VERSIONS OF BLACKNESS

Aphra Behn's short novel *Oroonoko* (1688) is one of the most widely studied works of seventeenth-century literature, because of its powerful representation of slavery and complex portrayal of ways in which differing races and cultures – European, Black African, and Native American – observe and misinterpret each other. This volume presents a new edition of *Oroonoko*, with unprecedentedly full and informative commentary, along with complete texts of three major British seventeenth-century works concerned with race and colonialism: Henry Neville's *The Isle of Pines* (1668), Behn's *Abdelazer* (1676), and Thomas Southerne's tragedy *Oroonoko* (1696). It combines these with a rich anthology of European discussions of slavery, racial difference, and colonial conquest, from the mid-sixteenth century to the time of Behn's death. Many are taken from important works that have not hitherto been easily available, and the collection offers an unrivaled resource for studying the culture which produced Britain's first major fictions of slavery.

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Key Texts on Slavery from the Seventeenth Century

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Contents

Introduction

THE PRINCIPAL WORKS in this collection are Henry Neville's *The Isle of Pines* (1668); Aphra Behn's only tragedy, *Abdelazer* (1676), and her best-known work of prose fiction, *Oroonoko* (1688); and Thomas Southerne's dramatic adaptation of *Oroonoko* (1696). *The Isle of Pines* is about an Englishman, shipwrecked on an uninhabited island with four women, one of whom is black; in the final version, printed here, his multitudinous descendants – by all four women – encounter some Dutch visitors. *Abdelazer* is the story of a captive Moorish prince who gains power and high office in the Spanish court and, after many villainies – including regicide and adultery with the Queen – is eventually outsmarted and destroyed. The two versions of *Oroonoko* tell of a nobler African prince, betrayed into a worse captivity – slavery in the British colony of Surinam – and destroyed by his attempts to gain liberty. The contextual material illustrates a range of attitudes toward slavery, colonialism, black Africans, and Native Americans from the mid-sixteenth to the late seventeenth centuries. My aim has been to situate Neville, Behn, and Southerne in contexts that might have influenced them, rather than to see them as leading toward the late eighteenth century, when the mentality of imperialism was quite different and when the debate about slavery had assumed a character almost undreamed of in Behn's time.

THE ISLE OF PINES

Henry Neville (1620–94) was a republican politician and theorist, who (along with Henry Marten, who is mentioned in *Oroonoko*) opposed Cromwell's quasi-monarchical rule. His chief works are his translation of the works of Machiavelli (1675) and his republican tract *Plato Redivivus* (1681). In its first version, *The Isle of Pines* is the brief autobiographical

narrative of an Englishman, George Pines. In 1589, he and four women are the sole survivors of a shipwreck and are cast away on an uninhabited island in the Indian Ocean. Pines sleeps with all four women, fathering 47 children, and by the end of an idle and otherwise unproductive life is surrounded by 1,789 descendants. Later in 1668, Neville published a sequel, set in the present, in which Pines' descendants are discovered by some Dutch visitors. In the final version, also published in 1668, the versions are merged, so that the later events frame the first, as the Dutch visitors are presented with George Pines' narrative.

This is an elusive and playful work, in which real-life parallels and applications are hinted at while remaining perhaps deliberately incomplete. As an example, we might take the four distinct peoples whom Pines sires, each with names derived from that of the founding mother. One tribe, descended from the daughter of Pines' employer, is the English. Another is the Trevors: Trevor is a distinctively Welsh name. But what of the other two tribes, the Sparks and the rebellious, trouble-making Phills (the latter descended from the black servant Philippa, who did not have a surname)? Do they correspond to the Scots and the Irish? Neither name belongs uniquely to that nation, and a genuine Irishman, Dermot Conelly, turns up at the end of the story, further spoiling any exact parallelism. Nevertheless, one cannot ignore the suggestiveness of the name "English." It seems that Neville here is suggesting an analogy, without pushing it to the point where it possesses and restricts the meaning of the work. Pines' island is a partial microcosm of some aspects of Britain.

It is perhaps best to approach the work through the intellectual traditions with which it plays. One, which figures prominently in this selection, is primitivism: a glorification of the primitive life, as being uncorrupted by the artifice and oppression of civilization, and a belief that primitive peoples, like the earliest human beings in classical myth, lived in a Golden Age where there was no violence, fraud, or need to labor. Sometimes associated with the tradition of primitivism is libertinism: the view that social and moral restrictions upon sexual freedom are artificial and repressive inventions of priests and lawgivers and that it is healthy to cast them off and recover humanity's primitive sexual freedom. Libertinism drew some nourishment from a growing sense of cultural relativism: an awareness of the immense ways in which cultures could differ in their moral and sexual values and a consequent belief that there were no absolute standards in these matters, for they were arbitrary matters of custom. Such beliefs were, of course, minority, heterodox beliefs in a predominantly Christian culture,

but they had their adherents, particularly in the avant-garde milieu of the Restoration theater.

In its original form, *The Isle of Pines* portrays a return to a sexual golden age of boundless pleasure and fulfillment, in which the artificial sexual restraints of civilization are cast aside. George Pines finds that sexual inhibitions are mere conventions, created by custom and – equally – abolished by it: "custome taking away shame (there being none but us) we did it more openly, as our Lusts gave us liberty" (p. 14). He overcomes his initial reluctance to sleep with the black servant woman, though he can only ever do so in the dark; this behavior is presented as a personal and not fully explicable idiosyncrasy. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that the future trouble-makers, John and Henry Phill, are descended from the black servant.

