar, we also learn, continues to signify the persistent gap between Anne, the daughter of a colonial official, and Sarah, a native Algerian woman.

Anne's entry into the *hammam*, to which she goes accompanied by a trio of her Algerian friends, is marked by a gaze that resonates significantly with the beginnings of Montagu's *hammam* scene. Montagu perceives she is entirely welcome in the *hammam*, which leads her to develop her overarching theme of cultural relativism (at least, where elite "white skinned" Turkish women are concerned).³⁹ To recall, she insists "there was not one of them that showed the least surprise or impertinent curiosity, but received me with all the obliging civility possible. I know no European court where the ladies would have behaved themselves in so polite a manner to a stranger" (58). No evidence disputes this sense of ease Montagu felt in this, for her, foreign setting, and she has been praised for being able to see herself through others' eyes. However, a similar scene in the English woman Aphra Behn's late seventeenth-century novella, *Oroonoko; or, The Royal Slave* (1688), suggests a more critical reading of Montagu's assumption she would be welcome in any space she entered, even when inappropriately dressed and apparently uninvited.⁴⁰ In *Oroonoko*, set in the precarious British colony of Surinam, the female narrator wishes to visit "an *Indian* Town," despite the indigenous uprising against the British colonial incursion (81). The colonists intend to "have a half Diversion in Gazing only," as none of their party spoke the indigenous languages; yet, they find themselves subject to a reversal of the gaze as they were greeted by, in the narrator's estimation, "Wonder and Amazement," followed by a physical "survey" of their persons and clothes (81–82). Although Montagu's presence in the Ottoman empire cannot be conflated with contemporaneous efforts at English colonialism in the Americas, juxtaposing the scenario of the reverse gaze in *Oroonoko* with the wonder and amazement Montagu represents in her *hammam* scene helps temper the apparent cultural relativism in the latter case. Again, we have no evidence to dispute the hospitality Montagu records during her initial venture into a Turkish bath. Nevertheless, Djebbar's *hammam* scene, which

begins by recording the bath owner's "look of suspicious condescension" as "she scrutinized Anne," provides another counterpoint to Montagu's perspective. This bath owner worries obsessively, because her son now lives in Europe, "she might one day find herself with a European daughter-in-law" (29). The European woman in Algeria thus reminds her of the post-colonial drain of Algerian men to Europe at the expense of Algerian women who remain at home.

Yet, the general mood of the *hammam* scene is not one of exclusion or hostility, as Anne disrobes with her friends to enjoy the comforts of the baths. Still, even this moment of community, which Montagu ultimately rejects, is marked by a noticeable difference: "Anne decided to go in wearing a two-piece bathing suit. Baya and Sonia [her Algerian friends] were wearing their usual pagnes with the conspicuous stripes, which brightened up the semidarkness of the steam room" (29). However, once naked, Anne does not appear visibly other, as "her black hair and particularly her somewhat weary smile, her resignation," could allow her to pass as an Algerian woman. Importantly, this assessment comes from the lower-class masseuse (whose life becomes the focus of narration after this scene), "while she took a good look at Anne" (31).⁴¹ It is Anne's inability to converse in the languages of Algeria – Arabic and Berber – that gives her away. Such cultural opacity, which seems striking given Anne grew up in Algeria, results in other moments of difference, as when an older woman asks Sarah how many children Anne has, and Sarah answers "without translating" as Anne jumps up to escape what she perceives as stifling heat (33). Following this episode, Anne asks Sarah about her scar, to which Sarah cannot find the words to respond (34). Only by uncovering her scar to embrace Leila (45), another Algerian woman subject to torture for resisting the colonizers, is Sarah able to articulate her sufferings through the language of sensuality.

The final emphasis on difference in a scene that ambivalently invites the entry of the western European woman into the community of women Montagu ultimately declines occurs as Anne, with the nostalgia of the colonizer, remarks, "If only I could tell her [the masseuse] that I feel a bond with her . . . I must have had a wet nurse like that . . ." (36; ellipses in the original). Although the masseuse cannot understand Anne's language, she clearly understands Anne's colonial nostalgia when she retorts to the request for her name, "'Fatma . . . Explain to her that in our country all *fatmas* are named Fatma!'" (36). As the "Glossary" to the English edition of *Women of Algiers* indicates, the term "fatma" was a "common pejorative noun by which the French colonizers designated Arab women and housemaids"

(157). Yet, the story ends with Anne rejecting at the last minute a flight back to France. "I'm not leaving," Anne suddenly cried out," startling a group of rural Algerians returning to France as migrant workers. The passage from Algeria to France for these nameless women involves abandoning the veil, as the youngest woman explained to Sarah, who translated for Anne. The related passage of Anne from France to Algeria continues, "I'm not going anymore!" Anne repeated, and as quickly as she could she rejoined Sarah, who was leaving the air terminal. They embraced [Elles s'enlacèrent]" (51). The French for "to embrace" is more conventionally "embrasser." Djébar's diction therefore suggests the word "lâcérer" [to lacerate] at the heart of this embrace or, more precisely, this interlacing.

The reintegration of the "other" woman, in this case the western European, into the space of Algeria, which has been signified as the space of the *hammam*, does not end with this ambivalent embrace. Rather, Anne and Sarah, as they return "[i]n the old jalopy, on the road that led to the flat part of town, open as a courtesan seemingly easy to get, before it turned into the arcade-lined avenue that carries high its tight, white heart, the women – first one, then the other too – were humming." The two women join in wordless but joyous song, which Djébar considers the basis of women's discourse, decrying its effacement under patriarchal programs of linguistic conformity, whether colonial or national.⁴² Thus joined, momentarily beyond the barriers of any phallogocentric symbolic system, the two women's identities also merge, with "the first one" (51), who could be either Sarah or Anne, imagining a radically revised perspective that refuses colonialist appropriation: "Not to go away, no, to gaze at the city when all the doors are opening . . . What a picture! It will make even the light tremble!" No longer does Delacroix's "light" – the purely aesthetic brilliance that made Renoir weep (136) – dominate the picture of Algeria. Moreover, no longer does the patriarchal rejection of female sexuality determine this gaze, since to be a courtesan on women's terms is cause for celebration.⁴³ And "the other one" – could it be Anne? could it be Sarah? or is it both together? – "added that they would finally resuscitate the proud joy of the raiders of earlier days, the only ones in the city who had ever been called 'kings,' undoubtedly because they had been renegades" (52).

In dialogically engaging with Djébar, this study accordingly ends where it began: with the confusion of self and other that conversion allows, as the "renegades" of Algiers were western Europeans who converted to Islam in the early modern period.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, the expanding criticism on England and the Islamic world from the sixteenth through the eighteenth century continues to render these "renegades" male only. But the female

“renegades” were there also, though their stories read differently than those of their male counterparts. Djébar, in concluding her title story on the note of the renegade, thus opens new avenues to assess Montagu and other early modern women who sought to engage the Islamic world on its own terms, as well as those feminist orientalist who rejected this history of engagement to embrace the accelerating western imperialist project.

Notes

INTRODUCTION

1. S. A. Skilliter, *William Harborne and the Trade with Turkey, 1578–1582: A Documentary Study of the First Anglo-Ottoman Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977); Alfred C. Wood, *A History of the Levant Company* (London: Oxford University Press, 1935); Albert Lindsay Rowland, *England and Turkey: The Rise of the Diplomatic and Commercial Relations* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1924); and Mortimer Epstein, *The English Levant Company: Its Foundation and History to 1640* (London: Routledge, 1908). For a more detailed list, see Hafiz Abid Masood, “Islam in Medieval and Early Modern English Literature,” *Islamic Studies* (Islamabad) 44.4 (Winter 2005), 553–29.
2. The Mughal empire is covered in P. M. Holt *et al.* (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Islam*, 2 vols., vol. 2, *The Further Islamic Lands, Islamic Society and Civilization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970). For a study addressing the early modern Anglo-Mughal encounter alongside the Anglo-Ottoman, see Richmond Barbour, *Before Orientalism: London’s Theatre of the East, 1576–1626* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
3. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (1978) (New York: Vintage, 1979). For critiques of the misapplication of Said’s argument to the early modern Anglo-Ottoman encounter, see Jonathan Burton, *Traffic and Turning: Islam and English Drama, 1579–1624* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005); Matthew Dimmock, *New Turkes: Dramatizing Islam and the Ottomans in Early Modern England* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2005); Nancy Bisaha, *Creating East and West: Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); Barbour, *Before Orientalism*; Daniel Vitkus, *Turning Turk: English Theater and the Multicultural Mediterranean, 1570–1630* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Aslı Çırakman, *From the “Terror of the World” to the “Sick Man of Europe”: European Images of Ottoman Empire and Society from the Sixteenth Century to the Nineteenth* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002); and Nabil Matar, *Islam in Britain, 1558–1685* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). For my intervention, see “Columbus in Istanbul: Ottoman Mappings of the ‘New World,’” *Genre* 30 (1997), 135–65, esp. 136–40.
4. Daniel Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 8. For a comprehensive presentation of

- these “competing imperialisms,” see Balachandra Rajan and Elizabeth Sauer (eds.), *Imperialisms: Historical and Literary Investigations, 1500–1900* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).
5. Gerald M. MacLean broaches the question, “What about the Women, Then?,” in *The Rise of Oriental Travel: English Visitors to the Ottoman Empire, 1580–1720* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 221–25. I respond to this question in “Travels through ‘Islam’ in Early Modern English Studies,” *Clio: A Journal of Literature, History and the Philosophy of History* 35 (2006), 225–43. MacLean also broaches possibilities for cross-cultural comparisons in “Renaissance Women between East and West” and “Women and Textiles between East and West,” *Re-Orienting the Renaissance: Cultural Exchanges with the East* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 12–19. I address Nabil Matar’s perspective on “Barbary and British Women,” *Britain and Barbary, 1589–1689* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005), 76–110, in Chapter 3.
 6. As Patricia Crawford details in “Women’s Published Writings, 1600–1700,” *Women in English Society*, ed. Mary Prior (London: Methuen, 1985), 211–82, although women’s publications (not including their manuscript productions) range from 0.8 to 11.1 percent of the total print production in English per half-decade from 1600 to 1700, this period saw a steady rise in English women’s participation in print culture (267). Many of English women’s literary “firsts” occur in the seventeenth century, such as Wroth’s publication of the first original (as opposed to translated) prose romance by an English woman in the early century and the first female playwrights for the English stage at its close. Moreover, “Quaker women began to write in the 1650s. Their work amounted to about 20 percent of women’s output for the whole century, a disproportionate share given their numbers in society” (213).
 7. Elaine Showalter, “Toward a Feminist Poetics” (1979), *The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature and Theory* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), 125–43, citing 128. For an influential typology of feminist literary criticism, see Toril Moi, *Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory* (London: Methuen, 1985). For an updated survey, see Ruth Robbins, *Literary Feminisms* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000). For discussions of this typology *vis-à-vis* early modern women, see Lorna Hutson, *Feminism and Renaissance Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 1–17, and Anita Pacheco, *Early Women Writers, 1600–1720* (London: Longman, 1998), 1–22. I consider the limits of gynocriticism in “Coming Out in Margaret Cavendish’s Closet Dramas,” *In-between: Essays and Studies in Literary Criticism* 9 (2000), 219–41, esp. 219–23.
 8. Margaret J. M. Ezell, *Writing Women’s Literary History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 14–65.
 9. Billie Melman, *Women’s Orients: English Women and the Middle East, 1718–1918* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), establishes Montagu as her “starting point” by dismissing religiously motivated women writers and travelers, such as the Quakers whom I discuss in Chapter 3, as outside the bounds of “[t]he modern ‘secular’ discourse [that] erupted after more than fifteen centuries of silence” (2, 10). Even within these questionable parameters, Melman completely

- neglects the secular writing of the “female wits,” whom I establish in Chapter 4 as important precursors to Montagu. Similarly, Mohja Kahf’s frequently cited *Western Representations of the Muslim Woman: From Termagant to Odalisque* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999) does not introduce women writers’ interventions until the subsection, “Lady Mary: Live from the Bagno” (118–38).
10. Kenneth R. Andrews, *Trade, Plunder and Settlement: Maritime Enterprise and the Genesis of the British Empire, 1480–1630* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), addresses the first part of the period under consideration. “Queen Elizabeth,” he concludes, “was not an imperialist” (11). Rather, “it was the reign of James [1603–25] that saw the effective beginnings of the British Empire” (13), though these “beginnings” also remained uncertain. David Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), complicates this assessment by beginning with “The Empire of Great Britain: England, Scotland, and Ireland, c. 1542–1612” (24–60). For further details, see *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, 5 vols., gen. ed. William Roger Lewis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998–99), particularly vol. 1, *The Origins of Empire*, ed. Nicholas Canny, and vol. 2, *The Eighteenth Century*, ed. P. J. Marshall. The recent volume, *Gender and Empire*, ed. Philippa Levine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), does not address English discourses of empire prior to the Hanoverian era (1714–1820).
 11. For a description of “negotiated” and “oppositional” subject positions, see Chapter 1.
 12. Felicity A. Nussbaum, *Torrid Zones: Maternity, Sexuality, and Empire in Eighteenth-Century English Narratives* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 1, 11, whom I engage further in Chapter 5.
 13. On the “false universal,” see Hilda L. Smith, *All Men and Both Sexes: Gender, Politics, and the False Universal in England, 1640–1832* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002), 1–38.
 14. Philip Massinger, *The Renegado* (1630), *Three Turk Plays from Early Modern England*, ed. Daniel J. Vitkus (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 240–344. On the trope of turning, see Burton, *Traffic and Turning*; Vitkus, *Turning Turk*; Gerald MacLean, “On Turning Turk, or Trying to: National Identity in Robert Daborne’s *A Christian Turn’d Turk*,” *Explorations in Renaissance Culture* 29 (2003), 225–52; Jonathan Burton, “English Anxiety and the Muslim Power of Conversion: Five Perspectives on ‘Turning Turk’ in Early Modern Texts,” *Journal of Early Modern Cultural Studies* 2.1 (2002), 35–67; Patricia Parker, “Preposterous Conversions: Turning Turk, and its ‘Pauline’ Righting,” *Journal of Early Modern Cultural Studies* 2.1 (2002), 1–34; Barbara Fuchs, “Faithless Empires: Pirates, Renegadoes, and the English Nation,” *English Literary History* 67 (2000), 45–69; Daniel Vitkus, “Turning Turk in *Othello*: The Conversion and Damnation of the Moor,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 48 (1997), 145–76; Lois Potter, “Pirates and ‘Turning Turk’ in Renaissance Drama,” *Travel and Drama in Shakespeare’s Time*, ed. Jean-Pierre Maquerlot and Michèle Willems (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 124–40;

- and N. I. Matar, “‘Turning Turk’: Conversion to Islam in English Renaissance Thought,” *The Durham University Journal* 86 (1994), 33–41. Warner G. Rice, “To Turn Turk,” *Modern Language Notes* 46 (1931), 153–54, lists as an ancillary definition woman as whore. Rice’s note is frequently cited, yet only Lawrence Danson, “England, Islam and the Mediterranean Drama: *Othello* and Others,” *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 2.2 (2002), 1–25, mentions this gendered definition; he does not develop its implications (9). On Massinger’s *The Renegado*, see Bindu Malieckal, “‘Wanton Irreligious Madness’: Conversion and Castration in Massinger’s *The Renegado*,” *Essays in Arts and Sciences* 31 (2002), 25–43, and Claire Jowitt, *Voyage Drama and Gender Politics, 1589–1642* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 157–75.
15. As indicated in the entry for “apostate,” *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd edn (1989), “the [Latin] *apostata* was by far the commoner form from 1350 to 1650.” The term applied not only to Christian–Muslim conversion, but more frequently to conversions between various Christianities after the Reformation. As the entry for “Turk” specifies, the phrases “to turn Turk” or “become Turk” appear in English men’s stage plays and travel narratives from the late sixteenth century through the early eighteenth. I discuss collateral definitions, which were highly gendered, in Chapter 4.
 16. Matar, “‘Turning Turk,’” 34, quoting Richard Hakluyt. Samuel C. Chew, *The Crescent and the Rose: Islam and England during the Renaissance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1937), initiated the first wave in this field.
 17. Matar, *Islam in Britain*, 11–12.
 18. Nabil Matar, *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 10.
 19. Daniel Goffman, *Britons in the Ottoman Empire, 1642–1660* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998), 4.
 20. Gerald MacLean advances this argument in “Ottomanism before Orientalism?: Bishop King Praises Henry Blount, Passenger in the Levant,” *Travel Knowledge: European “Discoveries” in the Early Modern Period*, ed. Ivo Kamps and Jyotsna G. Singh (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 85–96.
 21. Vitkus, “Turning Turk”; Barbara Fuchs, “Conquering Islands: Contextualizing *The Tempest*,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 48 (1997), 45–62; Jonathan Burton, “Anglo-Ottoman Relations and the Image of the Turk in *Tamburlaine*,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 30 (2000), 125–56. Burton, *Traffic and Turning*, perceptively explores the “anxious masculinity” of English men faced with conversion to Islam in the Ottoman empire (109), though he defers a comparable discussion of English and other western women’s negotiation of this possibility.
 22. Matar, *Islam in Britain*, established this “allure” of Islam for early modern English men (16).
 23. Chapter 1 discusses women of Christian provenance in the Ottoman “imperial harem,” who by and large did convert to Islam. Matar, *Britain and Barbary*, 92–110, posits similar forms of “upward mobility” for women in North African harems, where some lower-ranking English women became virtual queens.