Yet even in this version, paradise is not entirely regained: "This place," George Pines writes "(had it the culture that skilful people might bestow on it) would prove a Paradise." Paradise requires the improvement and management of nature, for which two things are necessary: symbolic systems and cutting implements. The one axe that George Pines possessed quickly became blunt and was cast aside. The palace of his descendant William Pines is therefore made of "unhewn" timber; with their "cutting instruments," however, the Dutch are able to build him a respectable palace. Cutting – the control and modification of nature with the knife – was to be one of the distinctive hallmarks of culture in *Oroonoko*, though one in which culture can easily turn against itself, as in the final dismemberment of the hero.

The Dutch also differ from the stranded British in their use of numbers. They measure the island and chart its position. For George Pines, numbering is chiefly confined to the counting of his offspring. He has been a bookkeeper – a keeper of accounts – but without blades he cannot directly manipulate the world that he regiments in his ledgers. He can only multiply. In Neville, the distinction between the mathematics and technology of the Dutch and of Pines' descendants is made clearly, but it is stated rather than developed. Later, Behn was to explore in detail the interaction between humanity's capacities for violence and for constructing symbolic systems, between cutting and counting. This interaction culminates in the quartering of Oroonoko's body.

When the Dutch arrive on the island, they are in the position of sophisticated Europeans confronting ingenuous and virtually naked primitives. They observe the natives' burial rituals – and also their Bible readings – like explorers observing the ceremonies of exotic tribes, which is, indeed, exactly

what they are doing. Yet, the work also exhibits something that characterizes all the major texts in this collection: a reversal of roles between the cultured and the primitive. In part, we see the Englishman reduced to the role of the naïve primitive, but we also see familiar English cultural practices (Bible reading, monarchy) displaced into an alien context. Readers are thus distanced from the everyday values of their culture and invited to question their absolute value.

If George Pines is in a libertine's sexual paradise, he is also in the position of Adam: As the only man in the world, he is the sole progenitor of a future race. This brings us to another theoretical context. One way of defending the Stuart monarchy was to argue that Adam had exercised monarchic authority over his descendants and that kings inherit his authority: this argument was, for example, advanced by John Maxwell and Sir Robert Filmer, Filmer's work being confuted by John Locke in his *Two Treatises of Government* (excerpted in this collection). In the final version, the island community starts as a libertine sexual paradise, but turns into a realization of Stuart monarchic theory. The allusion to the Stuarts is accentuated by one of Neville's fleeting and incomplete analogies, for William Pines, the king, is rather suggestive of Charles II, who was celebrated for his ease and familiarity of manner: "though he had nothing of majesty in him, yet he had a courteous, noble and debonair spirit." The patriarchal monarchy is, however, seen through the eyes of skeptical Dutchmen, who view it as a cultural oddity. For Holland was at this time a republic.

George Pines' story starts in 1589, at the height of England's glory. This was the year after the defeat of the Spanish Armada, and it saw the publication of that great expression of the expansionist spirit, the first edition of Richard Hakluyt's *The Principall Navigations, Voiages and Discoueries of the English Nation*. The name of the Isle of Pines also evokes Elizabethan glories, for it was the name of Sir Francis Drake's base during his raids on the Spaniards in Central America (one of which is commemorated in the extract from Davenant's *The History of Sir Francis Drake*). In contrast, the year 1668, when the tale was published and where it concludes, had quite different connotations. Coincidentally, it was the year toward which Behn's *Oroonoko* gloomily points: the year after naval humiliation by the Dutch and the year in which the Dutch took possession of Surinam. George Pines sets out in the dawn of England's colonial expansion and spends his life idly copulating.

The primitive, first-generation paradise cannot be sustained. Its increasing population and resulting tensions necessitate strict government, and it may at first sight seem that the evolution into a Filmerian monarchy is

inevitable. The visit of the Dutch to Calicut, however, presents us with a society whose social structure is quite different. It is different because it is derived from a differently constructed sexual morality, in which other men are permitted to sleep with the king's wives, thus making patriarchal inheritance infeasible. Patriarchy is not a universal principle; it is a local custom. Like other works in this collection, but more single-mindedly, this work uses the exotic to defamiliarize and criticize life back home.

The Isle of Pines is the island where George Pines copulates, but is the name Pines therefore – as has been suggested – a deliberate anagram of "penis"? Probably not. For one thing, seventeenth-century anagrams tend to be more elaborately blatant, as is demonstrated by the title of a 1653 pamphlet attacking the Leveller John Lilburne: *John Lilburne. Anagram. O! J. burn in hell.* There is not much rich implicitness here. More importantly, *penis* was not then the colloquially common word that psychoanalysis and school biology lessons have made it. The same goes for *anus*: Both words were Latinate rarities. In Thomas Shadwell's play *The Virtuoso* (1676), *anus* is a word used by a verbose, jargon-ridden scientist, and *penis* is used in the same sort of way in Thomas Middleton's play *Anything for a Quiet Life*.[1] *The Isle of Pines* is many things, but it is not a piece of twentieth-century schoolboy humor.

SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY CONCEPTIONS OF RACE

Aphra Behn (1640–89) was one of the most remarkable writers of the late seventeenth century. She was the first British woman to earn her living as a creative writer. One might expect that her unprecedented role made her a rather fragile and marginal figure, and she certainly encountered some prejudice against women writers – or, more specifically, against a woman writer who dared to write about sex. She also, however, enjoyed supportive friendships with a number of male writers, and during her period of literary activity (from 1670 until her death in 1689) she had significantly more new plays staged than any male playwright. In the years after 1682, when there was a serious slump in the demand for new plays, she diversified prodigally into poetry, translation, and – most fruitfully – prose fiction: *Love Letters Between a Nobleman and his Sister* (1684–87) is generally regarded as the first English novel. *Oroonoko* (1688) is the best known of a number of boldly

[1] Marjorie Hope Nicolson and David Rodes, eds., *The Virtuoso* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966), 2.3.194, 3.3.1; Thomas Middleton *Anything for a Quiet Life* (London, 1662), sig. D2.

experimental works of short realistic fiction that she produced toward the end of her life. *Abdelazer*, Behn's only tragedy, dates from an earlier period of her career, being the fourth of her plays to reach the stage. It is based on an early seventeenth-century play, *Lust's Dominion*, but it alters significantly the treatment of race in its source. It also, however, resembles a slightly earlier Restoration tragedy, Elkanah Settle's *The Empress of Morocco* (1673), which also features a monstrous, adulterous Queen Mother who arranges the murder of her own son.

Thomas Southerne (1659–1746) is less well remembered today, though his comedy *The Wives Excuse* (1691), unsuccessful in its own day, was revived with great success at Stratford in 1994. Three of his works are indebted to Behn's prose fiction, and he was like Behn an experimenter, especially in comedy: With its tenuous plot, inconsequentialities of conversation, and abrupt shifts of perspective, *The Wives Excuse* anticipates Chekhov. *Oroonoko* followed another Behn-based tragedy by Southerne, *The Fatal Marriage; or, The Innocent Adultery* (1694), which was a sentimentalization of Behn's cynical short story, *The History of the Nun* (1689), about an inadvertently bigamous ex-nun who (in the original) murders both her husbands.[2]

The principal works in this collection thus all portray black characters in conflict with – and generally destroyed by – white Europeans. All portray the alien with open-minded imaginativeness, and all treat the contrasts between alien and European as unstable, complex, and reversible; for both Behn and Southerne, moreover, the defining quality of the protagonist is his rank, not his ethnic origin. Thus, none of these works uses rigid and essentialist ideas of what came to be called "race." Although they portray the African with direct interest, however, they also use him as a means of exploring problems closer to home; the alien may be the familiar in an unfamiliar guise.

The definition of race with which we are familiar postulates hereditary differences of ability and moral character between ethnic groups of humanity defined in quasi-scientific terms, terms that came to be influenced by Darwinian evolutionism. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the intellectual foundations of this pseudo-science had not been established, and *race* primarily meant family, genealogy, or nation[3]: When the heroine

[2] Southerne's other debt to Behn is in his comedy *Sir Anthony Love* (1690), which borrows from *The Lucky Mistake* (1689). In addition, the combination of comic and tragic plots in *Oroonoko* may owe something to *The Widdow Ranter* (1689), which similarly juxtaposes a male rebel with a feisty, transgressive woman.

[3] See Nicholas Hudson, "From 'Nation' to 'Race'," *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 29 (1996), 247–66.

of Aphra Behn's *The Young King* expresses hatred for the entire "Race" of the Scythians, she is not making a racist remark, but rather is expressing hatred for the nation whose king killed her father (and whose prince she eventually marries having overcome her aversion).[4] John Ogilby's vast compilation *Africa* (1670) shows little attempt at racial generalization: It is an atomistic description of many different communities with many different characteristics. At a local level, it does show belief in tribal characteristics, but does not ascend from the characteristics of particular tribes to more general characteristics of "race": There is no hierarchical tree that rises from species, to genus, to family, and so on.

Yet, as some of the extracts in Part Two show, attempts to establish an intellectual rationale of racial inferiority began very early. In the 1540s the Spanish scholar Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda argued that the Native Americans were less than men (*homunculi*) because of their barbarous practices and their lack of courage. In 1550 Sepúlveda disputed at the University of Valladolid against Bartolomé de Las Casas, a pioneering polemicist against Spanish atrocities in the New World, and it was Las Casas who won the disputation; Sepúlveda was denied permission to publish his views. A later argument against the inferiority of alien peoples appears in the extracted passage from the Jesuit missionary from Peru, José de Acosta, who argues that seemingly innate differences of race are purely the product of education: If a black African had the education of a European nobleman, he would be his equal, and vice versa. The lot of the Native Americans under Spanish rule remained intolerable, but it was Las Casas and Acosta who influenced the outlook of King Philip II; Sepúlveda died in obscurity, despite being the king's former tutor.

The inferiority of non-white peoples was, therefore, being asserted, and belief in it certainly informed the actions of colonial conquerors and slave traders. Rabid hatred of black men informs the play that Behn was to adapt as *Abdelazer, Lust's Dominion*,[5] which shows a vigorous contempt for its black-skinned, sexually voracious, and treacherously violent protagonist. The King of Spain proposes that

> It shall be death for any Negroes hand,
> To touch the beauty of a Spanish dame.[6]

[4] Janet Todd, ed., *The Works of Aphra Behn*, 7 vols. (London: Pickering & Chatto, 1992–96), VII, 4.5.23. All citations to Behn's works are to this edition.

[5] *Lust's Dominion* was first published in 1657, when it was wrongly attributed to Marlowe. It is generally, though not conclusively, identified with *The Spanish Moor's Tragedy*, written in 1600 by Dekker and others, but not published at the time.