24. Claude Lévi-Strauss quoted in Gayle Rubin, “The Traffic in Women: Notes on the ‘Political Economy’ of Sex,” *Toward an Anthropology of Women*, ed. Rayna R. Reiter (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975), 157–210, citing 176, 201. See Chapter 1 for further discussion of this paradigm.
25. *Othello* 4.1.250–51, *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt *et al.* (New York: Norton, 1997).
26. Vitkus, *Three Turk Plays*, 5.
27. Cf. James Shapiro, “The Pound of Flesh” and “The Hebrew Will Turn Christian,” *Shakespeare and the Jews* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 113–65.
28. For the repercussions of unconverted men consorting with Muslim women, see William Biddulph, *The Travels* (1609), who observes that “it is death for a Christian to meddle with” Turkish women (101), and Fynes Moryson, *An Itinerary* (1617), who tells of “an Italian Merchant, who was found in bed with a Turkish woman: which offence is capital . . . if he had not thus [by converting] redeemed his life” (129). Both tracts are included in Kenneth Parker (ed.), *Early Modern Tales of Orient: A Critical Anthology* (London: Routledge, 1999).
29. Andrew Barker, *A True and Certain Report of the Beginning, Proceedings, Overthrowes, and now present Estate of Captaine Ward and Danseker, the two late famous Pirates* (London, 1609), sigs. A3–A3^v. I have normalized *ijf* and *u/v* when citing early modern documents. I have also silently corrected typographical errors. Otherwise, all spellings and punctuation are from the original.
30. Marshall, *Eighteenth Century*, marks his time frame from 1689 to 1815, when “British expansion overseas” encompassed North America from Newfoundland to the Carolinas (1–2); the Caribbean, with Jamaica “added by conquest in 1655” (2); Asia, with Bombay in Britain’s possession by the end of the seventeenth century (3–4); and the Pacific, where a permanent British settlement “was established in 1788” (4). As MacLean, *Oriental Travel*, adds, England established “its first African colony, Tangier,” during the late seventeenth century (180).
31. Raymond Williams, “Dominant, Residual, and Emergent,” *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 121–27, citing 121. For a related application, see Barbara Simerka, “Toward a Materialist Poetic of Counter-Epic Literature,” *Discourses of Empire: Counter-Epic Literature in Early Modern Spain* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), 1–14.
32. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Translator’s Preface,” *Of Grammatology*, by Jacques Derrida (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), ix–lxxxvii, citing xxxii.
33. On the “the multi-cultural Mediterranean,” see Vitkus, *Turning Turk*.
34. Mary Wortley Montagu, *Turkish Embassy Letters*, ed. Malcolm Jack (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1993), 71, 92, 95, 126–27.
35. Assia Djebar, *Women of Algiers in their Apartment*, trans. Marjolijn de Jager (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1980), 138. Cf. Djebar on the relationship between veiled and unveiled Algerian women in *A Sister to Scheherazade*, trans. Dorothy S. Blair (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1993).

36. On the implications of “postcolonial” versus “post-colonial,” I side with Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin (eds.), *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader* (London: Routledge, 1995), xv, who conclude that the latter term “is best used to designate the totality of practices, in all their rich diversity, which characterise the societies of the post-colonial world from the moment of colonisation to the present day, since colonialism does not cease with the mere fact of political independence and continues in a neo-colonial mode to be active in many societies” (xv).

1 EARLY MODERN QUEENS AND ANGLO-OTTOMAN TRADE

1. Louis Adrian Montrose, “‘Shaping Fantasies’: Figurations of Gender and Power in Elizabethan Culture,” *Representing the English Renaissance*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 31–64, citing 31. Janel Mueller reassesses such new historicist treatments in “Virtue and Virtuality: Gender in the Self-Representations of Queen Elizabeth I,” *Form and Reform in Renaissance England*, ed. Amy Boesky and Mary Thomas Crane (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2000), 220–46.
2. See the queen’s answers to parliamentary petitions that she marry (1559, 1563), *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, ed. Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 56–59, 70–86.
3. A. N. McLaren, *Political Culture in the Reign of Elizabeth I: Queen and Commonwealth, 1558–1585* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), foregrounds the dominant patriarchal definition of sovereignty in the English tradition, enunciated by the influential fifteenth-century political theorist John Fortescue: “me semyd no woman ought soveranly or supremely to reygne upon man” (46). Mary Beth Rose, “The Gendering of Authority in the Public Speeches of Elizabeth I,” *PMLA* 115 (2000), 1077–82, posits a more femiocentric basis for the queen’s claims to sovereignty. Sarah L. Duncan, “The Two Virgin Queens,” *Explorations in Renaissance Culture* 30 (2004), 77–88, explores how Elizabeth I and her predecessor, Mary Tudor, strategically referred to themselves as “‘king’ or ‘prince’” (78).
4. Philippa Berry, *Of Chastity and Power: Elizabethan Literature and the Unmarried Queen* (London: Routledge, 1989); Christine Coch, “‘Mother of my Contrey’: Elizabeth I and Tudor Constructions of Motherhood,” *English Literary Renaissance* 26 (1996), 423–50; and Jennifer Summit, “‘The Arte of a Ladies Penne’: Elizabeth I and the Poetics of Queenship,” *English Literary Renaissance* 26 (1996), 395–422.
5. Christine Gledhill, “Pleasurable Negotiations,” *Female Spectators: Looking at Film and Television*, ed. E. Deidre Pribram (London: Verso, 1988), 64–89, citing 67–68. For the application of these theories to a comparative study of western European women’s writing, see Ann Rosalind Jones, *The Currency of Eros: Women’s Love Lyric in Europe, 1540–1620* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990).

6. Claude Lévi-Strauss, "The Principles of Kinship," *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* (Boston: Beacon, 1969), 478–97; Gayle Rubin, "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex," *Toward an Anthropology of Women*, ed. Rayna R. Reiter (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975), 157–210; Luce Irigaray, "Women on the Market," and "Commodities among Themselves," *This Sex Which Is Not One* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985), 170–91 and 192–97; Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985). For a critique of the blanket application of this paradigm, see Karen Newman, "Directing Traffic: Subjects, Objects, and the Politics of Exchange," *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 2 (1990), 41–54. As Maurice Godelier, *The Enigma of the Gift*, trans. Nora Scott (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), counters, "the exchange of women" remains "the most statistically frequent form of matrimonial exchange" (35), one prevalent in western Europe and the Ottoman empire during the sixteenth century.
7. Jane Donawerth, "Women's Poetry and the Tudor-Stuart System of Gift Exchange," *Women, Writing, and the Reproduction of Culture in Tudor and Stuart Britain*, ed. Mary E. Burke et al. (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2000), 3–18, citing 3.
8. Irigaray, "Commodities among Themselves," 196. Donawerth, "Women's Poetry," 18, citing Irigaray, "Des marchandises entre elles," 110.
9. Other than H. G. Rosedale's *Queen Elizabeth and the Levant Company: A Diplomatic and Literary Episode of the Establishment of Our Trade with Turkey* (London: Henry Frowde, 1904) and S. A. Skilliter's *William Harborne and the Trade with Turkey, 1578–1582: A Documentary Study of the First Anglo-Ottoman Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977) – the first distinctly anti-quarian and the second primarily archival – no sustained attention has been paid to this exchange.
10. For the "object that speaks," see Luce Irigaray, "Any Theory of the 'Subject' Has Always Been Appropriated by the 'Masculine,'" *Speculum of the Other Woman* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985), 133–46, esp. 135.
11. Leslie P. Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), illuminates the misogynist historiography on "the sultanate of women" (*kadımlar saltanatı*) (289, n. 4).
12. Douglas A. Howard, "Ottoman Historiography and the Literature of 'Decline' of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," *Journal of Asian History* 22 (1988), 52–77; Pál Fodor, "State and Society, Crisis and Reform, in 15th–17th Century Ottoman Mirror for Princes," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 40 (1986), 217–40; Bernard Lewis, "Ottoman Observers of Ottoman Decline," *Islamic Studies* 1 (1962), 71–87, and "The Decline of the Ottoman Empire," *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 3rd edn (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), 21–39. Also see Caroline Finkel, "'The Treacherous Cleverness of Hindsight': Myths of Ottoman Decay," *Re-Orienting the Renaissance: Cultural Exchanges with the East*, ed. Gerald MacLean (New York: Palgrave

- Macmillan, 2005), 148–74. Peirce, *Imperial Harem*, viii, critiques the gendering of the “decline thesis.”
13. Peirce, *Imperial Harem*, 179, quoting an anonymous reform treatise, *Kitab-ı Müstetab*, from the early seventeenth century.
 14. Cornell H. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: The Historian Mustafa Ali (1541–1600)* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), and “From Şeyhzade Korkud to Mustafa Ali: Cultural Origins of the Ottoman *Nasihatname*,” *Proceedings of the International Conference on the Social and Economic History of Turkey* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 1989), 67–77.
 15. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat*, 243, 295; cf. 258–59.
 16. The late sixteenth-century reformist Hasan Kafi el-Akhisari, quoted in Peirce, *Imperial Harem*, 179.
 17. Kochu (Koçu) Bey, c. 1630, in Bernard Lewis, *Istanbul and the Civilization of the Ottoman Empire* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), 173; cf. 174–75. Also see Lewis, “Ottoman Observers,” 75–78. For a general assessment of the reformist views of Hasan al-Kafi and Koçu Bey, see V. J. Parry, “The Successors of Sulaiman, 1566–1617,” *A History of the Ottoman Empire to 1730*, ed. M. A. Cook (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 103–32, esp. 107–8.
 18. Constance Jordan, “Woman’s Rule in Sixteenth-Century British Political Thought,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 40 (1987), 421–51, citing 426. McLaren, *Political Culture*, describes “Knox’s and Aylmer’s tracts” as “stand[ing] in a dialogic relationship” (49).
 19. John Knox, *The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* (1558), ed. Edward Arber (London, 1880), 7; cf. 11.
 20. John Aylmer, *An Harborowe for Faithfull and Trewe Subjectes, agaynst the late blowne Blast, concerninge the Government of Wemen* (1559) (Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1972), sig. B2, subsequently cited parenthetically.
 21. Note that “sorte of infideles” in this passage may be transcribed as “forte of infideles.”
 22. For the Turkish name, see S. A. Skilliter, “Khurrem” (a variant of Hürrem), *The Encyclopedia of Islam, New Edition*, ed. C. E. Bosworth *et al.* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1979), 66–67. For western European variants, see Geoffrey Bullough, “Mustapha and Alaham,” *Poems and Dramas of Fulke Greville* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1945), 1–62, esp. 16–18.
 23. Hürrem has been labeled Russian, Ukrainian, Ruthenian, and Polish. For these possibilities, see Peirce, *Imperial Harem*, 58–59, and Skilliter, “Khurrem,” 66. Galina Yermolenko, “Roxolana ‘The Greatest Emprise of the East,’” *Muslim World* 95 (2005), 231–48, argues persuasively for her Ukrainian origin.
 24. On the Ottoman *kul* system, see Halil İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age, 1300–1600*, trans. Norman Itzkowitz and Colin Imber (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973), 77, 87–88.
 25. On the *devshirme*, see İnalcık, *Ottoman Empire*, 78–85.
 26. Mehmed, son of Süleyman and Hürrem, was born in 1521 (Skilliter, “Khurrem,” 66).

27. Bassano, quoted in Peirce, *Imperial Harem*, 63.
28. A shift documented in Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 159–65.
29. Peirce, *Imperial Harem*, 64, 221. As Skilliter details, “Khurrem” directed most of her diplomatic letters to the Poles and Persians (67).
30. From a sixteenth-century Venetian ambassadorial report cited in Peirce, *Imperial Harem*, 56.
31. From a letter written on December 23, 1553, by Dr. Wotton, the English envoy at Paris, quoted in Edward S. Creasy, *History of the Ottoman Turks from the Beginning of their Empire to the Present Time* (1878) (Beirut: Khayate, 1968), 185, n. 1.
32. Parry, “Sulaiman the Magnificent,” *A History of the Ottoman Empire to 1730*, 79–102, citing 96–99.
33. Peirce, *Imperial Harem*, 89.
34. This episode is included in Hugh Goughe, trans., *The Ofspring of the House of Ottomanno and Officers Pertaining to the Greate Turkes Court* (London, 1569), sigs. jv–miii^v, subsequently cited parenthetically. It is partially reproduced in Bullough, “Mustapha and Alaham,” 9–16, along with an extensive genealogy of the Mustafa story, 7–25.
35. Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, *The Turkish Letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, Imperial Ambassador at Constantinople, 1554–1562*, trans. Edward Seymour Forster (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 49. As a relatively informed observer, Busbecq understood the innovation of Süleyman’s legal marriage to Hürrem (28–29, 118–19). Clarence Dana Rouillard, *The Turk in French History, Thought, and Literature, 1520–1660* (Paris: Boivin, 1941), cites Paolo Giovio’s popular history of the Ottoman empire, first published in 1552 at Lyons, presenting Roxelana “avoit entierement gaigné son mary par certaines caresses, et mesmement par breuvages ensorcilez” (442).
36. Richard Knolles, *The Generall Historie of the Turkes, from the first beginning of that Nation to the rising of the Othoman Familie* (London, 1603), 757, 760.
37. Samuel C. Chew, *The Crescent and the Rose: Islam and England during the Renaissance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1937), 498. Elizabeth Richmond-Garza’s “‘She Never Recovered Her Senses’: Roxana and Dramatic Representations of Women at Oxbridge in the Elizabethan Age,” *Sex and Gender in Medieval and Renaissance Texts*, ed. Barbara K. Gold, Paul Allen Miller, and Charles Platter (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997), 223–46, focuses on the neo-Latin tradition.
38. For early modern French plays focusing on the Süleyman/Mustafa/Hürrem triangle, see Rouillard, *Turk in French*, 421–41. For a comparable list of English plays, see Linda McJannet, “Mapping the Ottomans on the Renaissance Stage,” *Journal of Theatre and Drama* 2 (1996), 9–34.
39. Rouillard, *Turk in French*, 68, who paraphrases Moffan’s remark, “[n]ous avons donc entre nous Chrestiens occasion grande de nous resjouyr ensemble de la

- mort de nostre tant grand et cruel ennemy, et nous faut penser que cecy n'a esté fait sans la grande providence de Dieu nous voulant ayder" (68, n. 3).
40. Rachel Weil, "The Crown Has Fallen to the Distaff: Gender and Politics in the Age of Catherine de Medici, 1560–1589," *Critical Matrix* 1 (1985), 1–38.
 41. Fulke Greville, *Mustafa, Poems and Dramas of Fulke Greville*, ed. Geoffrey Bullough (New York: Oxford University Press, 1945), 63–137, citing 125. On Greville's *Mustafa*, see Bullough, "Mustapha and Alaham," 25–34; Karen L. Raber, "Murderous Mothers and the Family/State Analogy in Classical and Renaissance Drama," *Comparative Literature Studies* 37 (2000), 298–320; Jonathan Burton, *Traffic and Turning: Islam and English Drama, 1579–1624* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005), 180–95; and Linda McJannet, *The Sultan Speaks: Dialogue in English Plays and Histories about the Ottoman Turks* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 152–63.
 42. Fulke Greville, *A Dedication to Sir Philip Sidney, The Prose Works of Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke*, ed. John Gouws (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 1–135, citing 133.
 43. For sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century dramas on this theme, see Chew, *Crescent and Rose*, 469–540. For Restoration representations, see Bridget Orr, *Empire on the English Stage, 1600–1714* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 67–80. Also see Ros Ballaster, *Fabulous Orient: Fictions of the East in England, 1662–1785* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2005), 59–69, who nevertheless perpetuates the western stereotype of Roxolana/Hürrem as a "courtesan."
 44. I address the late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century feminist appropriations of these orientalist themes in Chapter 4.
 45. Roger Boyle, *The Tragedy of Mustapha, the Son of Solyman the Magnificent, Five Heroic Plays*, ed. Bonamy Dobrée (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1960), 13–14.
 46. Peirce, *Imperial Harem*, maintains, "[u]nlike Hurrem and Nurbanu . . . Safiye probably did not become the sultan's legal wife" (94).
 47. Peirce, *Imperial Harem*, 17.
 48. A common misconception perpetuated in Justin McCarthy's *The Ottoman Turks: An Introductory History to 1923* (London: Longman, 1997), 92.
 49. Peirce, *Imperial Harem*, 55.
 50. For the volatile dynastic politics of the Tudor era, see Retha M. Warnicke, *The Rise and Fall of Anne Boleyn* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989). Anne Boleyn, whom Henry VIII scandalously wed and precipitously executed for reasons of succession, was Elizabeth I's mother. Unfortunately, Warnicke titles her central chapter "Harem Politics" (163–90), thus evoking western clichés, without exploring the historically specific features of this complicated political system.
 51. Çiğdem Balım, "Safiye Walide Sultan," *The Encyclopedia of Islam, New Edition*, ed. C. E. Bosworth *et al.* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995), 817–18.

52. S. A. Skilliter, “The Letters of the Venetian ‘Sultana’ Nur Banu and her Kira to Venice,” *Studia Turcologica memoriae Alexii Bombaci dicata*, ed. Aldo Gallotta and Ugo Marazzi (Naples: n.p., 1982), 515–36.
53. John Sanderson, *The Travels of John Sanderson in the Levant, 1584–1602*, ed. Sir William Foster (London: Hakluyt Society, 1931), 61. Sanderson accompanied Edward Barton’s late sixteenth-century embassy to the Ottoman court, on whom consult Rosedale, *Queen Elizabeth*, 41–64.
54. Citing the sixth edition of Knolles’s foundational history (see note 36), retitled *The Turkish History from the Original of that Nation, to the Growth of the Ottoman Empire* (London, 1687), 837.
55. On the Safavid and Mughal empires, see P. M. Holt, Ann K. S. Lambton, and Bernard Lewis (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Islam*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 1: 394–429 and 2: 35–66.
56. On “Diplomatic Relations between France and Turkey,” see Rouillard, *Turk in French*, 105–65.
57. Stephen A. Fischer-Galati, “The Protestant Reformation and Islam,” *The Mutual Effects of the Islamic and Judeo-Christian Worlds: The East European Pattern*, ed. Abraham Ascher, Tibor Halasi-Kun, and Béla K. Király (New York: Brooklyn College Press, 1979), 53–64, and *Ottoman Imperialism and German Protestantism, 1521–1555* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959).
58. Skilliter, *William Harborne*, 36, 37, 23. Among the causes listed in *A Declaration of the Sentence and Deposition of Elizabeth, the Usurper and Pretensed Quene of Englande* (Antwerp, 1588), is “procuringe for the oppression of Christendome and disturbance of comon peace, to bring in our potent and cruell enemy *the Turke*.”
59. In *The Letters of Queen Elizabeth* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1968), G. B. Harrison persuasively argues for the queen’s authorship of state letters, whether they were penned personally by her, dictated to her secretaries, or reviewed for her final signature (x). For an astute analysis of Elizabeth’s letters to male Muslim sovereigns, see Jonathan Burton, “Anglo-Ottoman Relations and the Image of the Turk in *Tamburlaine*,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 30 (2000), 125–56, esp. 129–37.
60. For Elizabeth’s correspondence with the Ottoman sultan, see Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations Voyages Traffiques & Discoveries of the English Nation*, 12 vols. (New York: AMS Press, 1965), 5: 169–91, 224–28, and 311–13. Edward Barton, Harbourne’s successor as English ambassador to the Ottoman empire from 1588 to 1597, alone evokes the topos of women’s weakness to obtain support for his queen. In his petitions to the Ottoman sultan, he repeatedly casts Elizabeth as a “poor woman,” as recorded in Albert Lindsay Rowland, *England and Turkey: The Rise of Diplomatic and Commercial Relations* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1924), 109; cf. 103, 110.
61. Hakluyt, *Principal Navigations*, 5: 175, 178. For Elizabeth I’s use of the title “Defensatrix Fidei,” see Skilliter, *William Harborne*, 74–75.