[6] Fredson Bowers, ed., *The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker*, 4 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953-61), IV, III.3.ii.2.48–49.

And, after the villain's just downfall, all Negroes are banished from Spain (Elizabeth I twice tried to expel black Africans from Britain). As we shall see, Behn radically altered her source.

Although a practical contempt for alien races was widespread, it had not generated an elaborate superstructure of ideology, and the qualities of the black- and brown-skinned peoples were a constant source of debate. At the other extreme from Sepúlveda is Montaigne's complex and partially idealizing view of the Native Americans and (under the influence of Las Casas) his denunciation of European barbarities in the New World. In *The Negro's & Indians Advocate* (1680), the Englishman Morgan Godwyn deplores white men's mistreatment of their slaves and their refusal to instruct them in Christianity. In the course of his argument, he describes the theoretical arguments with which English colonists justified their practical racism: that black Africans were descendants not of Adam but of an earlier man, or that they belonged to the "race" of Cain or of Cham, the son of Noah, who spied upon his father's nakedness and whose line was cursed (in perpetuity, it was argued) with servitude. Godwyn also seems aware of the dispute between Las Casas and Sepúlveda, but he reports racist theories as exotic curiosities, whose currency will barely be credible to his English readership. Nevertheless, Godwyn stops short of denouncing slavery itself. Slaves, he asserts, should be baptized and treated kindly; they will then be better slaves. In *Friendly Advice to the Gentlemen Planters of the East and West Indies* (1684), Thomas Tryon similarly denounces the mistreatment of black slaves and the belief in their inferiority, without arguing against slavery itself.

In looking at works such as Behn's *Oroonoko*, therefore, we should be aware that attitudes could be combined in ways that are impossible today. Defenders of black Africans could accept slavery (the first known condemnation of slavery is the Germantown Protest, signed in Pennsylvania by four German Quakers in 1688 – coincidentally, the year of publication of Behn's *Oroonoko* – but unpublished and unknown for nearly two centuries). Equally, race was not the primary justification for slavery; rather, it was non-Christianity. English colonists refused baptism to slaves because they feared that it would liberate them. In encouraging the baptism of slaves, therefore, North American lawgivers assured slave owners that baptism did not constitute manumission.[7] A Virginia law of 1748, however, admits that it is illegal to enslave a free man who is already a Christian.[8] It

[7] See, e.g., J. P., *A Complete Collection of All the Laws of Virginia now in Force* (London, 1684), 155.
[8] *The Acts of Assembly Now in Force, in the Colony of Virginia* (Williamsburg, 1752), 285.

is worth bearing this in mind, for Behn's *Oroonoko* pays far more attention to differences and prejudices of religion than it does to those of race.

Conceptually, the master-slave relationship was not yet fixed as that of white European and black African. Africans sold captives, debtors, and criminals into slavery, and until 1600 the west African export of slaves across the Sahara exceeded that across the Atlantic.[9] Native Americans used captured black Africans as slaves,[10] and white men could also be enslaved: Most of the books about slavery published in the seventeenth century relate to European enslavement in Islamic countries.[11] Royalist prisoners of war were sent from England to Barbados as forced labour in the 1650s, and British prisoners of war were sent to the galleys by the French. Behn follows common practice in referring to the white indentured servants in Surinam as "slaves." Thus, although in the seventeenth century there is a clear relationship in practice and in prejudice between slavery and racial difference, it is not the uniquely defining relationship; religious difference was the primary rationalization. Moreover, plantation owners (such as Richard Ligon, whose work is represented here) could deplore inhumanity to black slaves while coolly setting out the economics of a plantation and costing out the descending quantities and qualities of food and clothing allowable to overseers, servants, and slaves. The ambiguities of *Abdelazer* and the two *Oroonoko*s thus operate within a range of possible intellectual combinations that is not easily reproduced today.

Behn's work is also conditioned by literary conventions whose full range is not widely appreciated. This is particularly true of her treatment of sexual relations between Europeans and non-Europeans, and here there has been a tendency to read the outlook of seventeenth-century London in the light of attitudes current in other places and later periods.

Increasingly, the American provinces legislated against marriage or procreation by mixed-raced couples. A 1715 Maryland law referred to "unnatural and inordinate Copulation,"[12] but the attempt was initially to prevent

[9] Herbert S. Klein, *The Atlantic Slave Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 56.

[10] "In the Islands of S. *Vincent* and *Dominico* there are some *Caribbians* who have many *Negroes* to their Slaves, as the *Spaniards* and some other Nations have; some of them they got from the *English* Plantations, and some from *Spanish* Ships heretofore cast away on their Coasts" (Charles de Rochefort, *The History of the Caribby-Islands* [1658], trans. John Davies of Kidwelly (London, 1666), 295).

[11] For a study of white captivity, see Linda Colley, *Captives* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2002), and Abbot Emmerson Smith, *Colonists in Bondage: White Servitude and Convict Labor in America, 1607–1776* (Chapel Hill: North Carolina University Press, 1947).