62. The Turkish general Khizir Pasha of Rumelia wrote to Elizabeth in 1590, referring to her as “Potentissima et Suprema inter omnes Principes qui Iesum adorant Luteranorum ritus Regina”; Ottomans referred to Harborne as “Luteran elchisi” (Skilliter, *William Harborne*, 37).
63. Skilliter, *William Harborne*, 37. Creasy, *History of Ottoman*, similarly records, “Sinan Pacha is reported to have told the Austrian Ambassador Pezzen, ‘That there was nothing needed to make the English into genuine Mussulmans, save a lifting of the finger and a recital of the Eschdad’ (the formula of the confession of faith)” (228, n. 1). However, Elizabeth strategically repudiated her ties with Islam at other stages in her career, as noted by Carole Levin, “*The Heart and Stomach of a King: Elizabeth I and the Politics of Sex and Power*” (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), 35, 138.
64. For instance, “Her Majesties letter to the Turke or Grand Signior 1581” identifies Murad III as “Emperour of all the dominions of Turkie, and of all the East Monarchie chiefe above all others whosoever” (Hakluyt, *Principal Navigations*, 5: 189).
65. Italian and English versions of “A letter written by the most high and mighty Empresse the wife of the Grand Signior Sultan Murad Can to the Queenes Majesty of England, in the yeere of our Lord, 1594,” appear in Hakluyt, *Principal Navigations*, 6: 114–18.
66. Hakluyt, *Principal Navigations*, 6: 114, 117.
67. S. A. Skilliter, “Three Letters from the Ottoman ‘Sultana’ Safiye to Queen Elizabeth I,” *Documents from Islamic Chanceries*, ed. S. M. Stern (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965), 119–57, citing 130, 131 (translator’s brackets).
68. Knolles, *Turkish History*, emphasizes the vastness of the Ottoman empire, with “no part of the World left untouched but *America* only” (92). For Ottoman reconnaissance of the newly “discovered” Americas, see Bernadette Andrea, “Columbus in Istanbul: Ottoman Mappings of the ‘New World,’” *Genre: Forms of Discourse and Culture* 30 (1997), 135–65.
69. Skilliter, “Three Letters,” 131–32.
70. Hakluyt, *Principal Navigations*, 5: 169.
71. Skilliter mentions “*Mehd-i ‘ulya*, ‘most exalted cradle’” is “an honorific title of the Walide Sultan” (“Three Letters,” 131, n. 116).
72. Skilliter, “Three Letters,” 132. On the modesty topos, see Margaret W. Ferguson, “Renaissance Concepts of the ‘Woman Writer,’” *Women and Literature in Britain, 1500–1700*, ed. Helen Wilcox (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 143–68. For the queen’s strategic use of this topos, see *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, 326.
73. Peirce, *Imperial Harem*, 4, 5. For a deconstruction of the harem as a western fantasy, see Alain Grosrichard, *The Sultan’s Court: European Fantasies of the East*, trans. Liz Heron (London: Verso, 1998). For a feminist critique of Grosrichard, who is frequently cited in literary studies of the early modern Anglo-Ottoman encounter, see Inge E. Boer, “Despotism from Under the Veil: Masculine and Feminine Readings of the Despot and the Harem,” *Cultural Critique* (1995–96), 43–73, esp. 51–55.

74. Skilliter, “Three Letters,” 132–33.
75. Matthew Dimmock, *New Turkes: Dramatizing Islam and the Ottomans in Early Modern England* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2005), 89, discusses Hakluyt’s editorial alterations to the English capitulations (or trading agreement) with the Ottomans, also published in *Principal Navigations*. Dimmock does not discuss Safiye’s letter.
76. Hakluyt, *Principal Navigations*, 6: 115, 117.
77. Skilliter, “Three Letters,” 139.
78. John B. Thompson, Introduction to Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, trans. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), 14.
79. Hakluyt, *Principal Navigations*, 5: 108. For the protocol for diplomatic gift giving in the Ottoman empire, see Peirce, *Imperial Harem*, 220–28.
80. *The Diary of Master Thomas Dallam, 1599–1600*, ed. J. Theodore Bent (New York: Burt Franklin, 1964), 1, 74, 75, 73; cf. 79–80. On “Dallam’s Organ,” see Gerald M. MacLean, *The Rise of Oriental Travel: English Visitors to the Ottoman Empire, 1580–1720* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 1–47.
81. For the gift of “a jewel of her majesties picture, set with some rubies and diamants,” as recorded by Richard Wrag, a member of the English ambassador’s party, see Skilliter, “Three Letters,” 146. Wrag also describes the return gift of a Turkish costume. Janet Arnold inventories these gifts in *Queen Elizabeth’s Wardrobe Unlock’d* (Leeds: Maney, 1988), 98; 108, n. 37. “Portrait of a Woman” or “The Persian Lady” (1590s) by Marcus Gheeraerdt’s the Younger (see cover image) is reputed to be Queen Elizabeth, though this attribution has been contested. For details, see Roy Strong, “‘My Weeping Stagg I Crowne’: The Persian Lady Considered,” *The Art of the Emblem*, ed. Michael Bath, John Manning, and Alan R. Young (New York: AMS Press, 1993), 103–41.
82. Skilliter, “Three Letters,” 143, who adds that Edward Barton, English ambassador to Constantinople, considered Esperanza Malchi “his ‘mediatrix’ with the Sultana” (154). Godfrey Goodwin, *The Private World of Ottoman Women* (London: Saqi Books, 1997), details the *kira*’s duties in the harem run by Safiye, which could include drafting correspondence (128, 135–38). Goodwin’s unsubstantiated comment that Safiye’s letters to Elizabeth reflect the former’s “greed” nevertheless provides an unfortunate example of patriarchal bias in assessing this exchange (138). Ruth Lamdan provides a more thorough assessment of Jewish women as mediators in “Communal Regulations as a Source for Jewish Women’s Lives in the Ottoman Empire,” *Muslim World* 95 (2005), 249–63.

2 THE IMAGINARY GEOGRAPHIES OF MARY WROTH’S URANIA

1. This analysis has been pursued most rigorously by Kim F. Hall, *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), 187–210.

2. On the Holy Roman empire, see Frances A. Yates, *Astraea: The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 1975), 1–28, who maintains, “it is precisely as a phantom that Charles [V]’s empire was of importance. . . . Every revival of the Empire, in the person of some great emperor, carried with it, as a phantom, the revival of a universal imperialist hope” (1). For a related analysis, see W. B. Patterson, *King James VI and the Reunion of Christendom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
3. Gerald MacLean, “Ottomanism before Orientalism? Bishop King Praises Henry Blount, Passenger in the Levant,” *Travel Knowledge: European “Discoveries” in the Early Modern Period*, ed. Ivo Kamps and Jyotsna G. Singh (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 85–96.
4. This focus on humanism characterizes the English Renaissance, which I use to describe Wroth’s milieu. “Early modern” is the broader term for the era, which I use more generally. Leah S. Marcus elucidates the relationship between Renaissance/early modern in *Redrawing the Boundaries: The Transformation of English and American Literary Studies*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt and Giles Gunn (New York: MLA, 1992), 41–63.
5. On colonial cabinets, see Steven Mullaney, “Strange Things, Gross Terms, Curious Customs: The Rehearsal of Cultures in the Late Renaissance,” *Representing the English Renaissance*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 65–92. For the contents of these cabinets, see Oliver Impey and Arthur MacGregor (eds.), *The Origins of Museums: The Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Europe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), esp. MacGregor, “The Cabinet of Curiosities in Seventeenth-Century Britain,” 147–58, and Julian Raby, “Exotica from Islam,” 251–58. On the feminine “object that speaks,” see Chapter 1, note 10.
6. Mohammad Nezam-Mafi, “Persian Re-creations: The First ‘Persian’ in England, 1610–26,” *Modern Language Association Convention* (December 28, 1998). This talk was incorporated into Nezam-Mafi’s “Persian Recreations: Theatricality in Anglo-Persian Diplomatic History, 1599–1828,” unpublished PhD dissertation, Boston University (1999).
7. The term “imaginary geography” derives from Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979), though Wroth’s era is demonstrably proto-orientalist. Although he does not deal with women’s writing, Richmond Barbour’s *Before Orientalism: London’s Theatre of the East, 1576–1626* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) establishes the era’s “proto-orientalist” features.
8. For the full scope of this injunction, see Suzanne W. Hull, *Chaste, Silent, and Obedient: English Books for Women, 1475–1640* (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1982).
9. Margaret W. Ferguson, “A Room Not Their Own: Renaissance Women as Readers and Writers,” *The Comparative Perspective on Literature*, ed. Clayton Koelb and Susan Noakes (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), 93–116, citing 99, 101.
10. Mary Ellen Lamb, *Gender and Authorship in the Sidney Circle* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), 12, 13. Unless otherwise indicated, when citing the Bible I am referring to the King James Version.

11. Lamb, *Gender and Authorship*, 16. On Eleanor Davies, see Teresa Feroli, *Political Speaking Justified: Women Prophets and the English Revolution* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2006), 35–96.
12. Sharon L. Jansen, *The Monstrous Regiment of Women: Female Rulers in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002); Barbara Kiefer Lewalski, *Writing Women in Jacobean England* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 243–307.
13. R. F. Foster, *Modern Ireland, 1600–1972* (London: Penguin, 1989), 9.
14. Josephine Roberts, “Critical Introduction,” *The First Part of The Countess of Montgomery’s Urania*, by Mary Wroth (Binghamton, NY: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1995), xxxix, xlvi.
15. Josephine Roberts, Introduction, *The Poems of Lady Mary Wroth* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983), 24–26.
16. George Sandys, *A Relation of a Journey begun An. Dom: 1610* (London, 1615), 9, as well as the frontispiece map.
17. Jonathan Haynes, *The Humanist as Traveler: George Sandys’s Relation of a Journey begun An. Dom. 1610* (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1986), 16.
18. Nona Fienberg, “Mary Wroth and the Invention of Poetic Subjectivity,” *Reading Mary Wroth: Representing Alternatives in Early Modern England*, ed. Naomi J. Miller and Gary Waller (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991), 175–90, describes the romance as a “558-page prose and poetry ‘preface’” to the lyric sequence (185).
19. Mary Wroth, *The First Part of The Countess of Montgomery’s Urania*, ed. Josephine A. Roberts (Binghamton, NY: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1995), 2, subsequently designated *UI* and cited parenthetically. In her “Commentary,” Roberts suggests that “Urania’s discovery of the sonnet derives from an episode in [Philip] Sidney’s *Old Arcadia*” (716, n. 3.9).
20. Cf. Helen Hackett, “The Torture of Limena: Sex and Violence in Lady Mary Wroth’s *Urania*,” *Voicing Women: Gender and Sexuality in Early Modern Writing*, ed. Kate Chedzoy, Melanie Hansen, and Suzanne Trill (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1997), 93–110.
21. Elaine Beilin, “‘The Onely Perfect Vertue’: Constancy in Mary Wroth’s *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*,” *Spenser Studies* 2 (1981), 229–45, initiated discussion of these themes.
22. Lamb, *Gender and Authorship*, 188–90.
23. Jeff Masten, “‘Shall I turne blabb?’” *Reading Mary Wroth*, 67–87.
24. Heather Dubrow, *Echoes of Desire: English Petrarchism and Its Counterdiscourse* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), 99–162.
25. For a related reference to the sonnet form as a room, see John Donne’s “The Canonization,” *Poems, by J.D. With elegies on the authors death* (London, 1633), 202–4.
26. Michael Drayton, *Poly-Olbion* (London, 1612), sig. A.
27. On the Ottoman referents in Holbein’s *The Ambassadors*, see Bernadette Andrea, “Pamphilia’s Cabinet: Gendered Authorship and Empire in Lady Mary Wroth’s *Urania*,” *ELH: English Literary History* 68 (2001), 335–58, esp. 339–44.

28. For a comparable analysis, see Margaret Ferguson, “Feathers and Flies: Aphra Behn and the Seventeenth-Century Trade in Exotica,” *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture*, ed. Margreta de Grazia, Maureen Quilligan, and Peter Stallybrass (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 235–59, citing 235.
29. On Antissia’s unruly passion versus Pamphilia’s regal composure, see Roberts, “Critical Introduction,” *UI*, xxxiv–xxxv.
30. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Translator’s Preface,” *Of Grammatology*, by Jacques Derrida (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), ix–lxxxvii, citing xxxii.
31. Edward Tripp, *The Meridian Handbook of Classical Mythology* (New York: Meridian, 1970), 57. The classical source on Cyprus as the Isle of Love is Book 10 of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. As Roberts, “Critical Introduction,” *UI*, xxxiii, indicates, Wroth was an avid reader of Ovid, a text generally forbidden to women.
32. Richard Knolles, *The Generall Historie of the Turkes* (London, 1603), details this conquest, concluding with the marginal note, “*Cyprus lost*” (867). Ronald C. Jennings, *Christians and Muslims in Ottoman Cyprus and the Mediterranean World, 1571–1640* (New York: New York University Press, 1993), discusses the aftermath of the conquest.
33. Archimandrite Kyprianos quoted in Harry Luke, *Cyprus Under the Turks, 1571–1878* (1921) (London: C. Hurst, 1969), 15. Also see Jennings, *Christians and Muslims*, 306, 385–99.
34. Knolles, *Generall Historie*, celebrates “[t]he great and notable battell between the Turks and the Christians, commonly called, the battell of Lepanto” (878). He nevertheless acknowledges the Turkish retort that “*the losse of Cyprus was greater than the losse of the battell at Lepanto*” (885). For a summary of scholarship on this battle, see Jennings, *Christians and Muslims*, 10–12. As Halil İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age, 1300–1600*, trans. Norman Itzkowitz and Colin Imber (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973), affirms, “[t]his victory . . . was the greatest feat of Ottoman arms” (41).
35. Roberts perpetuates the common fallacy that “[t]his Christian victory [in Lepanto] ended the Turkish threat against the West,” in her “Commentary” to *UI*, 730, n. 123.18. As Jennings reiterates, “[h]owever soundly their [the Ottoman’s] fleet may have been defeated at Lepanto, that did not affect Ottoman momentum in the Mediterranean” (*Christians and Muslims*, 396; cf. 346–47). Knolles, *Generall Historie*, indicates that the Ottoman invasion of Cyprus was launched from Pamphilia in Asia Minor (846–47, 855).
36. Hall, *Things of Darkness*, 190–91. Susan Donahue, “‘My Desires . . . Lie . . . Wrapt up Now in Folds of Losse’: Lady Mary Wroth’s Baroque Visions of Female Community in the Enchantment Episodes of *The Countess of Montgomery’s Urania* (1621),” *Female Communities, 1600–1800: Literary Visions and Cultural Realities*, ed. Rebecca D’Monté and Nicole Pohl (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000), 28–52, similarly ignores Ottoman control of Cyprus (35).
37. Edward Denny, “To Pamphilia from the father-in-law of Seralius,” in Roberts, Introduction, *Poems*, 32–33. Lamb, *Gender and Authorship*, 156–59, explicates

- this attack on female authorship. Rosalind Smith, “Lady Mary Wroth’s *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*: The Politics of Withdrawal,” *English Literary Renaissance* 30 (2000), 408–31, complicates the relationship between Denny’s attack and Wroth’s withdrawal of the published *Urania* from circulation.
38. Mary Wroth, “Railing Rimes Returned upon the Author by Mistress Mary Wrothe,” in Roberts, Introduction, *Poems*, 34–35.
 39. See Margaret Cavendish, *Sociable Letters* (1664), ed. James Fitzmaurice (New York: Garland Publishing, 1997), where she begins her dedicatory letter to her husband with a paraphrase of Denny’s attack on Wroth (4).
 40. Gossett, “General Description of the Manuscript,” *U2*, xvii–xxiii. The published *Urania* ran to 350,000 words.
 41. Wroth expands the imaginary geography of her romance in a less sustained way into Natolia (Anatolia), Babylon, and other eastern regions. See “Index of Places in Part Two,” *U2*, 574–75.
 42. Mueller surveys this shift in “Altered Narrative Directions in Part Two,” *U2*, xxviii–xxxiv.
 43. For a summary of Pamphilia and Amphilanthus’s relationship, see Lamb, *Gender and Authorship*, 231–35.
 44. Hall, *Things of Darkness*, 197; cf. 208–9. Mary Wroth, *The Second Part of the Countess of Montgomery’s Urania*, ed. Josephine A. Roberts; completed by Suzanne Gossett and Janel Mueller (Tempe, AZ: Renaissance English Text Society, 1999), 271, subsequently designated *U2* and cited parenthetically.
 45. Hall, *Things of Darkness*, 210; cf. 207–8.
 46. For an analysis that accounts for religion, see Shelia T. Cavanagh, “‘She Is but Enchanted’: Christianity and the Occult in Lady Mary Wroth’s *Urania*,” *Things of the Spirit: Women Writers Constructing Spirituality*, ed. Kristina K. Groover (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004), 69–89.
 47. Cf. Shelia T. Cavanagh’s cosmological discussion of “Asia in Flames,” *Cherished Torment: The Emotional Geography of Lady Mary Wroth’s Urania* (Pittsburg, PA: Duquesne University Press, 2001), 113–23.
 48. On the medieval hope that the Mongols would convert to Christianity, see Vali Erfanian T. Baghal-Kar, “Images of Persia in British Literature from the Renaissance through the Nineteenth Century,” unpublished PhD dissertation, Bowling Green State University (1981), 25–26.
 49. This effort is documented in *A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia and the Papal Mission of the XVIIth and XVIIIth Centuries*, vol. 1 (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1939), which includes letters from Pope Clement VIII and Pope Paul V to Shah Abbas I brokered by the Sherley brothers (66–155).
 50. Nezam-Mafi, “Persian Recreations,” 24, 8, 3. A third brother, Thomas, also appears in these texts. However, unlike Anthony and Robert, Thomas did not travel to Persia.
 51. Nezam-Mafi, “Persian Recreations,” 20, 24–25. Also see G. Le Strange (ed.), *Don Juan of Persia, a Shi’ah Catholic, 1560–1604* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1926), and Nasrin Rahimieh, “A Conversion Gone Awry,” *Missing Persians*:

Discovering Voices in Iranian Cultural History (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2001), 21–38.