[12] *A Compleat Collection of the Laws of Maryland* (Annapolis, 1727), 112. Cf. Nicholas Trott, ed., *The Laws of the Province of South-Carolina*, 2 vols. (Charles-Town, 1736), 318.

anomalous combinations of free and servile, rather than to prevent racial degeneration. An act recorded in the 1684 edition of the laws of Virginia (but not in the 1662 *The Lawes of Virginia now in Force*) makes the stipulation, usual in English territories, that all Children "shall be held Bond or Free according to the condition of the Mother" and adds that "if any Christian shall commit Fornication with a *Negro Man* or *Woman*, he or she so offending, shall pay double the Fines imposed on Fornication by the former Act."[13] This is, to be sure, discrimination, but it does not reflect horror at the contamination of the racial blood-line. Things were to get far worse:

> In 1785, the revolutionary generation defined a black person as anyone with a black parent or grandparent, thus conferring whiteness on whomever was less than one-quarter black. Virginia changed the law 125 years later to define as "Negro," as the term then was used, anyone who was at least one-sixteenth black. In 1930, Virginia adopted the notorious "one-drop" law – defining as black anyone with one drop of African blood, however that might have been determined.[14]

This is not to suggest, absurdly, that the lot of the black American was better in 1684 than in 1930. It is rather to suggest that the oppressions of the seventeenth century were driven by imperatives and anxieties that are not the same as those of more recent times and that it is a mistake to read the earlier period entirely in the light of the later one. *Abdelazer* and Southerne's *Oroonoko* both portray a sexual relationship (marriage, in both) between a black man and a white woman. Behn's *The Widdow Ranter* (not included in this volume) portrays an unconsummated romance between an Englishman and a Native American queen. Behn's Imoinda is desired by her white captors, and some scholars have (unnecessarily) postulated an unspoken relationship between Behn's Oroonoko and her female narrator. Much ink has been spilt on an assumed fear of "miscegenation" in Behn's work.

[13] *A Complete Collection of All the Laws of Virginia* (1684), 111. Du Tertre, who deplores the sexual abuse of slaves, records that in French territories the status of the child followed that of the father, who was obliged to maintain any illegitimate child until he or she reached the age of twelve (Jean-Baptiste Du Tertre, *Histoire générale des Antilles habitées par les François*, 4 vols. [Paris, 1667–71], I, 512–13).

[14] Gary B. Nash, "The Hidden History of Mestizo America," in *Sex, Love, Race: Crossing Boundaries in North American History*, ed. Martha Hodes, 10–32 (New York and London: New York University Press, 1999).

This is particularly inappropriate with *The Widdow Ranter*. At the height of the legislation against mixed-race marriages, in 1920, only five states prohibited marriages between whites and Native Americans, as against thirty prohibiting marriages between whites and African-Americans,[15] and there was a wide spectrum of attitudes in Behn's time. It was at first French policy at the highest level to encourage intermarriage. According to Charles de Rochefort, "Nay, there are some handsom Maids and Women amongst the Savage *Caribbians*, witness *Madamoiselle de Rosselan*, wife to the Governour of *Saintalousia*."[16] In 1671, John Ogilby approvingly retold the story of Pocahontas.[17] The half–Native American son of Thomas Warner, the first British settler of Saint Kitts, was made governor of Dominica by Lord Willoughby. In addition, racial anxieties were not a constant, but varied according to the ratio of slaves and masters in the colonies: They were strong in Barbados, where the slave population quickly exceeded that of the British, and less so in Carolina. We thus cannot assume that the racial attitudes evoked in the transient illusions of the London stage corresponded to those of remote Barbados or the still remoter Virginia of 1785 or 1930. Far more palpable and immediate were the attitudes of heroic romance.

HEROIC ROMANCE

The ancient Greek novel *The Ethiopian Story*, by Heliodorus (4th century CE), tells of the love of the Greek hero Theagenes and the Ethiopian princess Chariclea. Chariclea's parents are black, but she is born white because her mother had been looking at a portrait of Andromeda (an earlier white Ethiopian princess) at the moment of conception. Fearing her husband's suspicion, her mother abandoned her at birth. After many separations and adventures, including capture by pirates, enslavement, and near human sacrifice, the lovers are eventually married.

Heliodorus' novel initiates a long tradition of interracial heroic romance. Chariclea is the model for the white Ethiopian warrior princess Clorinda in Tasso's epic poem *Jerusalem Delivered* (1580), who is loved, mortally wounded, and baptized at the point of death by the crusader Tancredi. It is a symptom of the diverse constructions that different cultures can place on

[15] Peter M. Rinaldo, *Marrying the Natives: Love and Interracial Marriage* (DorPete Press: Briarcliff Manor, NY, 1996), 26.
[16] *The History of the Caribby-Islands* [1658], trans. John Davies of Kidwelly (London, 1666), 252. Louis de Kerengoan, sieur de Rosselan, was governor of St Lucia from 1650 until his death in 1654.
[17] *America* (London, 1671), 201–05.

interracial romance that this love has nothing whatsoever to do with miscegenation: It is an allegory of Rome's relationship with the Coptic church.[18] Chariclea is reworked yet again as the white Ethiopian princess Candace in La Calprenède's romance *Cleopatra*: She is white on this occasion because of repeated intermarriage – miscegenation – between Ethiopian kings and white women.[19] *Cleopatra* was much plundered by Restoration dramatists (Behn took one of the plots of her first play, *The Young King*, from it), and its main story reads as a simple romantic analogue to *Oroonoko*: Juba, a North African prince, becomes a slave in Rome after the defeat of his kingdom and is given a Roman name – Coriolanus – by Julius Caesar. After many separations, he is united with his true love, Cleopatra's daughter and namesake.