52. Nezam-Mafi modifies this formula in his dissertation, where he specifies that “[t]he first Persian *of frank* to reach English shores is an Englishman [i.e., Robert Sherley] who must act the part” (38; my emphasis). Regarding lower-ranked women from the Persian domains entering England, Nezam-Mafi adduces a Tartar girl whom Anthony Jenkinson acquired while in Astrakhan in 1576 and subsequently presented to Queen Elizabeth (125). D. W. Davies, *Elizabethans Errant: The Strange Fortunes of Sir Thomas Sherley and His Three Sons* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1967), mentions “Leylye, a Persian woman” who accompanied Lady Sherley to England (242). Moreover, “three or four English women” accompanied the Sherleys on their return trip to Persia (247). Boies Penrose, *The Sherleian Odyssey* (London: Wessex, 1938), 189, comments that Captain Powell’s wife, who had been living with him in Herefordshire while the Sherleys sojourned in London, was Persian.
53. Elizabeth I, quoted in E. Denison Ross, *Sir Anthony Sherley and His Persian Adventure* (London: Routledge, 1933), 5. Anthony earned the queen’s ire for accepting the Order of Saint Michael from the king of France. Also see Penrose, *Sherleian Odyssey*, 7.
54. Samuel C. Chew captures Anthony Sherley’s contradictory character as “A Great Plotter and Projector in Matters of State,” *The Crescent and the Rose: Islam and England during the Renaissance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1937), 239–97.
55. Ross, *Sir Anthony*, 17, discusses the significance of Qazvin as the Safavid capital. For a description of this encounter, see Davies, *Elizabethans Errant*, 104.
56. *Chronicle of Carmelites*, 70, confirms this encounter was fortuitous.
57. Anthony Sherley, *Relation of Travels into Persia* (1613) (Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1974), 66.
58. For the full list, see Ross, *Sir Anthony*, xxix–xxxviii.
59. Anthony Parr, “Foreign Relations in Jacobean England: The Sherley Brothers and the ‘Voyage of Persia,’” *Travel and Drama in Shakespeare’s Time*, ed. Jean-Pierre Maquerlot and Michèle Willems (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 14–31, citing 14, 15. Samuel Purchas, “A briefe memoriall of the travels of the Right Honourable Sir Robert Sherley Knight, Count and Knight of the Sacred Empire, now Ambassador from the Persian King to His Majestie and other Christian Kings,” *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimes*, 20 vols. (Glasgow: James MacLehose, 1905), 10: 376.
60. Parry, quoted in Ross, *Sir Anthony*, 103.
61. Anthony Sherley, *Relation*, 127.
62. Davies, *Elizabethans Errant*, 168–70.
63. Thomas Middleton, *Sir Robert Sherley, sent ambassadour in the name of the King of Persia, to Sigismond the third, King of Poland and Swecia, and to other Princes of Europe* (1609), *The Works of Thomas Middleton*, ed. A. H. Bullen (London: John C. Nimmo, 1886), 317. Thomas Herbert, *A Relation of Some Yeares Travaile, Begunne Anno 1626. Into Afrique and the greater Asia, especially*

- the Territories of the Persian Monarchie: and some parts of the Orientall Indies, and Iles adjacent* (1634) (Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1971), 125.
64. Chew summarizes this itinerary, *Crescent and Rose*, 298–339.
65. Nezam-Mafi, “Persian Recreations,” 3; Chew, *Crescent and Rose*, 306.
66. Nezam-Mafi, “Persian Recreations,” 38.
67. Anthony Parr notes this ambiguity in his Introduction to *Three Renaissance Travel Plays* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 8, though he does not explore its historical referent. This volume includes Day, Rowley, and Wilkins’s *Travailes* (which Parr modernizes to *Travels* with a resultant loss of meaning), 55–134, subsequently cited parenthetically. For a more extensive survey of early modern English plays on this theme, see Linda McJannet, “Bringing in a Persian,” *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 12 (1999), 236–67. Regarding Robert Sherley’s audiences with King James, see Davies, *Elizabethans Errant*, 225–86.
68. For the classic theorization, see Joan Riviere, “Womanliness as Masquerade” (1929), *Formations of Fantasy*, ed. Victor Burgin, James Donald, and Cora Kaplan (London: Routledge, 1986), 35–44.
69. Anthony Nixon, *The Three English Brothers, Sir Thomas Sherley his Trauels, with his three yeares imprisonment in Turkie, his Inlargement by his Maiesties Letters to the great Turke; and lastly, his safe returne into England . . .* (1607) (Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1970). Thomas Sherley produced a manuscript entitled *Discours of the Turkes* (London: Camden Miscellany, 1936). This manuscript, not published during Thomas Sherley’s lifetime, was composed shortly after his return to England in 1605, on which see Penrose, *Sherleian Odyssey*, 28–45.
70. Nixon, *Three English Brothers*, title page, sigs. K2v, K4v, K4. Shah Abbas I’s interest in Christianity extended only so far as the western Christian powers would support his plan for a pincher movement against the Turks (*Chronicle of Carmelites*, 155–88).
71. Tripp, *Classical Mythology*, 51.
72. William Kerrigan and Gordon Braden, *The Idea of the Renaissance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 5. Cf. Purchas’s similarly gendered language in “A briefe Memoriall,” 374.
73. Chew, *Crescent and Rose*, 309, notes a reference to the Sherleys in John Cooke’s play, *Greenes Tu Quoque* (1611).
74. Purchas, “Briefe Memoriall,” 375.
75. On Jason and Medea in the early modern discourses of empire, see James Ellison, *George Sandys: Travel, Colonialism and Tolerance in the Seventeenth-Century* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2002), 151–52, and Michèle Longino, “*Médée* and the Traveler-Savant,” *Orientalism in French Classical Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 29–76.
76. I discuss the gender specificity of the term “apostata” in the Introduction.
77. H. Neville Davies, “*Pericles* and the Sherley Brothers,” *Shakespeare and His Contemporaries*, ed. E. A. Honigmann (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), 94–113, citing 106.

78. Baghal-Kar, "Images of Persia," 76.
79. John Cartwright, *The Preachers Travels* (1611) (Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1977), 70–71.
80. Thomas Coryat, "A Letter of Master Thomas Coryat, which traveled by Land from Jerusalem to the Court of the Great Mogoll," *Hakluytus Posthumus*, 4: 471–72. Penrose, *Sherleian Odyssey*, 196–97, details Coryat's encounter with the Sherleys.
81. Thomas Fuller, *The History of the Worthies of England* (1662) (New York: AMS Press, 1965), 225.
82. John Chamberlain, January 17, 1624, cited in Chew, *Crescent and Rose*, 324. Henry Sherley was born in London in 1611, with Queen Anne and Prince Henry standing as his godparents. Chew, *Crescent and Rose*, 314–18, explores the theory that this Henry Sherley was the author of the stage play, *The Martyr'd Soldier* (1638), a play about conversion to Christianity in the imperial Roman context. However, Penrose, *Sherleian Odyssey*, 45, claims the playwright was Thomas Sherley the younger's son, and thus Robert Sherley's nephew.
83. See Davies, *Elizabethans Errant*, 96, for the religious and ethnic groupings within the Persian empire. For specifics on Circassians in Safavid Persia, see P. M. Holt, Ann K. S. Lambton, and Bernard Lewis (eds.), *Cambridge History of Islam*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 1: 407–22.
84. *Chronicle of Carmelites*, 144–45. For Lady Sherley's petition to King James in support of her husband, see Davies, *Elizabethans Errant*, 272.
85. The quote continues: ". . . viro amantissimo, et sibimet posuit, illius ossibus, suisque laribus in Urbem e Perside pietatis ergo translatis," *Chronicle of Carmelites*, 290. Davies, *Elizabethans Errant*, provides an English translation (inset between 174 and 175). He also includes Anthony Van Dyck's portraits of Robert and Teresa Sherley, with Robert sporting a prominent turban.
86. Herbert, "The Death of Sir Robert Sherley at Cazbeen," *Relation*, 124–25.
87. *Chronicle of Carmelites*, 291.
88. *Chronicle of Carmelites*, 293, presents Lady Sherley as a stalwart defender of Catholicism.
89. Chew, *Crescent and Rose*, 299.
90. Parry, *New and Large Discourse*, in Ross, *Sir Anthony*, 98, 100. For other references to the Sidney/Sherley connection, see Ross, *Sir Anthony*, 4–6.
91. Chew, *Crescent and Rose*, 330–31.
92. Baghal-Kar, "Images of Persia," 75, 98.
93. For the layered significance of this designation, see Cavanagh, *Cherished Torment*, 21–30.
94. Mueller, *U2*, xxix.
95. Roberts, "Critical Introduction," *UI*, lxv.
96. *Chronicle of Carmelites*, 259–66.
97. While Roberts, "Critical Introduction," *UI*, xciii–xciv, equates Rosindy with Wroth's younger brother, this character may equally be identified with the elder Robert Sidney.
98. Baghal-Kar, "Images of Persia," 35–40.

99. Hall, *Things of Darkness*, 107–16, explicates the “black, but beautiful” formula. Also see Bernadette Andrea, “Black Skin, the Queen’s Masques: Africanist Ambivalence and Feminine Author(ity) in the Masques of Blackness and Beauty,” *English Literary Renaissance* 29 (1999), 246–81.
100. Chew, *Crescent and Rose*, makes the connection between Lady Sherley and Davenant’s play (310). Chew also notes a fanciful reference to Robert and Teresa Sherley in Thomas Randolph’s 1630 play, *Aristippus* (300).
101. See Chapter 3, note 10.

3 EARLY QUAKER WOMEN, THE MISSIONARY POSITION, AND MEDITERRANEANISM

1. William C. Braithwaite, *The Beginnings of Quakerism*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), details Quaker missions in the British Isles (153–240); the Caribbean, continental Europe, and North America (401–18); and the Mediterranean (418–33). As I stress in the Introduction, England had not consolidated an overseas empire during the period under study. However, by the second half of the seventeenth century, the activities of the British navy in the Mediterranean and other locales marked a significant shift in the nation’s competency as a global imperial player, on which see David Loades, *England’s Maritime Empire: Seapower, Commerce and Policy, 1490–1690* (London: Longman, 2000).
2. Bernadette Andrea, “From Invasion to Inquisition: Mapping Malta in Early Modern England,” *Remapping the Mediterranean World in Early Modern English Writings*, ed. Goran Stanivukovic (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 245–71.
3. Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, 2 vols. (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), 1: 14. On English trade in the Mediterranean during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, see 1: 612–29. On the later seventeenth century, see Loades, *England’s Maritime Empire*, 166–243.
4. Andrew Hess examines this triangulation in *The Forgotten Frontier: A History of the Sixteenth-Century Ibero-African Frontier* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 94, 104, which extends into the seventeenth century.
5. Nabil Matar, *Britain and Barbary, 1589–1689* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005), 77.
6. Catie Gill, *Women in the Seventeenth-Century Quaker Community* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2005), establishes how “just as the notion of the idealized patriarchal family makes religious differences between spouses invisible, so too does the notion of the male bread-winner make women’s economic role obscure” (105).
7. For primary sources, see Norman Penney (ed.), *The First Publishers of Truth, Being Early Records of the Introduction of Quakerism into England and Wales* (London: Headley, 1907); for a critical assessment, see Ernest E. Taylor, “The First Publishers of Truth,” *Journal of the Friends’ Historical Society* 19 (1922), 66–81.

8. Matar, *Britain and Barbary*, 91. To support these claims, Matar references “Mack, *Visionary Women*, 123, quoted in Linebaugh and Rediker, *Many-Headed Hydra*” (204, n. 60; n. 61 is listed as “Ibid.”). However, “the age of independent female prophecy” of the 1640s to which Phyllis Mack refers in *Visionary Women: Ecstatic Prophecy in Seventeenth-Century England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992) was superseded by a “new movement, a larger community whose leaders were explicitly concerned to dissolve *all* barriers to the equality of the saints” (124). That movement, which Mack analyzes in the balance of her 465-page study, became known as the Quakers, who first emerged in the 1650s and featured women’s public speaking throughout the 1660s. For corroboration, see Patricia Crawford, *Women and Religion in England, 1500–1720* (London: Routledge, 1993), 119–82.
9. Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 486–87, 522–23; Jon Mitchell, *Ambivalent Europeans: Ritual, Memory, and the Public Sphere in Malta* (London: Routledge, 2002), xi, 31.
10. For a comparable dynamic in the nineteenth-century Anglo-Indian context, see Kumari Jayawardena, *The White Woman’s Other Burden: Western Women and South Asia During British Colonial Rule* (New York: Routledge, 1995). Jayawardena makes a passing reference to seventeenth-century Quaker women as “mothers of feminism” (10, 25). She contrasts Quakers with other “women missionaries and reformers in the [nineteenth-century] ‘Age of Empire,’” whom the critics she cites call “maternal imperialists” and collaborators “in the ideological work of empire” (10; cf. 102, 201). As I establish, early Quaker women were more ambivalently involved in anglocentric discourses of empire than their subsequent record of anti-imperialism suggests.
11. George Fox, *The Journal of George Fox*, ed. Rufus M. Jones (Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1976), 77, 92.
12. Kate Peters, *Print Culture and the Early Quakers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 124–50, departs from critics who deem early Quaker men supportive of their female co-religionists, instead arguing that the men’s tracts served to contain women’s potentially subversive public speaking.
13. Rosemary Foxtan, “*Hear the Word of the Lord*”: *A Critical and Bibliographical Study of Quaker Women’s Writings, 1650–1700* (Melbourne: Bibliographical Society of Australia and New Zealand, 1994), emphasizes “the spiritual imperative” motivating these women’s writings, describing it as “an inescapable duty” and “an inner obligation” (13, 14, 16).
14. Subsequent citations are from the 1667 edition, reproduced in Margaret Fell, *Womens Speaking Justified* (Los Angeles: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, 1979). On the politics of the Quaker Women’s Meeting, see Gill, *Quaker Community*, 164–71; Su Fang Ng, “Marriage and Discipline: The Place of Women in Early Quaker Controversies,” *The Seventeenth Century* 28 (2003), 113–40; Mack, *Visionary Women*, 265–304; and Christine Trevett, *Women and Quakerism in the Seventeenth Century* (York: Sessions, 1991), 75–131. On the divergent roles for Quaker women, see Hugh Barbour, “Quaker Prophetesses

- and Mothers in Israel,” *Seeking the Light: Essays in Quaker History*, ed. J. William Frost and John M. Moore (Lancaster, PA: Pendle Hill, 1986), 41–60.
15. As Luella M. Wright, *The Literary Life of the Early Friends, 1650–1725* (1932) (New York: AMS Press, 1966), specifies, “The First Publishers, numbering twenty-five in 1652, had increased in the northern counties alone to seventy in 1654, and a little later to two hundred and thirty-one in the nation. Of these one hundred and ninety-eight were men and thirty-three were women” (41). Moreover, as Braithwaite acknowledges, “[t]he pioneer work in America, as had been the case in the South of England, was begun by women” (*Beginnings*, 402). Mary Fisher and Ann Austin were the first Quaker missionaries in the Caribbean and in New England. Fisher was at the forefront of missionary work in the Mediterranean and the Ottoman empire, along with Mary Prince and Beatrice Beckley, and later Katharine Evans and Sarah Chevers (421–33). Elizabeth Harris and Elizabeth Coward traveled to Venice (426).
 16. Braithwaite, *Beginnings*, 132.
 17. Catherine M. Wilcox, *Theology and Women’s Ministry in Seventeenth-Century English Quakerism: Handmaids of the Lord* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1995), 153–90.
 18. Joseph Besse, *A Collection of the Sufferings of the People called Quakers, for the Testimony of a Good Conscience, from the time of their being first distinguished by that name in the year 1650, to the time of . . . the Act of Toleration . . . in the year 1689* (London, 1753), 1: 85, 57. On Fisher’s mission to Cambridge, see Peters, *Print Culture*, 76–77. On her subsequent Ottoman mission, see Mabel Richmond Brailsford, *Quaker Women, 1650–1690* (London: Duckworth, 1915), 94–132.
 19. Priscilla Cotton and Mary Cole’s *To the Priests and People of England, We Discharge Our Consciences, And Give Them Warning* (1655), 7–8. Hilary Hinds reproduces this tract in *God’s Englishwomen: Seventeenth-Century Radical Sectarian Writing and Feminist Criticism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 222–26, wherein she analyzes its rhetoric, 180–208.
 20. Wilcox, *Theology*, 253.
 21. Early accounts of Fisher’s mission to the Ottoman sultan include Gerard Croese, *The General History of the Quakers: Containing the Lives, Tenents, Tryals, Speeches, and Letters of all the most Eminent Quakers, both Men and Women, from the first rise of that Sect down to the present Time* (London, 1696), 2: 274–76; William Sewel, *The History of the Rise, Increase, and Progress of the Christian people called Quakers* (London, 1722), 257–58; and Besse, *Collection*, 1: xxxiii. Brailsford, *Quaker Women*, 114–32, reproduces Fisher’s manuscript letters.
 22. Alan Palmer, *The Decline and Fall of the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1992), vii.
 23. Fox, *Journal*, 434. Fox nonetheless prophesies Christian victory at the pivotal battle of St. Gothard in Hungary (434). Moreover, earlier in the chapter, “In Prison for not Swearing,” Fox defends himself by asserting, “I am neither Turk, Jew, nor heathen, but a Christian, and should show forth Christianity” (414). On similar instances, see N. I. Matar, “Islam in Interregnum and Restoration

- England,” *The Seventeenth Century* 6 (1991), 57–71, and “Some Notes on George Fox and Islam,” *Journal of the Friends’ Historical Society* 55 (1989), 271–76.
24. Christopher Hill, *Milton and the English Revolution* (New York: Viking Press, 1977), 78.
 25. Samuel C. Chew, *The Crescent and the Rose: Islam and England during the Renaissance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1937), surveys early modern English translations of the Qur’an, including Alexander Ross’s 1649 translation (448–51). The first European translation, in Latin, “had been prepared under the direction of Peter the Venerable, Abbot of Cluny, about A.D. 1143” (434).
 26. Matar, “Islam in Interregnum,” cites Anglican condemnations of nonconformists as “Protestant Mahometans” (63). For “the Turk as the ally of the Reformation,” see Dorothy Vaughan, *Europe and the Turk: A Pattern of Alliances, 1350–1700* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1954), 134–46.
 27. “Letter No. 2,624 of the Clarendon collection, written in 1647,” quoted in Fox, *Journal*, 125–26, n. 4. Cf. Braithwaite, *Beginnings*, 57, and Peters, *Print Culture*, 93.
 28. Chew, *Crescent and Rose*, 406–9.
 29. William C. Braithwaite, *The Second Period of Quakerism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961).
 30. George Fox, *To the Great Turk and his King at Argiers together with a postscript of George Pattison’s taking the Turks and setting them on their own shoar* (London, 1680), which he references in his *Journal*, 562. He used Arabic examples in *A Battle-Door for Teachers and Professors to Learn Singular and Plural* (London, 1660), 77–88, part of the heated Quaker debate over “you” and “thou.” Fox published other tracts addressing the “Great Turk,” including *To the Turk, and all that are under his supream, to read this over which concerns their salvation* (1660), *An Epistle to all Professors in New-England, Germany and other Parts of the Christian World. Also to the Jews and Turks throughout the World* (1673), and *An Answer to the Speech or Declaration of the Great Turk, Sulton Mahomet. Which He sent to Leopold Emperor of Germany. And is a Defence of the true Christian Religion against the Turks Antichristian Speech. And A Testimony for the Lord Jesus Christ* (1683). The 1683 tract cites the Qur’an to persuade the Ottoman sultan to protect Christians. Nawal Muhammad Hassan, *Hayy Bin Yaqzan and Robinson Crusoe: A Study of An Early Arabic Impact on English Literature* (Baghdad: Al-Rashid House, 1980), argues that Ibn Tufail’s *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*, introduced into English culture in the 1670s, shaped the Quaker doctrine of the Inner Light. Quaker apologists George Keith and Robert Barclay relied on Ibn Tufail’s treatise to defend the movement’s unorthodox dogma and radical social platform (5–6, 37–39).
 31. Robert O. Byrd, *Quaker Ways in Foreign Policy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1960), 115.
 32. Fox, *To the Great Turk*, 12.
 33. Brailsford, *Quaker Women*, 126.
 34. Fisher’s companions included Beatrice Beckly, John Buckley, John Luffe, John Perrot, and Mary Prince. Braithwaite discusses this group in *Beginnings*, 420–26.

35. Braithwaite, *Beginnings*, 422 (last two sets of square brackets Braithwaite's).
36. Braithwaite, *Beginnings*, 423.
37. On Mehmed IV's uneasy tenure, see Norman Itzkowitz, *Ottoman Empire and Islamic Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), 75–85. Also see Halil Inalcik, "The Heyday and Decline of the Ottoman Empire," *The Cambridge History of Islam*, 2 vols., ed. P. M. Holt, Ann K. S. Lambton, and Bernard Lewis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 1: 350–52.
38. Brailsford, *Quaker Women*, 115–16, who quotes from a 1633 missive from the Ottoman sultan to the emperor of Germany.
39. Brailsford, *Quaker Women*, 123, 126. In Chapter 1, I discuss the deprecating attitudes to women held by male bureaucrats of the Ottoman court.
40. Brailsford, *Quaker Women*, 127.
41. Sewel, *History*, 258.
42. Brailsford, *Quaker Women*, 130.
43. Sewel, *History*, 258.
44. The traditional penalty for a non-Muslim in a Muslim state "insulting or abusing the Prophet [Muhammad]," according to Bernard Lewis, *Islam in History* (Chicago: Open Court, 1993), 361–74, ranges from "flogging or imprisonment or death or any combination of these" (364). Such threats are frequently recorded in seventeenth-century men's travel narratives, some of which I discuss in Chapter 4.
45. Sewel, *History*, 258.
46. Brailsford, *Quaker Women*, 130.
47. Brailsford specifies that upon her return Fisher "seems to have preached and travelled no more after her marriage" (*Quaker Women*, 280).
48. The late Elizabethan Protestant Henry Timberlake, for instance, refused to pretend he was a Roman Catholic or a Greek Orthodox Christian while in Jerusalem, ruled by the Ottomans. As James Ellison indicates in *George Sandys: Travel, Colonialism and Tolerance in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2002), Timberlake "was thrown into prison by the Turks, who became suspicious of him, claiming they had never heard of England and her Queen of whom Timberlake stoutly boasted" (77).
49. On Evans and Chevers's ordeal, see Braithwaite, *Beginnings*, 428–33, and Brailsford, *Quaker Women*, 206–10, who draw largely on Sewel, *History*, 293–320. On the Maltese Inquisition, see Charles Henry Lea, *The Inquisition in the Spanish Dependencies* (London: Macmillan, 1908), 44–47, and Andrew P. Vella, *The Tribunal of the Inquisition in Malta* (Valletta: Royal University of Malta, 1964). Lea (47) mentions Evans and Chevers; Vella (30–37) presents their case using the trial records of the Inquisition.
50. *This is a Short Relation of some of the Cruel Sufferings (For the Truths Sake) of Katharine Evans & Sarah Chevers, in the Inquisition in the Isle of Malta* (London, 1662), 80. Unless otherwise indicated, parenthetical references are to the 1662 edition.
51. Braithwaite, *Beginnings*, 428.
52. Susan Wiseman, "Read Within: Gender, Cultural Difference and Quaker Women's Travel Narratives," *Voicing Women: Gender and Sexuality in Early*

- Modern Writing*, ed. Kate Chedgoy, Melanie Hansen, and Suzanne Trill (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1997), 153–71, confuses Evans and Chevers's intentions and itinerary. The two women *do not* “set off on a dual mission, first to go to Istanbul and convert the Sultan, and secondly to replicate the voyages of St. Paul” (157). It is Baker who records his intention to travel to “*Smyrna* and *Constantinople*,” a destination that he did not reach due to the opposition of non-Quaker English in the region (*Short Relation*, 93). Moreover, Evans and Chevers do not state an intention to replicate Paul's travels to Malta, though when their planned journey to Alexandria is led astray they interpret their new trajectory as providential (3).
53. This cliché is reproduced in Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, 6th edn (1651–52), 2 vols. (London: J. Cuthell, 1821), 2: 475.
 54. Braithwaite, *Beginnings*, 432.
 55. The title page of *A Short Relation* indicates it was “Printed for Robert Wilson.” Rosemary Kegl, “Women's Preaching, Absolute Property, and the *Cruel Sufferings* (For the Truths sake) of Katharine Evans and Sarah Chevers,” *Women's Studies* 24 (1994), 51–83, speculates that Wilson may have been associated with the radical publisher Giles Calvert (79, n. 23).
 56. Margaret J. M. Ezell, *Writing Women's Literary History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 141.
 57. On male “relators” of women's prophetic discourse, see Nigel Smith, *Perfection Proclaimed: Language and Literature in English Radical Religion, 1640–1660* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 45–53. For a critique of such male “endorsements,” see Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Feminist Consciousness* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 50–51.
 58. Cotton and Cole, *To the Priests*, 7–8.
 59. John Bewick, *An Antidote against Lay-Preaching or the Preachers Plea* (London, 1642), 25–26.
 60. Evans and Chevers make a single parenthetical allusion to this debate (*Short Relation*, 15). Evans engages it more extensively in *A Brief Discovery of God's Eternal Truth* (London, 1663).
 61. Cf. Fisher and Williams, who when the mayor of Cambridge “asked *their Names*: They replied, *their Names were written in the Book of Life*. He demanded their Husbands Names. They told him, *they had no Husband but Jesus Christ, and he sent them*” (Besse, *Sufferings*, 1: 84–85).
 62. Cf. *The Examination and Tryall, Of Margaret Fell and George Fox* (London, 1664). More generally, see Craig W. Horle, *The Quakers and the English Legal System, 1660–1688* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988).
 63. Ezell, *Writing Women's Literary History*, 149.
 64. Amelia Mott Gummere, *Witchcraft and Quakerism: A Study in Social History* (Philadelphia: Biddle Press, 1908), provides an antiquarian survey. For a revisionist history, see Diane Purkiss, *The Witch in History: Early Modern and Twentieth-Century Representations* (London: Routledge, 1996).
 65. Croese, *General History*, 1: 37. Emily Manners begins *Elizabeth Hooton: First Quaker Woman Preacher (1600–1672)* (London: Headley Brothers, 1914), 1,

with this quote. Croese exemplifies the ambivalent response to female Quaker missionaries, as when he surveys their travels through the Mediterranean:

These manly Examples [Samuel Fisher, John Stubbs, John Perrot, John Love, and George Robinson] were imitated by some of the Female Sex, both Wives and Virgins, not out of a Womanly precipitancy and boldness, but upon a determinate Advice, taking good resolution of Mind, and raising up the Fortitude of their Bodies, contemning the danger of their lives, changing as it were their Sex, or being transmuted from Women to Men, which says *Pliny's* credit, in reference to a Transmutation of this Kind, of which sort *L. Mutianus* shewed a Boy at *Smyrna*, which he had seen. (2: 273)

66. Fell, *Womens Speaking*, 13–16. On these gendered personae, see Gill, *Quaker Community*, and Mack, *Visionary Women*, 127–34.
67. For the Quaker critique of formal education, see Smith, *Perfection Proclaimed*, 289–96. For this critique's empowerment of women, see Brailsford, *Quaker Women*, 10–11. Brailsford nonetheless echoes the prejudices of her era when she presumes "Mahomet took for his working theory the maxim that women were born without souls," a fallacy I contest in Chapter 4. She accurately establishes that "one thousand years later [in the seventeenth century] extremists were found amongst the Puritans who cherished this same doctrine" (4).
68. Baker conversed with the Maltese authorities in Italian and translated his own prophecies into Spanish (*Short Relation*, 100 [misprinted as 90], 104).
69. *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd edn (1989) defines "travel" as "labour, toil; suffering, trouble, labour of child-birth, etc.: see *travail*" and as "the action of travelling, or journeying."
70. For early modern men's discursive appropriation of women's birthing experiences, see Margaret Thickstun, *Fictions of the Feminine: Puritan Doctrine and the Representation of Women* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), 1–36.
71. Baker had an editorial hand in the selection of these letters, which he preserved by preparing fair copies for the "Pope's Lord Inquisitor" (*Short Relation*, 48–49).
72. Teresa Feroli, *Political Speaking Justified: Women Prophets and the English Revolution* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2006), 23, touches on these letters, which I had previously analyzed in "The Missionary Position: Seventeenth-Century Quaker Women and Global Gender Politics," *In-between: Essays and Studies in Literary Criticism* 11 (2002), 71–87. I initially presented this material at the conference, "British Women's Writing/Political Discourse, 1640–1867" (Tulsa University, 1997), organized by Feroli. While Gill, *Quaker Community*, refrains from discussing Evans and Chevers (42, n. 5), she delineates the imposition of wifely subordination in Quaker writings after 1660 (155–64, esp. 155–56). I am arguing that Evans and Chevers subvert this trend in their letters.
73. D. M. R. Esson, *The Curse of Cromwell: A History of the Ironside Conquest of Ireland, 1649–53* (London: Leo Cooper, 1971).
74. Moira Ferguson, *Subject to Others: British Women Writers and Colonial Slavery, 1670–1834* (London: Routledge, 1992), applies the term "cultural imperialism" to Quakers' missionary activities in the Caribbean, notwithstanding their

- proto-abolitionist and proto-feminist stances (65). Braithwaite, *Beginnings*, records the “Irish” Quakers’ patently colonist attitude towards the indigenous Irish, such as Francis Howgill’s description of the Irish countryside as “the desolatest places that ever any did I think behold, without any inhabitant except a few Irish cabins here and there, who are robbers and murderers that lives in holes and bogs where none can pass” (214). Richard Hodden describes Ireland as a “waste land” into which may be planted “comfortable habitations for religious Englishmen, if thereunto encouraged” (216). Edward Burrough appealed “to all the poor desolate [English] soldiers of the lowest rank, who are scattered up and down in this desolate land of Ireland” (217).
75. Daniel J. Vitkus, “Trafficking with the Turk: English Travelers in the Ottoman Empire during the Early Seventeenth Century,” *Travel Knowledge: European “Discoveries” in the Early Modern Period*, ed. Ivo Kamps and Jyotsna G. Singh (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 35–52, citing 36.
 76. Judith Kegan Gardiner, “Margaret Fell Fox and Feminist Literary History: A ‘Mother in Israel’ Calls to the Jews,” *The Emergence of Quaker Writing: Dissenting Literature in Seventeenth-Century England*, ed. Thomas N. Corns and David Loewenstein (London: Frank Cass, 1995), 42–56.
 77. Mary Agnes Best, “Thomas Lurting – An Able-Minded Seaman,” *Rebel Saints* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1925), 74–99, citing 89. Thomas Lurting served in the English navy in the late 1650s, when he realized he could not be a Christian and kill anyone (Braithwaite, *Beginnings*, 521). Lurting’s *The Fighting Sailor Turn’d Peaceable Christian* was published in 1710 and reprinted c. 1770.
 78. Kenneth L. Carroll, “Quaker Captives in Morocco, 1685–1701,” *Journal of the Friends’ Historical Society* 55 (1983), 67–79, and “Quaker Slaves in Algiers, 1679–1688,” *Journal of the Friends’ Historical Society* 54 (1982), 301–12.
 79. Mack, *Visionary Women*, 183.
 80. Richard Bauman, *Let Your Words Be Few: Symbolism of Speaking and Silence among Seventeenth-Century Quakers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 88.
 81. Mack, *Visionary Women*, 184.
 82. Mack, *Visionary Women*, 265–402; Wilcox, *Theology*, 235–59.
 83. Brian Blouet, *The Story of Malta* (London: Faber and Faber, 1972), 159–97.
 84. I analyze these histories and dramas in “From Invasion to Inquisition” (see note 2).
 85. Emily C. Bartels, “Malta, the Jew, and the Fictions of Difference: Colonialist Discourse in Marlowe’s *The Jew of Malta*” (1990), *Critical Essays on Christopher Marlowe* (New York: G. K. Hall, 1997), 97–109, citing 99.
 86. On the period 1640–60, see Christopher Hill, *Antichrist in Seventeenth-Century England* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 78–145.
 87. Christopher Hill, *The Century of Revolution, 1603–1714* (New York: Norton, 1980), 9. For a “revisionist” perspective, see Conrad Russell, “England in 1637,” *Reformation to Revolution: Politics and Religion in Early Modern England*, ed. Margo Todd (London: Routledge, 1995), 116–41.

88. *News from the Great Turke* (1645) lists among the Ottoman sultan's numerous honorifics, "of America" (1). For similar references, see Chapter 1, note 68.
89. Cf. D. F. Allen, "Attempts to Revive the Order of Malta in Stuart England," *Historical Journal* 33 (1990), 939–52.
90. On Hakluyt, who published the proto-imperialist *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation* (1598–1600), see Chapter 1.
91. Michel de Certeau, "Spatial Practices," *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven F. Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 91–130.
92. C. V. Wedgwood, "The Conversion of Malta," *Velvet Studies* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1946), 129–37, citing 130.
93. In "Prison Writing of Early Quaker Women: 'We were stronger afterward than before,'" *Quaker History* 73 (1984), 25–37, Judith Scheffler adduces a nineteenth-century "Philadelphia Quaker girl, Elizabeth Lloyd" who suggested that the "Quaker poet John Greenleaf Whittier . . . write a Quaker epic and that his sister Elizabeth include sketches of Mary Dyer and Evans and Cheevers, for the 'holy truths' they exemplify" (34, n. 37).
94. Lord d'Aubigny, a prominent Catholic in the court of Charles II, secured the women's release. His generous actions were matched by his words, "Good women . . . for what service or kindness I have done you, all that I shall desire of you is that when you pray to God, you will remember me in your prayers" (Brailsford, *Quaker Women*, 210).
95. *A True Account of the Great Tryals and Cruel Sufferings, undergone by those two faithful Servants of God, Katharine Evans and Sarah Cheevers* (London, 1663).
96. The most tolerant pronouncement in the entire narrative was voiced by the brother of the Grand Master of Malta, who was on Evans and Cheevers's out-bound ship:

he spake to the Captain often that we might not want any thing that was in the Ship, and he told us: if we were at *Malta* again we should not be persecuted so; for as soon as he saw our faces he said, *he would not differ with us*; he and some other of them said to the Captain, *If we went to Heaven one way, and they another, yet we should all meet together at the last.*

To this broad tolerance, Evans and Cheevers retorted, "But we held out Christ Jesus the Light of the World, to be the *alone way* to the Father" (*True Account*, 255).

97. E. M. G. Routh, "The English at Tangier," *English Historical Review* 26 (1911), 469–81.
98. The title page of the 1663 edition closes, "To which is added, A Short Relation from George Robinson."
99. Gill, *Quaker Community*, discusses the decline after 1660 in "multi-vocal writing" amongst Quakers, which resulted in the effacement of women's contributions (174). Although she does not discuss Evans and Cheevers's multi-voiced text, her conclusions resonate with my argument about the alterations to the third edition of their account.

4 THE FEMALE WITS AND THE GENEALOGY OF FEMINIST ORIENTALISM

1. Joyce Zonana, "The Sultan and the Slave: Feminist Orientalism and the Structure of *Jane Eyre*," *Signs: The Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 18 (1993), 592–617, citing 593.
2. Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, ed. Carol H. Poston, 2nd edn (New York: Norton, 1988), 19. In an egregious instance of feminist orientalism, the editor glosses this passage with the claim, "Islam (the religion whose chief prophet was Mohammed) did not allow women to go to heaven and denied them souls" (19, n. 2). Among others, Anouar Majid, *Unveiling Traditions: Postcolonial Islam in a Polycentric World* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000), counters, "Islam, unlike the belief widespread in Christendom for so long, never asserted that 'women have no souls'" (III).
3. On the "freeborn Englishman," see David Underdown, *A Freeborn People: Politics and the Nation in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996); on the uneasy extension of this designation to English women, see Hilda L. Smith, *All Men and Both Sexes: Gender, Politics, and the False Universal in England, 1640–1832* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002).
4. Zonana, "Sultan and Slave," 599.
5. See Hilda L. Smith, *Reason's Disciples: Seventeenth-Century English Feminists* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982), on "the first group of modern 'feminists' – that is, individuals who viewed women as a sociological group whose social and political position linked them together more surely than their physical or psychological natures" (4). Margaret J. M. Ezell, *Writing Women's Literary History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), warns against acceding to a "linear narrative," where "[b]eing 'first' . . . establishes the model against which others are measured, but it also indicates a more rudimentary accomplishment – being the first is not usually equated with being the best" (22). Virginia Shapiro, "Wollstonecraft and Feminist Traditions," *A Vindication of Political Virtue: The Political Theory of Mary Wollstonecraft* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 257–35, similarly qualifies the potentially anachronistic use of the term "feminism." I retain the descriptor "first feminist" with these qualifications.
6. Billie Melman, *Women's Orients: English Women and the Middle East, 1718–1918* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), 7. For a feminist critique of Melman's argument, see Reina Lewis, *Gendering Orientalism: Race, Femininity and Representation* (London: Routledge, 1996), 127–90.
7. Mary Wortley Montagu, *Turkish Embassy Letters* [TEL], ed. Malcolm Jack (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1993), subsequently cited parenthetically. TEL was published posthumously in 1763, though circulated earlier.
8. Billie Melman, "Transparent Veils: Western Women Dis-Orient the East," *The Geography of Identity*, ed. Patricia Yaeger (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 433–65, citing 441, 439.