Indeed, Restoration drama repeatedly idealizes love between people of different races: An example is Dryden's heroic play *The Conquest of Granada*, which portrays the love of a Spanish nobleman for a Moorish princess. A minor play, William Walker's *Victorious Love* (1698), portrays the triumphant marital love of Barnagasso, king of the African state of Gualata, and a European heroine. According to Ogilby (though Thomas Browne reported otherwise), the inhabitants of Gualata are very black.[20]

It is well known that Behn's *Oroonoko* evokes and subverts the conventions of French heroic romance. During the early stages of his captivity, Oroonoko performs deeds worthy of a hero of such narratives. For example, his exploits in killing two tigresses recall the feat of Lysimachus in La Calprenède's *Cassandra* (1644–50), who kills a lion with his bare hands[21] (or of Heliodorus' Theagenes, who heroically kills a bull). The separation and surprising reunion of the lovers are the stuff of romance from the Greek novels onward in which if lovers are not abducted by British slave traders, they are abducted by pirates. The reunions in romance, however, are eventually happy, and pirates do not prosper. Although Oroonoko kills the tigers, his exploits as a romantic hero are part of a controlled exercise by his captors to keep him placid and unthreatening. Behn foregrounds a tension between what was the dominant mode of fiction in the mid-seventeenth century and the realistic fiction in which she was the British pioneer: For her, romance is a lie, generated by the imperatives of money and power.

[18] David Quint, *Epic and Empire: Politics and Generic Form from Virgil to Milton* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 234–47.
[19] Gauthier de Costes, Sieur de La Calprenède, *Hymen's Praeludia* [*Cleopâtre*], trans. Robert Loveday [1652–59] (London, 1674), Part I, Book iii, 56.
[20] Ogilby, *Africa*, 315; Thomas Browne, *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* 6.10.
[21] Gauthier de Costes, Sieur de La Calprenède, *Cassandra* [1644–50], trans. Sir Charles Cotterell (London, 1661) Part II, Book ii, 126.

Surinam (Guiana), where Oroonoko is enslaved, at first seemed a land of romance. When Sir Walter Raleigh wrote his *Discoverie of the Large, Rich, and Bewtifull Empire of Guiana* (London, 1596), he was describing the imaginary empire of El Dorado, founded by the brother of Atabalipa, the last of the Incas: "whatsoeuer Prince shall possesse it, that Prince shall be Lorde of more Golde, and of a more beautifull Empire, and of more Cities and people, then eyther the king of Spaine, or the great Turke" (p. 9). American gold is the source of Spanish power, and it is by possessing the gold of El Dorado that England will rival Spain. The exoticism of romance here serves to heighten economic incentives: nations that are "marueilous rich in gold" exist to the west of nations of headless cannibals (p. 91). Raleigh is not concerned with the agricultural exploitation of the new land and indeed explicitly skips "mention of the seueral beasts birds[,] fishes, fruites, flowers, gummes, sweete woodes, and of their seuerall religions and customes" (p. 92) – all things central to Behn's account. He does, however, report that there was nothing in the Peruvian emperor's country, "whereof he had not the counterfeat in gold" (p. 12), the golden replica evidently being more important than the organic original. His two unsuccessful expeditions to Surinam, in 1594 and 1617–18, were indeed quests for gold. Robert Harcourt, who attempted to create a settlement in Surinam in 1609, does take a less purely metallurgical view of its resources, describing its fauna and its "sweet gummes" and its potential for producing sugar and tobacco.[22] Some of his crew, however, were interested only in gold, and became mutinous when reports of "Golden Mountaines" proved to be false (p. 38). "Mountains of Gold" remain a dream in Behn's *Oroonoko* (p. 174), but one that is not fulfilled.

> The lasting recognition that there was no new Mexico or Peru still to be discovered, that Raleigh's "Large, Rich and Beautiful Empire of Guiana" was a fiction, transformed forever the English perception of the kind of project their Empire in America was intended to be. Confusedly at first and then with religious, and invariably self-righteous zeal, they abandoned the vision of El Dorado and Spanish-style kingdoms overseas for that of "colonies" and "plantations"; places, that is, which would be sources not of human or mineral, but of agricultural and commercial wealth.[23]

[22] Robert Harcourt, *A Relation of a Voyage to Guiana* (London, 1613), 32, 33, 36.
[23] Anthony Pagden, 'The Struggle for Legitimacy and the Image of Empire in the Atlantic to c. 1700', in Nicholas Canny and Alaine Low, eds., vol. 1 *The Oxford History of the British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998–99), 36 (34–54).

In the 1620s and 1630s, the English acquired St. Christopher, Barbados, Nevis, and Montserrat and Antigua. Lord Willoughby's colony in Surinam was established in 1650. In 1655–56, Cromwell's generally unsuccessful attempt at Caribbean expansionism added Jamaica to the list. Originally, the main produce was cotton and tobacco, but in the 1640s an increase in the price of sugar inspired a switch to large-scale sugar production and led to an economic boom. It also produced a change in the labor force. The Caribbean could not provide an adequate supply of native labor, and before the "sugar revolution" the principal source of labor had been indentured white servants. The arduousness of sugar production, however, produced an increasing demand for black African labor, fueled by the high mortality rate of slaves, which necessitated constant replenishment. "By 1660 the African slave trade was the 'life line' of the Caribbean economy. In 1645, some two years after the beginning of sugar production, Barbados had only 5,680 slaves; in 1698 it had 42,000 slaves." In 1655 the ratio of whites to blacks was 23,000 to 20,000; by 1684, four years before the composition of *Oroonoko*, it was 19,568 to 46,502.[24] *Oroonoko* is thus set at a time when the Caribbean slave trade was in its infancy, but was at the same time an established and rapidly growing institution.