9. Melman, *Women's Orients*, 10. Also see my comments in the Introduction, note 9.
10. Montagu mentions Manley in several letters from 1709, included in *The Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, 3 vols., ed. Robert Halsband (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965–67), 1: 15, 18. Daniel Goffman, *Britons in the Ottoman Empire, 1642–1660* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998), indicates the presence of English diplomats' and merchants' kinswomen in the Ottoman empire during the 1650s (225–26, n. 25), as does Gerald M. MacLean, *The Rise of Oriental Travel: English Visitors to the Ottoman Empire, 1580–1720* (New York: Palgrave, 2004), 221–25. On “women captives” in seventeenth-century North Africa, see Nabil Matar, *Britain and Barbary, 1589–1689* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005), 92–110, whose analysis I address in Chapter 3.
11. Zonana, “Sultan and Slave,” 595.
12. Fynes Moryson, *An Itinerary Containing his Ten Yeeres Travell*, 4 vols. (Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1907–8), 3: 350.
13. Moryson cites “the Proverb, that England is the Hell of Horses, the Purgatory of Servants, and the Paradise of Women” (*Itinerary*, 4: 169). On whether England was “the paradise of women,” see Elaine Hobby, *Virtue of Necessity: English Women's Writing, 1646–1688* (London: Virago, 1988), 1, quoting John Ray, *A Collection of English Proverbs* (1670).
14. Kenneth Parker (ed.), *Early Modern Tales of Orient* (London: Routledge, 1999), 18.
15. Parker (ed.), *Early Modern Tales*, 83–105, subsequently cited parenthetically.
16. As Colin Imber specifies in “Women, Marriage, and Property: *Mahr* in the *Behcetü'l-Fetava* of Yenişehirli Abdullah,” *Women in the Ottoman Empire: Middle Eastern Women in the Early Modern Era*, ed. Madeline C. Zilfi (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 81–104, “[w]ith regards to property, Islamic law is unusual, although not unique [Imber cites medieval Welsh law], in keeping the wife's property separate from her husband's and in requiring the husband to make a payment to his wife at the time of the marriage” (81). Hence, because under Islamic law “a slave cannot own property,” Muslim wives cannot be slaves (93).
17. Parker (ed.), *Early Modern Tales*, 155. For a related discussion of Biddulph and Lithgow, see Nabil Matar, “The Representation of Muslim Women in Renaissance England,” *Muslim World* 86 (1996), 50–61, esp. 52–55. This essay, however, does not adduce English women's writing.
18. Daniel J. Vitkus (ed.), *Piracy, Slavery, and Redemption: Barbary Captivity Narratives from Early Modern England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 218–340, citing 243. As Montagu recognized, “'Tis true, their law permits them four wives, but there is no instance of a man of quality that makes use of this liberty, or of a woman of rank that would suffer it” (*TEL*, 72).
19. For an Islamic feminist interpretation of the ambiguity inhering in the Qur'anic injunction regarding polygamy, see Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 63.

20. Cf. Montagu's correction of the misconception that Greeks were held as slaves, along with her general discussion of slavery in the Ottoman empire (*TEL*, 104, 130). Isobel Grundy, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), cites Alexander Pope's patriarchal orientalist projection of "white" slavery onto Montagu (165).
21. Smith, *Reason's Disciples*, ix–xvii, 3–74, 117–39; Ruth Perry, *The Celebrated Mary Astell: An Early English Feminist* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 99.
22. *The Lawes Resolutions of Womens Rights*, in Joan Larsen Klein (ed.), *Daughters, Wives and Widows: Writings by Men about Women and Marriage in England, 1500–1640* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 27–61, citing 47. In the eighteenth century, William Blackstone ruled that "husband and wife are one person, and the husband is that person," cited in Lee Holcombe, *Wives and Property: Reform of the Married Women's Property Law in Nineteenth-Century England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983), 18; cf. 25. Amy Louise Erickson, *Women and Property in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 1993), emphasizes the liabilities of coverture (3–20), even as she examines some of the means by which the traditional upper classes sought to temper the common law (99–101).
23. Ahmed, *Women and Gender*, traces women's property rights in early Islamic societies, include the Ottoman empire (110–12).
24. By circumventing an arranged marriage, Montagu renounced the contract that would have "settled" an independent portion of wealth upon her (Grundy, *Lady Mary*, 45–56). Governed by the common law as a *feme covert*, she ceded all former and future earnings and inheritances to her husband (cf. 358, 546, 558, 601).
25. "Mary Astell's Preface to the *Embassy Letters; The Travels of an English Lady in Europe, Asia and Africa*, by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu 1724 & 1725," *The First English Feminist: Reflections Upon Marriage and Other Writings by Mary Astell*, ed. Bridget Hill (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986), 233–35, citing 234–35.
26. Perry, *Celebrated*, 8. Astell's juvenilia include a poem linking her nascent feminism to Christian proselytizing: "How shall I be a Peter or a Paul? / That to the Turk and Infidel, / I might the joyfull tidings tell, / And spare no labour to convert them all: / But ah my Sex denies me this . . ." (61). This poem was written around 1683.
27. Modernized excerpts have been published in *The "Other" Eighteenth Century: English Women of Letters, 1600–1800*, ed. Robert W. Uphaus and Gretchen M. Foster (East Lansing, MI: Colleagues Press, 1991), 23–31, and *Women in the Eighteenth Century: Constructions of Femininity*, ed. Vivien Jones (London: Routledge, 1990), 207–17, from which I cite. Jones lists the *Defence* as anonymous. Uphaus and Foster ascribe it to Judith Drake and discuss its incorrect attribution to Astell (23). Perry, *Celebrated*, posits Drake as the most likely author (106).
28. On this tract as the "first imitation" of Astell's *Serious Proposal*, see Uphaus and Foster, *"Other" Eighteenth Century*, 23. Smith, *Reason's Disciples*, juxtaposes

- an extended analysis of this tract with Astell's confirmed works (144–48). In early modern English political parlance, the term "Whig" was "[a]ppled to the Exclusioners (c1679) who opposed the succession of James, Duke of York, to the crown, on the ground of his being a Roman Catholic. *Hist.* (Opposed to TORY A. 2.)"; "hence, from 1689, an adherent of one of the two great parliamentary and political parties in England, and (at length) in Great Britain. (Opposed to TORY A. 3.)" (*Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd edn, 1989). For the ideological contrast between Whig (or liberal) and Tory (or conservative) feminists of the late seventeenth century, see Jones, *Women*, 193.
29. Jones, *Women*, 194. Moira Ferguson, *Subject to Others: British Women Writers and Colonial Slavery, 1670–1834* (London: Routledge, 1992), lists, but does not analyze, *An Essay in the Defence of the Female Sex* as an instance of "extra-colonial expropriations of the language of slavery" (22–24). Ferguson extends this argument in *Colonialism and Gender Relations from Mary Wollstonecraft to Jamaica Kincaid* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 33. Countering Ferguson, I maintain that Wollstonecraft in her evocation of "harem-based slavery" consolidates the model of feminist orientalism contested by Manley and Montagu.
 30. Nabil Matar, *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 43–82; St. Clair Drake, "The Evolution of Racial Slavery," *Black Folk Here and There: An Essay in History and Anthropology*, 2 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 2: 227–92.
 31. Jones, *Women*, 144–45, 218, 171. Smith, *All Men*, indicates that Elizabeth Johnson authored the preface to Rowe's *Poems* (133).
 32. A fourth playwright, "Ariadne," initiated this run, on whom see Jacqueline Pearson, *The Prostituted Muse: Images of Women and Women Dramatists, 1642–1737* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988), 139–40.
 33. Pearson, *Prostituted Muse*, 16.
 34. Bridget Orr, *Empire on the English Stage, 1600–1714* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 62.
 35. Orr, *Empire*, 4.
 36. Paula R. Backscheider, *Spectacular Politics: Theatrical Power and Mass Culture in Early Modern England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 71.
 37. Janet Todd, *The Secret Life of Aphra Behn* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1996), 320, cites the Restoration panegyrist Thomas Creech's descriptor.
 38. Janet Todd, *The Critical Fortunes of Aphra Behn* (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1998), numbers Manley, Pix, and Trotter among "the tribe of Behn" (20). Jane Spencer offers a similar assessment in *Aphra Behn's Afterlife* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 145–56.
 39. Trotter's plays are included in vol. 2 of Edna L. Steeves (ed.), *The Plays of Mary Pix and Catharine Trotter*, 2 vols. (New York: Garland Publishing, 1982), subsequently cited parenthetically. Trotter also produced an epistolary novel, *Olinda's Adventures; or, The Amours of a Young Lady* (Los Angeles: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, 1969). Her later career, as Catharine

Cockburn, focused on moral and philosophic writings, on which see Anne Kelley, *Catharine Trotter: An Early Modern Writer in the Vanguard of Feminism* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2002).

40. According to Patrick Hands and Flavia Hodges, *A Dictionary of First Names* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), Elvira and Alvaro also suggest the preceding Gothic layer of Spanish culture (14, 103). On the Visigoth era (415–711) and the subsequent Islamic kingdoms (711–1492), see Joseph F. O’Callaghan, *A History of Medieval Spain* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1975). Pix’s subsequent play, *The Conquest of Spain* (1705), makes this connection explicit, on which see Pilar Cuder-Dominguez, “The Islamization of Spain in William Rowley and Mary Pix: The Politics of Nation and Gender,” *Comparative Drama* 36 (2002), 321–36.
41. Steeves, Introduction, *Plays*, 2: ix; Constance Clark, *Three Augustan Women Playwrights* (New York: Peter Lang, 1986), 37.
42. Pix’s plays are included in vol. 1 of Steeves. For Pix’s 1696 novel, see *The Inhumane Cardinal*, ed. Constance Clark (Delmar, NY: Scholars’ Facsimiles, 1984). In *Love and Thunder: Plays by Women in the Age of Queen Anne* (London: Methuen, 1988), Kendall develops the argument that “[i]n 1688 an anonymous feminist tract called *Sylvia’s Revenge* appeared in London. It was prefaced by a poem signed ‘M.P.’, which was probably Pix’s first published piece” (31). *Sylvia’s Revenge, or; A Satyr again Man; In Answer to the Satyr against Woman* (London, 1688) was one of a series of ripostes in a pamphlet war initiated by *Love Given O’re; or, A Satyr against the Pride, Lust, and Inconstancy, &c. of Woman* (London, 1682). Sarah Frye Egerton’s contribution, *The Female Advocate* (London, 1686), disputes the *English* prejudice that “a Woman had no Soul” and the *English* male’s attempt to establish “*Poligamy*” in Protestant England (8, 18).
43. Paul Rycaut, *The History of the Turkish Empire, From the Year 1623, to the Year 1677*, included in the sixth edition of Richard Knolles, *The Turkish History, From the Original of that Nation to the Growth of the Ottoman Empire* (London, 1687), subsequently cited parenthetically. Also see Sonia P. Anderson, *An English Consul in Turkey: Paul Rycaut at Smyrna, 1667–1678* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 229–47.
44. Norman Itzkowitz, *Ottoman Empire and Islamic Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), 75.
45. Charles I (1625–49); Commonwealth (1649–59); Charles II (1660–85); James II (1685–88). Craig Rose, *England in the 1690s: Revolution, Religion and War* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), indicates that Charles II was frequently portrayed during the 1690s as “the Grand Seignior” in Whig political discourse, whereas William I was represented as Tamerlane in the dual sense of being the conqueror of the Grand Seignior (in this case, James II as “the wicked Ottoman Sultan, Bayazit”) and “a King William-like champion of civil and religious liberty” (68, 180). Also see Ruth Herman, *The Business of a Woman: The Political Writings of Delarivier Manley* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2003), 105–8, 131–32, and 141–43.
46. Peirce, *Imperial Harem*, 18–27; Itzkowitz, *Ottoman Empire*, 74–75.

47. Steeves, Introduction, *Plays*, 1: xli, xlvi.
48. Orr, *Empire*, 67.
49. As María Rosa Menocal establishes in *Shards of Love: Exile and the Origins of the Lyric* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994), the courtly love ideal derives from Islamic precedents (57–90).
50. This name, which resonates with the Spanish term for a female “Moor,” anticipates the racial motifs Pix develops elsewhere in her *œuvre*, on which see Jacqueline Pearson, “Blacker than Hell Creates: Pix Rewrites *Othello*,” *Broken Boundaries: Women and Feminism in Restoration Drama*, ed. Katherine M. Quinsey (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1996), 13–30.
51. Stephanie Jed, *Chaste Thinking: The Rape of Lucretia and the Birth of Humanism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989). For the racial implications of this narrative, see Arthur L. Little, Jr., *Shakespeare Jungle Fever: National-Imperial Re-Visions of Race, Rape, and Sacrifice* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), 29–48.
52. Orr, *Empire*, 89.
53. Delarivier Manley, *The Lost Lover; or, The Jealous Husband* (London, 1696), sig. A, subsequently cited parenthetically. Clark, *Three Augustan*, describes the performance of *The Lost Lover* as “a total failure, prompting Manley to add a very informative preface to its published version” (150). Backscheider, *Spectacular Politics*, states this resulted from “the constraints of a gendered literary world” (74).
54. Delarivier Manley, *The Royal Mischief* (London, 1696), sig. A3, subsequently cited parenthetically.
55. On Manley’s authorial persona, see Ros Ballaster, *Seductive Forms: Women’s Amatory Fiction, 1684–1740* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 114–52, and Janet Todd, *The Sign of Angellica: Women, Writing and Fiction, 1660–1800* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 84–98.
56. Clark, *Three Augustan*, discusses how Betterton’s “secession” provided hitherto unimaginable opportunities for English women playwrights (20–21). For more details, see Judith Milhous, *Thomas Betterton and the Management of Lincoln’s Inn Fields, 1695–1708* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1979).
57. Paula McDowell, *The Women of Grub Street: Press, Politics, and Gender in the London Literary Marketplace, 1678–1730* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 252, interprets J. H. in the latter sense. For a documented instance of a male writer (and publisher) pirating Manley’s works, and Manley’s brilliant counterpunch, see Patricia Köster (ed.), *The Novels of Mary Delariviere Manley* (Gainesville, FL: Scholars’ Facsimiles and Reprints, 1971), xix–xxi.
58. Backscheider, *Spectacular Politics*, 73–74.
59. Candace Brook Katz, “The Deserted Mistress Motif in Mrs. Manley’s *Lost Lover*,” *Restoration and Eighteenth Century Theatre Research* 16 (1977), 27–39, citing 27.
60. Anderson, *English Consul*, 1–18.
61. Lisa Lowe, *Critical Terrains: French and British Orientalisms* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 51.

62. Manley, in her preface “To the Reader,” lists Chardin’s travelogue as her explicit source (sig. A3). Herman, *Business*, identifies *The Rival Princesses; or, The Colchian Court: A Novel* (London, 1689) as Manley’s implicit source (188).
63. Jean Chardin, *The Travels of Sir John Chardin into Persia and the East Indies* (London, 1686), 126, subsequently cited parenthetically.
64. Ronald W. Ferrier, *A Journey to Persia: Jean Chardin’s Portrait of a Seventeenth-Century Empire* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1996), 11–20, documents Chardin’s assimilation into Persian culture.
65. For an astute discussion of Russians as racial “others” for the early modern English, see John Michael Archer, *Old Worlds: Egypt, Southwest Asia, India, and Russia in Early Modern English Writing* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), 101–38. On early modern English anxieties about their proximity to these northern “others,” see Mary Floyd-Wilson, *English Ethnicity and Race in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
66. Joyce Green MacDonald, *Women and Race in Early Modern Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 93–94, details the evolution of the Anglo-American slave code. On the contrasting Islamic provisions, see Imber, “Women,” 82.
67. Orr, *Empire*, 129.
68. “Dadian,” records Chardin in his *Travels*, “is the Title given to the Prince of Mingrelia” (148). Mingrelia is synonymous with Colchis (79).
69. Chardin indicates Libardian is “a Country that extends it self a great way into Mount Caucasus” (134).
70. Rosalind Ballaster, introducing Manley’s *The New Atalantis* (London: Penguin, 1992), suggests Homais “shares her name with the anti-heroine of a scandalous portrayal of the lengthy affair between Barbara Villiers and Charles II that appeared in 1689, *The Sultana of Barbary*” (xi–xii). Köster previously made this connection in her Introduction to *The Novels of Mary Delariviere Manley*, xi. I discuss *The Sultana of Barbary* at greater length in Chapter 5.
71. These descriptions are Fidelis Morgan’s, drawn from her *dramatis personae* for Manley’s *The Royal Mischief; The Female Wits: Women Playwrights on the London Stage, 1660–1720* (London: Virago, 1981), 211. This collection also appears under the cover, *The Female Wits: Women Playwrights of the Restoration*. All further references to Manley’s *The Royal Mischief* will be from this edition, with page numbers cited parenthetically.
72. Louis Marin, “Caravaggio’s ‘Head of Medusa’: A Theoretical Perspective,” *The Medusa Reader*, ed. Marjorie Garber and Nancy J. Vickers (New York: Routledge, 2003), 140. Marin draws on Hesiod’s *Theogony* (c. 700 BCE), 11–13. For a feminist emphasis on Medusa’s non-European provenance, see Emily Erwin Culpepper, “Experiencing My Gorgon Self,” 238–46. Also see Vickers’s influential invocation of “Medusa as the countertale to Shakespeare’s Lucrece,” 232. This juxtaposition resonates with my earlier discussion of the Lucrece motif in Pix’s *Ibrahim*, and anticipates my argument that Manley’s celebration of Medusa in the figure of Homais challenges the orientalist stance of Whig/liberal feminists such as Pix.

73. Hélène Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa," *New French Feminisms*, ed. Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron (New York: Schocken, 1981), 245–64. Post-colonial feminist critiques include Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "French Feminism Revisited: Ethics and Politics," *Feminists Theorize the Political*, ed. Judith Butler and Joan W. Scott (New York: Routledge, 1992), 54–85, and Sue Thomas, "Difference, Intersubjectivity, and Agency in the Colonial and Decolonizing Spaces of Hélène Cixous's 'Sorties,'" *Hypatia* 9 (1994), 53–69.
74. Cynthia Lowenthal, "Portraits and Spectators in the Late Restoration Playhouse: Delariviere Manley's *Royal Mischief*," *The Eighteenth Century* 35 (1994), 119–34, citing 131.
75. On Edward Said, see the Introduction to this study; on Luce Irigaray, see Chapter 1.
76. Alain Grosrichard advances this psychoanalytic interpretation in *The Sultan's Court: European Fantasies of the East*, trans. Liz Heron (London: Verso, 1998), 51–52. For a feminist critique of Grosrichard, see Chapter 1, note 73.
77. My argument here runs counter to Orr, *Empire*, 130.
78. Manley launched a similar critique of Trotter, whom she parodies in *The New Atalantis* as one who "assumed an air of *Virtue pretended* and was ever eloquent (according to her stiff manner) upon the foible of others" (160).
79. Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), introduced this image into Anglo-American feminist literary criticism. Its source is Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, which Zonana discusses in "Sultan and Slave." Also see Melman's Preface to the second edition of *Women's Orient*s (1995), xx–xxii, on *Jane Eyre*'s dissemination via nineteenth-century British colonialist incursions into Palestine.
80. Manley's *The Secret History of Queen Zarah* (1705), *The Novels of Mary Delariviere Manley*, ed. Patricia Köster, launched Manley's immensely successful career as a writer of satirical "scandal chronicles." The "Zarah" of the title refers to Sarah Jennings Churchill, duchess of Marlborough (1660–1744).
81. Delarivier Manley, *Almyna; or, The Arabian Vow. A Tragedy* (London, 1707), subsequently cited parenthetically. Paul Bunyan Anderson, "Mary de la Rivière Manley, a Cavalier's Daughter in Grub Street," unpublished PhD dissertation, Harvard University (1931), is the play "Mrs. Manley's masterpiece" (135).
82. *Arabian Nights' Entertainments*, ed. Robert L. Mack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), which is based on the "Grub Street" translation (c. 1705/6–21) of Galland's first edition of *Les mille et une nuits* (1704–17). Mack in his Introduction does not mention Manley. On the relationship of the French and English translations, see Su Fang Ng, "Delariviere Manley's *Almyna* and Dating the First Edition of the English *Arabian Nights' Entertainments*," *English Language Notes* 40 (2003), 19–26. Also see Ros Ballaster, *Fabulous Orient: Fictions of the East in England, 1662–1785* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 83–95.
83. Ruth Bernard Yeazell, *Harems of the Mind: Passages of Western Art and Literature* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 187. Orr, *Empire*, 132. For similar

- assessments of the play's feminism, see Morgan, *Female Wits*, 40; Clark, *Three Augustan*, 172; Pearson, *Prostituted Muse*, 195, 199.
84. Orr, *Empire*, 134.
 85. On Galland's proto-orientalism, see Robert Irwin, *The Arabian Nights: A Companion* (London: Penguin, 1994), 15, and Orr, *Empire*, 132.
 86. Martha Pike Conant, *The Oriental Tale in England in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1908), xvii, xv.
 87. Delarivier Manley, *The Adventures of Rivella; or, the History of the Author of Atalantis* (London, 1714), 15. Manley refers to *Letters Writ by a Turkish Spy* (London, 1687). Arthur J. Weitzman, *Letters Writ by a Turkish Spy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), vii–xix, addresses debates over authorship.
 88. Ros Ballaster, "Seizing the Means of Seduction: Fiction and Feminine Identity in Aphra Behn and Delarivier Manley," *Women, Writing, History, 1640–1740*, ed. Isobel Grundy and Susan Wiseman (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1992), 104. Melinda Alliker Rabb, "Angry Beauties: (Wo)Manley Satire and the Stage," *Cutting Edges: Postmodern Critical Essays on Eighteenth-Century Satire*, ed. James E. Gill (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1995), corroborates that Manley, in contrast to Montagu, "knew only too well the confinement suffered by women and the difficulty of merely getting from London to Exeter" (145). Rabb cites Fidelis Morgan, *A Woman of No Character: An Autobiography of Mrs Manley* (London: Faber and Faber, 1986), 70–71.
 89. Roger Manley, *The History of the Turkish Empire Continued*, in Knolles, *Turkish History*, 277–338. Roger Manley's other published works include *The History of the Rebellions in England, Scotland and Ireland . . . From the Year 1640 to the Beheading of the Duke of Monmouth in 1685* (London, 1691), as well as histories of Russia, Japan and Siam, and Denmark.
 90. Daniel Beaumont, *Slave of Desire: Sex, Love, and Death in The 1001 Nights* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2002), considers "Galland's translation" as "an early landmark in what Raymond Schwab was to call "The Oriental Renaissance"" (21). Peter L. Caracciolo, *The Arabian Nights in English Literature: Studies in the Reception of The Thousand and One Nights into British Culture* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988), xvii, also cites Schwab's *The Oriental Renaissance: Europe's Rediscovery of India and the East, 1680–1880* (1950), trans. Gene Patterson-Black and Victor Reinking (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984).
 91. Conant, *Oriental Tale*, states her "Chronological Table" represents "[a] list of the more important oriental tales published in English during the period under consideration" (267).
 92. Irwin notes, "[t]he one thing that all the collections [of *1001 Nights*] have in common is that the stories in them are supposed to have been told by Sheherazade to King Shahriyar" (*Arabian Nights*, 2–3). However, it was not until the publication of Galland's translation in French and English that this aspect of the collection was presented to western European audiences.
 93. Dorothee Metlitzki, *The Matter of Araby in Medieval England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 141–60.

94. Anderson, “Mary de la Rivière Manley,” 121–35, lists additional sources for Manley’s play, including Alexander Ross’s 1649 English version of the Qur’an and *The Life of Almanzor* (1693). He also cites *Letters Written by Mrs. Manley* (London, 1696), wherein she remarks, “My study has fallen upon Religion; I am searching into all sorts” (61; cited by Anderson, 124).
95. Ferial J. Ghazoul, *Nocturnal Poetics: The Arabian Nights in Comparative Context* (Cairo, Egypt: American University in Cairo Press, 1996), 22; Beaumont, *Slave of Desire*, 45.
96. Smith, *Reason’s Disciples*, 13.
97. Katherine M. Rogers, *Feminism in Eighteenth-Century England* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982), 2.
98. Irwin, *Arabian Nights*, 3; Ghazoul, *Nocturnal Poetics*, x.
99. Yeazell, *Harems*, 187.
100. Herman, *Business*, incorrectly states that Scheherazade does not provide “an heir for the sultan.” She also questionably represents Manley’s “heroine” as “far more assertive than Scheherazade” (193).
101. Smith, *Reason’s Disciples*, 15.
102. Clark, *Three Augustan*, 175.
103. Susanna Centlivre launched her career with the popular play, *The Perjured Husband* (1700); after her death in 1723, her plays were deemed important enough to be published as a three-volume *Works* (1760–61). As Pearson documents, two of Centlivre’s plays – *The Busy Body* (1709) and *The Wonder: A Woman Keeps a Secret* (1714) – rank among “only four non-Shakespearian comedies written before 1750,” which “were still being regularly performed” by the end of the nineteenth century (*Prostituted Muse*, 202).
104. Clark, *Three Augustan*, 172.

5 THE SCANDAL OF POLYGAMY IN DELARIVIER MANLEY’S *ROMAN À CLEF*

1. On Whigs and Tories, see Chapter 4, note 28.
2. On Pix’s popularity, see Edna L. Steeves (ed.), *The Plays of Mary Pix and Catharine Trotter*, 2 vols. (New York: Garland Publisher, 1982), 1: xvi–xvii. On Centlivre’s, see Nancy Cotton, *Women Playwrights in England, 1363–1750* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1980), 122–23. For the comparative failure of Manley’s plays, see Constance Clark, *Three Augustan Women Playwrights* (New York: Peter Lang, 1986), 110, 150, 156, 172.
3. Jack M. Armistead and Debbie K. Davis, Introduction, *Lucius, the First Christian King of Britain* (1717), by Delariviere Manley (Los Angeles: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, 1989).
4. Armistead and Davis, Introduction, iv. The first volume of *The New Atalantis* was published in 1709; the second edition was published together with the first edition of volume 2 later in the year. Ros Ballaster uses this combined edition for her modernized *The New Atalantis* (London: Penguin, 1992), subsequently cited parenthetically. Other editions appeared in 1710, 1716, 1720, and 1736. As

- Paula McDowell summarizes in *The Women of Grub Street: Press, Politics, and Gender in the London Literary Marketplace, 1678–1730* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), *The New Atalantis* was “the bestselling novelistic fiction of the decade” (232).
5. On Manley’s arrest, see Catherine Gallagher, *Nobody’s Story: The Vanishing Acts of Women Writers in the Marketplace, 1670–1820* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 88–144.
 6. Gwendolyn B. Needham, “Mary de la Rivière Manley, Tory Defender,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 12 (1949), 253–88, cites Sir Winston Churchill’s wish that Manley be sent “back into the cesspool from which she should never have crawled” (256, n. 8). For more, see Churchill’s *Marlborough: His Life and Times* (London: George G. Harrap, 1933), 53–54, 119–32, 344, n. 1.
 7. As Todd documents in *The Critical Fortunes of Aphra Behn*, Manley and Behn were cast as a “bogey” for women writers (30–31). Jane Spencer, *Aphra Behn’s Afterlife* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 91–100, also traces the progressive exclusion of Behn, Manley, and the early Eliza Haywood.
 8. Joyce Zonana, “The Sultan and the Slave: Feminist Orientalism and the Structure of *Jane Eyre*,” *Signs: The Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 18 (1993), 592–617, citing 599, 604.
 9. Felicity A. Nussbaum, *Torrid Zones: Maternity, Sexuality, and Empire in Eighteenth-Century English Narratives* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), II.
 10. Nussbaum, *Torrid Zones*, 17; cf. 12. Cf. Harriette Andreadis, *Sappho in Early Modern England: Female Same-Sex Literary Erotics, 1550–1714* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), who illuminates the orientalism informing the discourse of sapphism in early modern England (4, 32). However, she does not extend this analysis to her discussion of “Delarivier Manley’s Cabal in her roman à clef *The New Atalantis* (1709)” (16).
 11. John Cairncross, *After Polygamy was Made a Sin: The Social History of Christian Polygamy* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), 27. Also see Margaret R. Sommerville’s discussion of Christian polygamy in *Sex and Subjection: Attitudes to Women in Early-Modern Society* (London: Arnold, 1995), 141–73.
 12. On Anabaptist polygamy, with its oppression of women and girls, see Cairncross, *After Polygamy*, 8–18, who concludes by describing the household of the Anabaptist leader, John of Leyden, as “this Westphalian harem.” As I have emphasized, this model of the harem derives from western men’s tendentious misunderstanding of Islamic law, which does not enable unrestrained sexual dominance of the husband over the women of his household.
 13. Cairncross, *After Polygamy*, 7, 27.
 14. Cairncross, citing Philip, landgrave of Hesse, *After Polygamy*, 32. In summarizing the defense of Philip by “an ex-Carthusian called Lening,” Cairncross indicates that “[p]olygamy, Lening concludes, would alleviate the prevailing immorality and help to drive back the Turks, who were then pressing on the south-east flank of Europe” (46).

15. Cairncross, *After Polygamy*, 49, paraphrasing Martin Luther. Leo Miller, in *John Milton among the Polygamophiles* (New York: Loewenthal Press, 1974), reproduces this passage in German (from a letter of November 28, 1526) and provides an English translation (14–15).
16. Cairncross, *After Polygamy*, 36, 59. For further references to the influence of “Moslem polygamy” on western Christian theologians, see Miller, *John Milton*, 50.
17. On Henry VIII and his consideration of polygamy as a solution for his marital problems, see Cairncross, *After Polygamy*, 54–64. Roderick Phillips, in *Putting Asunder: A History of Divorce in Western Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), indicates that this episode involved “Luther, Melancthon, Bucer, Erasmus” and other prominent Reformers, who suggested “that Henry should take a second wife without annulling his marriage to Catherine” (75).
18. Miller, *John Milton*, 28, provides a synopsis of the tract, which consists of Bernardino Ochino’s sixteenth-century polemic in favor of polygamy. As Miller points out, “Between the 1563 Latin and 1657 English translations of Ochino’s dialogue, no West European writer is known who argued publicly in favor of polygamy” (48).
19. Cairncross, *After Polygamy*, 66–67, discusses the link between Ochino and prominent Protestant English women. Christopher Hill, *Milton and the English Revolution* (New York: Viking, 1977), records that Francis Osborne, Ochino’s English translator, “expressed approval of polygamy both in his very popular *Advice to a Son* (1656–8) and in his *Political Reflections upon the Government of the Turks* (1656).” Furthermore, “Ochino, like Milton, combined advocacy of polygamy and divorce with anti-Trinitarianism” (138).
20. Miller, *John Milton*, 12. For related references to Milton’s interest in polygamy, see Cairncross, *After Polygamy*, 125–36; Phillips, *Putting Asunder*, 119–26; and Hill, *Milton*, 117–45. The first attack on Milton’s divorce tracts, from Abraham Cowley in 1643, hinges on an orientalist analogy: “The number of their wives their lusts decree; / The Turkish law’s their Christian liberty” (130). Disturbingly, Hill concludes his discussion of Milton and polygamy with the equally orientalist, and blatantly patriarchal, comment, “The experience of Islam suggests that polygamous families where the senior wife chooses her junior partners can be cosy communities” (139). This comment is rendered doubly disturbing by the suspect sources Hill adduces to support this claim. Hill first cites an unverifiable personal reference and an outdated orientalist novel: “Marmaduke Pickthall, *Veiled Women* (1913) and other novels by him” (139, n. 3). He then cites an editorial in a daily newspaper: “Jill Tweedie recently suggested that an extension of the family in polygamy might be more satisfactory than divorce with all its problems in breaking up families (*The Guardian*, 8 September 1975)” (139, n. 4). None of these sources satisfies the protocols for scholarly research, a departure for the otherwise rigorous Hill. Because Hill’s study remains an influential touchstone, this challenge to the orientalism therein seems long overdue.

21. See Manley, *New Atalantis*, 138–40, as well as Brian Masters, *The Mistresses of Charles II* (London: Blond and Briggs, 1979), 61–64.
22. John Dryden, *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681), in Cairncross, *After Polygamy*, 136. Harold Weber also uses this quote to launch his discussion of “The Monarch’s Profane Body,” *Paper Bullets: Print and Kingship under Charles II* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1996), 88–127. The subtitle for this chapter, “His scepter and his prick are of a length,” comes from John Wilmot, the earl of Rochester’s satirical assessment of Charles II’s sexual politics. Weber’s references to Charles II and Islamic polygamy suggest a complex perception of the Ottoman sultan. On the one hand, Charles, as “a tame spinster in’s seragl” (John Ayloffe, “Brittania and Raleigh” [1674–75]) is feminized by association with Ottoman practices; on the other hand, the Ottoman precedent, exemplified by the conqueror of Constantinople, Mehmet (Mahomet) II’s purported execution of his favorite Greek concubine, Irene, at the behest of his masculine troops, functions as a positive counterpoint to Charles II’s perceived favoritism of his mistresses over the demands of England’s all-male parliament (John Lacy, “Satire” [1677]) (103, 110). For earlier renditions of the Mahomet/Irene story, see Samuel C. Chew, *The Crescent and the Rose: Islam and England during the Renaissance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1937), 478–90.
23. Cairncross, *After Polygamy*, 136–37. On the bigamous proposal for Charles II’s barren marriage, see Miller, *John Milton*, 111–15.
24. Henry Neville, *The Isle of Pines* (1668), *Restoration and Augustan British Utopias*, ed. Gregory Claeys (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2000), 115–30. Regarding Neville’s earlier anti-feminist satires, grouped under the title *A Parliament of Ladies* (1641–56), see Hilda L. Smith, *All Men and Both Sexes: Gender, Politics, and the False Universal in England, 1640–1832* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002), 126–27.
25. Adam R. Beach, “A Profound Pessimism about the Empire: *The Isle of Pines*, English Degeneracy and Dutch Supremacy,” *The Eighteenth Century* 41 (2000), 21–36, citing 22.
26. *The Amours of the Sultana of Barbary: A Novel in Two Parts* (London, 1689), 1.
27. Cairncross, *After Polygamy*, 141.
28. Delarivier Manley, *The Adventures of Rivella; or, the History of the Author of Atalantis* (London, 1714), 29, subsequently cited parenthetically.
29. Lawrence Stone, *Broken Lives: Separation and Divorce in England, 1660–1857* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 27, 28, 78.
30. In the Delia episode, Manley identifies her “cousin guardian”-cum-husband as “two or three and twenty years older than I was” (*New Atalantis*, 224). Ellen Pollack, “Guarding the Succession of the (E)State: Guardian–Ward Incest and the Dangers of Representation in Delarivier Manley’s *The New Atalantis*,” *The Eighteenth Century* 39 (1998), 220–37, addresses the discrepancy in Delia’s age *vis-à-vis* Manley’s, who was “at least fifteen at the time of her father’s death and at least seventeen when she married John Manley” (233). As Pollack argues, this discrepancy does not imply Manley’s complicity in this bigamous marriage, as her father’s will extended her guardianship, and thus her age of

- consent, to twenty-one. This explanation corrects Ballaster's judgment in her Introduction to *The New Atalantis* (viii–ix).
31. As Morgan notes in *The Female Wits*, “[w]e do not know what became of Mrs Manley’s son” (35).
 32. Ros Ballaster, “Seizing the Means of Seduction: Fiction and Feminine Identity in Aphra Behn and Delarivier Manley,” *Women, Writing, History, 1640–1740*, ed. Isobel Grundy and Susan Wiseman (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1992), 103; cf. 105–6.
 33. Cf. Bridget Orr, *Empire on the English Stage, 1600–1714* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), on the “double-jointedness” of political allegory and literal referentiality in “[p]lays with exotic settings” (11). My analysis addresses the substantial prose component of Manley’s *œuvre* not covered in Orr’s study of theatrical productions.
 34. See N. A. M. Rodger, “Sea-Power and Empire, 1688–1793,” *The Oxford History of the British Empire: The Eighteenth Century*, vol. 2, ed. P. J. Marshall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 169–83.
 35. Ballaster, *New Atalantis*, 270, n. 22.
 36. Leslie P. Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 6, 7.
 37. Manley, *Adventures*, 12. Manley also references her “Father’s Library” in “The Preface” to her *Memoirs of Europe* (London, 1710), included in Patricia Köster (ed.), *The Novels of Mary Delariviere Manley* (Gainesville, FL: Scholars’ Facsimiles and Reprints, 1971), vol. 2.
 38. Manley, *Adventures*, 15.
 39. Roger Manley, “The History of the Turkish Empire Continued, from the Year of Our Lord, 1676, to the Year 1686,” included in the sixth edition of Richard Knolles, *The Turkish History, from the Original of that Nation to the Growth of the Ottoman Empire* (London, 1687), 287, 307, 336.
 40. *Letters Writ by a Turkish Spy* (London, 1687), 69. On the disputed authorship of this text, see Chapter 4, note 87.
 41. Ballaster, *New Atalantis*, 296, n. 423.
 42. Nabil Matar, *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 10.
 43. Stone remarks, “[b]igamy seems to have been a quite common occurrence in the period of flourishing clandestine marriages before 1753” (*Broken Lives*, 22). Cf. Stone on “Calvert v. Calvert: Multiple Adultery and Bigamy, 1698–1700” (49–78), as well as Phillips on bigamy and polygamy as a *de facto* solution for the early modern English ban on divorce (*Putting Asunder*, 296–302).
 44. Ballaster, *New Atalantis*, 273, n. 74; 274, n. 84.
 45. Ruth Perry, *Women, Letters, and the Novel* (New York: AMS Press, 1980), 156–57; Janet Todd, *The Sign of Angellica: Women, Writing and Fiction, 1660–1800* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 93; Ros Ballaster, *Seductive Forms: Women’s Amatory Fiction, 1684–1740* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 132; Pollack, “Guarding the Succession,” 225.
 46. Ballaster, *New Atalantis*, 275, n. 100.