Slaves were bought from kingdoms on the west coast of Central Africa and sold to Europeans, Arabs, and others by kings and princelings, such as Oroonoko. Europe did not at this stage have a colonial presence in sub-Saharan Africa, but operated from trading forts such as Kormantin (which Behn transforms into the kingdom of Coromantien).[25] Slaves were traded for goods bought in Europe and brought to the New World, where they produced goods for export to Europe, though in general the slaving ships were employed only in the first two legs of the trading triangle. Neither Behn nor Southerne, however, is much interested in the economic genesis and basis of slavery. Behn mentions sugar only once, and she is far more interested in the economic value of the native flora and fauna of Surinam, such as the trees whose colored timbers are "glorious to behold; and bear a Price considerable" (p. 164). She is certainly keenly interested in varieties of social economy: Witness her juxtaposition of the militaristic patriarchy of Africa and the rule of upstart traders in Surinam. When she examines trade in *Oroonoko*, however, she is primarily interested in the cultural transpositions and dislocations that it brings about – in the fact that the

[24] Hilary McD. Beckles, "The 'Hub of Empire': The Caribbean and Britain in the Seventeenth Century," ibid., 227 (218–40).

[25] "The chief Town upon the Shore is *Kormantyn*, the principal place of Trade for the *English*:. . . Near which the *English* have a Castle fortifi'd with four Bulwarks" (Ogilby, *Africa*, 431).

feathers of exotic living birds can be transformed by the Native Americans into gorgeous artifacts and that, under her influence, these artifacts can migrate to being props in a London theatrical performance of Dryden and Howard's *The Indian Queen*, which portrays warfare between Mexico and Peru.[26] The feathers become artificial representations of another American culture, quite different from that which actually produced them. The movements of trade thus deprive the exotic feathers of any fixed significance, placing them in a changing relationship to the familiar. This change does not happen with sugar: Sugar has a fixed material character, whereas the feathers are cultural products of no fixed significance. It is the latter – cultural contingency, rather than biological essence – that Behn explores in *Oroonoko*.

ABDELAZER

Behn seems to have been actively uninterested in using the nascent racism of her time. As noted, *Lust's Dominion*, the source of *Abdelazer*, is dominated by explicit contempt for the black African. Behn omits this to the point of removing not only the polarity between Negro and white but even the words themselves. In *Lust's Dominion* there is a real, unquestionable association between the blackness of the Moor (here called Eleazer) and of the devil, as we can see in the following speech, in which an objective observer describes his conduct in battle. The diabolical, the bestial, and the black become almost synonymous:

> The *Moor*'s a Devill, never did horrid feind
> Compel'd by som Magicians mighty charm,
> Break through the prisons of the solid earth,
> With more strange horror, then this Prince of hell,
> This damned Negro Lyon-like doth rush,
> Through all, and spite of all knit opposition. (4.2.29–34)

The comparable speech in *Abdelazer*, delivered by Abdelazer's brother-in-law and erstwhile supporter, is by contrast one of subjective surprise at Abdelazer's speedy advance in battle:

> The Moor! – a Devil! – never did Fiend of Hell,
> Compell'd by some Magicians Charms,
> Break through the Prison of the folded Earth

[26] *The Indian Queen* is a rhymed heroic play by John Dryden and his brother-in-law Sir Robert Howard, first performed in 1664. The titular character is a villainess who has usurped the throne of Montezuma.

> With more swift horrour, then this Prince of Fate
> Breaks through our Troops, in spight of opposition. (4.i,79)

The emphasis on blackness has gone, and the devil image now refers neither to blackness nor to evil, but to speed.

Even when Abdelazer performs the ultimate black man's crime of attempting to rape a white woman, Behn handles the episode with some nuanced complexity. The intended victim is the Spanish princess Leonora, to whom Abdelazer has just surrendered the crown and who has rejected his declaration of love with disparagement of his "Person." Certainly, Abdelazer is viewed critically. He had been the lover of her mother, who has been murdered on his instructions earlier in the scene. He had knelt in hypocritical sorrow by her corpse, a gesture that is recapitulated ironically and ominously when he kneels in amorous homage to the woman whose rejection is to inspire him to rapist aggression. Yet her disparagement of his "Person" stands out as one of the very few instances of purely racial contempt for Abdelazer in the play; it gains force from the way in which her lover Alonzo has very shortly before condemned Abdelazer's affair with the Queen while stressing that his remarks have nothing to do with Abdelazer's race: "I spoke *without reflection on your Person*, / But of dishonest love" (V.i,101; italics added). In response to Leonora's rebuff, Abdelazer for the only time in the play regrets his blackness:

> And curst be Nature, that has dy'd my skin
> With this ungrateful colour! cou'd not the Gods
> Have given me equal Beauty with *Alonzo*! (V.i,104)

The attempt to rape Leonora is thus not simply presented as the kind of thing a black villain could be expected to do. It arises from a specific combination of circumstances and motives. Moreover, the prompt arrival of Osmin, the contrasting good Moor, who interrupts the rape and discloses privately to Leonora that he is on the side of virtue, confirms that Abdelazer is an individual, rather than a racial type.