47. Peirce, *Imperial Harem*, 61, 64.
48. Orr, *Empire*, 67–80.
49. On the orientalism in Defoe's *Roxana*, see Nussbaum, *Torrid Zones*, 31–41.
50. I differ from Ros Ballaster, *Fabulous Orient: Fictions of the East in England, 1662–1785* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), who conflates Roxelana with the Countess, “the worldly older woman who understands where women’s power, visual and verbal, lies” (69). Ballaster’s misreading stems from her projection of the western stereotype of Roxelana as a “courtesan” onto this scene, which I address in Chapter 1, note 43.
51. Ballaster, *New Atalantis*, 287–88, n. 285.
52. Jonathan Swift, *The Examiner* 18 (Nov. 23–30, 1710), *The Prose Works of Jonathan Swift*, 12 vols. (London: George Bell and Sons, 1887–1908), 9: 101. Cairncross, *After Polygamy*, 143, citing Voltaire. Also see Fidelis Morgan, *A Woman of No Character: An Autobiography of Mrs Manley* (London: Faber and Faber, 1986), 47.
53. Cairncross, *After Polygamy*, 143.
54. Morgan, *Woman of No Character*, 47.
55. Stone, *Broken Lives*, 22.
56. Ballaster, *New Atalantis*, 288, n. 290.
57. See Masters, *Mistresses*, 137–38, for Charles II’s “mock marriage” with Louise de Kéroualle.
58. As Ballaster specifies, William Cowper, upon whom the character Hernando Volpone was based, became “the first Lord Chancellor of Great Britain. His brother [represented as Mosco Volpone], also trained in the law, was Comptroller of the Bridge House Estates 1690–1705, and then succeeded William as M.P. for Beeralston” (*New Atalantis*, 287–88, n. 285).
59. Humberto Garcia’s chapter on “Hannah Cowley, the Female Wits, and the Unfeminine Politics of the Turkish Harem,” in his PhD dissertation (University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, 2007) discusses challenges to Wollstonecraft’s feminist orientalism at the time of its enunciation in the 1790s.
60. William Blackstone quoted in Lee Holcombe, *Wives and Property: Reform of the Married Women’s Property Law in Nineteenth-Century England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983), 25. As I establish in “Women and Their Rights: Fethullah Gülen’s Gloss on Lady Montagu’s ‘Embassy’ to the Ottoman Empire,” *Muslim Citizens of the Globalized World*, ed. Robert A. Hunt and Yüksel A. Aslandoğan (Somerset, NJ: The Light and IID Press, 2006), 137–54, Montagu reiterates that the elite Muslim women she met used the provisions of Islamic law, which requires a marriage contract, to ensure their unions remained monogamous. Polygamy, as some seventeenth-century English male travel writers also confirmed (see my analysis in Chapter 4), was the exception in the Islamic world. Suraiya Faroqhi, focusing on “Women’s Culture,” *Subjects of the Sultan: Culture and Daily Life in the Ottoman Empire* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2000), 101–22, stresses that, in addition to their legal rights to property, “[Muslim] women were subjects of the [Ottoman] empire in their own right as soon as they reached puberty” (101). Also significant is Faroqhi, *Stories of*

Ottoman Men and Women: Establishing Status, Establishing Control (Istanbul: Eren, 2002).

61. Zonana, “Sultan and Slave,” 595.

CODA: ARAB WOMEN REVISIT MARY WORTLEY
MONTAGU’S *HAMMAM*

1. Letter xxvii from Mary Wortley Montagu, *Turkish Embassy Letters* [TEL], ed. Malcolm Jack (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1993), 57–60, with silent corrections from *The Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, ed. Robert Halsband, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 1: 312–15. The “stays” to which Montagu refers are “[a] laced underbodice, stiffened by the insertion of strips of whale-bone (sometimes of metal or wood) worn by women (sometimes by men) to give shape and support to the figure” (*Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd edn, 1989).
2. Elizabeth Warnock Fernea, “An Early Ethnographer of Middle Eastern Women: Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689–1762),” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 40 (1981), 329–38, citing 330. Leila Ahmed, “Western Ethnocentrism and Perceptions of the Harem,” *Feminist Studies* 8 (1982), 521–34, citing 525.
3. Joseph W. Lew, “Lady Mary’s Portable Seraglio,” *Eighteenth Century Studies* 24 (1991), 432–50, citing 432, 433. Lew observes, “[i]n his already classic critique of Orientalism, Said fails to mention [Lady Mary]” (434). Leela Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), asserts that Said’s *Orientalism* is “[c]ommonly regarded as the catalyst and reference point for postcolonialism” and thereby “represents the first phase of postcolonial theory” (64).
4. Lisa Lowe, *Critical Terrains: French and British Orientalisms* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 44.
5. Srinivas Aravamudan, *Tropicopolitans: Colonialism and Agency, 1688–1804* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), 20; Meyda Yeğenoğlu, *Colonial Fantasies: Towards a Feminist Reading of Orientalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 93.
6. For the former approach, see Teresa Heffernan, “Feminism against the East/West Divide: Lady Mary’s *Turkish Embassy Letters*,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 33 (2000), 201–15; for the latter approach, see Arthur J. Weitzman, “Voyeurism and Aesthetics in the Turkish Bath: Lady Mary’s School of Female Beauty,” *Comparative Literature Studies* 39 (2002), 347–59.
7. Bernadette Andrea, “Travels Through ‘Islam’ in Early Modern English Studies,” *Clio: A Journal of Literature, History and the Philosophy of History* 35 (2006), 225–43. Also see Hülya Adak, “Aligning the ‘Original’ with the ‘Target’: Translating Ottoman Poetry,” “Intersubjectivity: Halide Edib (1882–1964) or the ‘Ottoman/Turkish (Woman)’ as the Subject of Knowledge,” unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Chicago (August 2001), 33–49.
8. See Chapter 2, note 52, and Chapter 4, note 10.
9. I develop this point in “Travels Through ‘Islam.’”

10. Katherine S. H. Turner, "From Classical to Imperial: Changing Visions of Turkey in the Eighteenth Century," *Travel Writing and Empire: Postcolonial Theory in Transit*, ed. Steve Clark (London: Zed, 1999), 113–28, marks the chasm between Montagu's *Turkish Embassy Letters* (first published as a book in 1763) and Lady Elizabeth Craven's *A Journey through the Crimea to Constantinople* (first published in 1789). As Turner concludes, "Craven's repudiation of Montagu is a significant contribution to an emergent colonial discourse, displacing Montagu's classical, tolerant and largely ahistorical stance" (115; emphasis added). For an expanded analysis of this shift, see Kader Konuk, "Ethnomasquerade in Ottoman-European Encounters: Reenacting Lady Mary Wortley Montagu," *Criticism* 46 (2004), 393–414.
11. For related analyses, see Bernadette Andrea, "Dialogism between East and West: Halide Edib's *Masks or Souls?*," *Journal of Early Modern Cultural Studies* 6.2 (2006), 5–21, and "Passage through the Harem: Historicizing a Western Obsession in Leila Ahmed's *A Border Passage*," *Arab Women's Lives Retold: Exploring Identity through Writing*, ed. Nawar Al-Hassan Golley (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2007).
12. Assia Djebar is the pseudonym of Fatima-Zohra Imalayen (born August 4, 1936). On the significance of this pseudonym, see Katherine Gracki, "Writing Violence and the Violence of Writing in Assia Djebar's Algerian Quartet," *World Literature Today* 70 (1996), 835–43. On Djebar's engagement with orientalism and feminism, see Anne Donadey, *Recasting Postcolonialism: Women Writing Between Worlds* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2001); Rafika Merini, *Two Major Francophone Women Writers, Assia Djébar and Leila Sebbar: A Thematic Study of Their Works* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999); and the special issue of *World Literature Today* 70.4 (1996) on Djebar. Also see Mildred Mortimer, "Edward Said and Assia Djebar: A Contrapuntal Reading," *Research in African Literatures* 36 (2005), 53–67.
13. Ruth Bernard Yeazel, "Public Baths and Private Harems: Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and the Origins of Ingres's *Bain Turc*," *Yale Journal of Criticism* 7 (1994), 111–38, details Ingres's debt to, and distortion of, Montagu.
14. Priscilla Ringrose, *Assia Djebar: In Dialogue with Feminisms* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006), published after I completed this coda, applies "a dialogical approach" to Djebar's relations with French feminists such as Hélène Cixous, Julia Kristeva, and Luce Irigaray, and Arab feminists such as Fatima Mernissi and Leila Ahmed.
15. Assia Djebar, *Women of Algiers in their Apartment*, trans. Marjolijn de Jager (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1992), 1, first published as *Femmes d'Alger dans leur appartement* (Paris: Des femmes, 1980). All subsequent citations appear parenthetically. For a complementary analysis, see Emer O'Beirne, "Veiled Vision: Assia Djebar on Delacroix, Picasso, and the *Femmes d'Alger*," *Romance Studies* 21 (2003), 39–51.
16. Meredith Turshen, "Algerian Women in the Liberation Struggle and the Civil War: From Active Participants to Passive Victims?," *Social Research* 69 (2002), 889–911.

17. The title of the theoretical essay featured in this section is, significantly, “Forbidden Gaze, Severed Sound” (133), “Regard interdit, son coupé” (145).
18. From the “Afterword” included in the English edition of Djébar’s *Women of Algiers in their Apartment*, 159–211, consisting of Clarisse Zimra’s interview with Djébar (167–87), framed by Zimra’s analysis (159–67, 187–211). I cite from the interview, 175.
19. Christine Peltre, *Orientalism in Art*, trans. John Goodman (New York: Abbeville Press, 1998), 108. Also see Reina Lewis, *Gendering Orientalism: Race, Femininity and Representation* (London: Routledge, 1996).
20. Cf. Montagu’s similar assessment at the beginning of the eighteenth century (*TEL*, 60).
21. Marnia Lazreg articulates a similar methodology in *The Eloquence of Silence: Algerian Women in Question* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 16–19, despite her blanket condemnation of Djébar, 200–1.
22. Hélène Cixous and Catherine Clément, *The Newly Born Woman*, trans. Betsy Wing (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986). The “Glossary” provided by the translator unpacks the multiple significations of “voler” (163). Cixous, born in Algeria in 1937 (one year after Djébar), defines her ancestry thus: “My father, Sephardic–Spain–Morocco–Algeria – my mother, Ashkenazy–Austria–Hungary–Czechoslovakia (her father) and Spain (her mother) passing by chance through a Paris that was short-lived” (131, n. 5). Donadey, *Recasting Postcolonialism*, comments that Algerian Jews like Cixous might hail from groups “established in the region since the sixth century (prior to the arrival of the Arabs, in the seventh century)” though “[m]ost [like Cixous’s paternal ancestors] had come from Spain in 1492, expelled by the Inquisition at the same time as Muslims.” The French colonists used the Algerian Jewish population as part of a divide-and-rule strategy by redefining them in 1870 as “European” and granting them full French (and therefore “Algerian”) citizenship (3). The Berbers and Arabs of the region, by contrast, continued to be defined as colonial subjects.
23. Assia Djébar, *A Sister to Scheherazade [Ombre sultane (1987)]*, trans. Dorothy S. Blair (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1993), 2.
24. For the politics and permutations of the modern *hijab*, see Faegheh Shirazi, *The Veil Unveiled: The Hijab in Modern Culture* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001), who takes a cultural studies approach, and Fadwa El Guindi, *Veil: Modesty, Privacy and Resistance* (Oxford: Berg, 1999), who takes an anthropological one.
25. Montagu records her use of the traditional veil to explore the public spaces of the marketplace and the mosque (*TEL*, 69, 92, 95, 126–27, 133). For a detailed inventory of these garments, see N. M. Penzer, *The Harem: An Account of the Institution as it Existed in the Palace of the Turkish Sultans with a History of the Grand Seraglio from its Foundation to the Present Time* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1937), 167–73.
26. “Son arabe, iranien, afghan, berbère ou bengali, pourquoi pas, mais toujours avec timbre féminin et lèvres proférant sous le masque” (7). This passage

- more plausibly translates as “Arabic, Iranian, Afghan, Berber, or Bengali sound.”
27. Cf. Assia Djebar, *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade* [*Amour, la fantasia*, 1985] (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1993).
 28. Fernea, “An Early Ethnographer,” 329 (citing Spence), 336.
 29. On her commitment to learning Turkish, see Montagu, *TEL*, 79, 103, 122. As Turner stresses in “Classical to Imperial,” the next aristocratic English woman travel writer after Montagu, Lady Élisabeth Craven, refused to learn the Turkish language and disdained the Turkish dress (121–22), on which see note 10.
 30. Montagu presents such a scenario, involving “a Christian woman of quality who made it her choice to live with a Turkish husband” (*TEL*, 136).
 31. Isobel Grundy in her biography of *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) documents these rumors, noting, “Edward Wortley Montagu the younger [Montagu’s first child, born in England prior to the embassy through the Ottoman empire] liked to hint – with obvious absurdity – that *he* was sired by the sultan” (149). For Edward Wortley Montagu, Jr.’s studies of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish, and his eventual conversion to Islam, see Jonathan Curling, *Edward Wortley Montagu, 1713–1776: The Man in the Iron Wig* (London: Andrew Melrose, 1954). I am preparing an extended study of Montagu and her son.
 32. As Jill Campbell concludes in “Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and the Historical Machinery of Female Identity,” *History, Gender and Eighteenth-Century Literature*, ed. Beth Fowkes Tobin (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1994), 64–85, “Italy (and France), where she was to live for twenty-three years, served her as a kind of mediating port between Eastern and Western realms” (81–82).
 33. Djebar, interviewed by Zimra, “Afterword,” 177.
 34. Djebar, interviewed by Zimra, “Afterword,” 177.
 35. Zimra in this “Afterword” continues, “it also happens to be the name of Djebar’s maternal clan through the female line, that of her mother’s mother, a descendent of highly revered religious leaders” (198).
 36. Djebar, interviewed by Zimra, “Afterword,” 179.
 37. Djebar dramatizes this dilemma in *Fantasia*, which opens with the portentous line, “A little Arab girl going to school for the first time, one autumn morning, walking hand in hand with her father” (3). She concludes with “The Tunic of Nessus,” to signify the tormenting paradox of being schooled in the language of the colonizers, which enabled an escape from the bonds of the harem and immured the writer in the alienation of the enemy’s tongue (213–17). The classical hero Hercules, who sojourned in the Atlas regions of Algeria while performing his famous twelve labors, ultimately donned the poisoned “tunic of Nessus” for an agonizing death. Also see Assia Djebar, *Ces voix qui m’assiègent . . . en marge de ma francophonie* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1999).
 38. We later learn that “the blue scar . . . started above one of her breasts and stretched down to her abdomen” (45). See the similar description from a former female combatant in Djebar’s *Fantasia*, 161.

39. Montagu at the conclusion of *TEL* shifts into the language of modern racism when describing North Africans (149).
40. Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko; or, The Royal Slave* (1688), ed. Catherine Gallagher, with Simon Stern (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), subsequently cited parenthetically.
41. In the extended narration of the old masseuse's life, we learn she escaped a mercenary marriage, arranged by her father over the protests of her female kinswomen, after which her only means of subsistence was prostitution. Nevertheless, this bad situation, in her estimation, was the better of the two grim futures (*Women of Algiers*, 37–43).
42. As Djebar asserts in her interview with Zimra, "*Women of Algiers* is my first response to the official policy of Arabization, which I loathe." Citing her experience in the hinterlands of Algeria, she explains this is "an 'Arabization from above' that has become, for me, the linguistic equivalent of war. Official Arabic is an authoritarian language that is simultaneously a language of men" (176).
43. Courtesan, which literally means "[o]ne attached to the court of a prince," shifted from its political context to the sexualized connotation of "[a] court-mistress; a woman of the town, a prostitute" in the sixteenth century (*Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd edn, 1989).
44. John B. Wolf documents this history in *The Barbary Coast: Algiers Under the Turks, 1500–1830* (New York: Norton, 1979).

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