Behn de-emphasizes Abdelazer's racial alienness. His ruling qualities are not ones that distinguish him from the white Spaniards, but rather those that unite him with them: warriorhood, sexual proprietorship of his wife Florella, and patriarchy (like his antagonist Philip, he wishes to avenge a slain father). In short, his ruling qualities are not those of his race but of his sex. He is an extreme embodiment of masculinity. Abdelazer's blackness

makes strange that which is commonplace in any male-dominated society. His alienness is a means of defamiliarizing and scrutinizing the impulses that are common to him and the Spaniards.

BEHN'S *OROONOKO*

What of *Oroonoko*? Is this also a work that uses blackness as a means of representing something else, rather than the thing itself? Some scholars have suggested that the story is primarily about the dangers gathering about James II, his wife, and infant son in England: *Oroonoko* was published in the early summer of 1688, and James was to be ousted by William of Orange in November of that year. As Surinam fell to the Dutch in 1667, so England was to fall to the Dutch two decades later.

It is tempting to see this political situation as part of the context of the novel, but it is too simple to see it as the primary key. Parallel narratives, which use historical or foreign situations to explore contemporary English politics, were certainly common in the Restoration: Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681) is a well-known example. Behn, however, does not use such parallelism on any other occasion, and throughout *Oroonoko* she emphasizes the mutability and deceptiveness of narrative: an emphasis that militates against the direct translation of Oroonoko's story into that of an English king. Behn repeatedly presents narrative as being second-hand or questionable in its authority. Even Oroonoko's experiences in Africa are narrated by him to the narrator, and then by her to us. Yet she feels she is not the most appropriate writer of his history: that person would have been Trefry, the man who owned him as a slave, for ownership of Oroonoko's body strangely gave him proprietorial rights over his history; Trefry, however, died before he would write this authoritative history, leaving us to the work of "a Female Pen" (p. 156). Furthermore, the narrative would have been different if written in Surinam, where "History was scarce" and where more circumstantial detail would therefore have been welcome. In London, overloaded with information, the narrator has omitted some details that would have been of interest in Surinam. Narrative thus expands or contracts to fill the available space; like the exotic feathers, it changes in significance as it moves from place to place.

Within the story, narrative is often deceptive and manipulative. During Oroonoko's captivity, the narrator attempts to pacify him by telling him the lives of the Romans; an allusion to Plutarch's parallel biographies of Greek and Roman politicians, a new translation of which had appeared

in 1683. Yet the scheme misfires. Oroonoko derives an unexpected lesson from what he is told, drawing a parallel between himself and Hannibal, the North African invader of Rome, and using it to incite the slaves to rebellion. He misapplies the parallel, however, for Hannibal's invasion of Rome was unsuccessful. The narrator thus miscalculates the effect of her tale; Oroonoko misconstrues it. Narrative is, indeed, shaped by power. Behn instructs Oroonoko in Roman history at the bidding of unnamed powerful figures. Byam, the wicked deputy governor, tricks Trefry into offering Oroonoko false assurances of a pardon. Historical narrative is the exclusive property of the Europeans; it is possessed neither by the Native Americans nor the Africans. Yet the Native Americans lack not only history but also any capacity for verbal deception. In this, as in historiography, the Europeans' abilities are unrivaled.

The capacities for history and mendacity seem to develop in tandem and in close interrelationship, and this is typical of Behn's portrayal of culture and cultural progress. Culture is contradictory: The primitive paradise of the Native Americans and the conceptual sophistication of the Europeans both coexist with horrifying violence, and the contrasts among the three cultures portrayed in the novel are counterbalanced by deeper affinities. The dismemberment of Oroonoko parallels and outdoes the rituals in which the Indian military leaders compete for supreme command, by vying to see which of them can cut the most parts off himself; and it foreshadows their future brutality in cutting some Dutch settlers to pieces.

The relationship between cultures is particularly slippery in the sphere of religion. Behn narrates the bogus, sleight-of-hand cures with which the Indian priests bemuse their gullible followers. Whereas some clerical writers saw such impostures as inspired by the devil,[27] Behn implicitly sees them as paralleling the impostures of Christianity; in the same year as the publication of *Oroonoko*, she published her translation of Fontenelle's *L'Histoire des Oracles* (1687), *The History of Oracles, and the Cheats of the Pagan Priests*. This translation implicitly uses the absurdity of pagan practices to suggest the absurdity of Christianity itself. Conversely, the advanced free-thinking of Oroonoko's French tutor inculcates in him an anti-Christian skepticism that is at once a symptom of the most avant-garde European thought and a reconstitution of the non-Christianity of the "primitive"; it is the very feature that, in European eyes, renders him liable to enslavement. The savage and the civilized, the exotic and the familiar constantly change places, in ways that are quite incompatible with fixed notions of racial character.

[27] Du Tertre, I, 368–69.

SOUTHERNE'S *OROONOKO*

If Behn's *Oroonoko* is only tangentially about the future misfortunes of James II, Southerne – writing eight years after James's deposition – may be more influenced by them. He had been a supporter of James and perhaps had spent the immediate aftermath of the Revolution in exile on the Continent. He accommodated himself to the new regime, however, and his next tragedy after *Oroonoko*, *The Fate of Capua*, may reflect on Ireland's imprudent support in 1689–91 for James's military campaign to regain his crown, for it concerns Capua's disastrous support of Hannibal during his invasion of Italy (this is the sort of neat historical parallel that Behn avoided). The possible relevance of the Revolution to *Oroonoko* lies in the play's portrayal of a cultural shift: the failure of values based on faith and the vow, and their replacement by commerce and self-interest. In this respect, it resembles Southerne's previous play, *The Fatal Marriage*, which was based on Behn's story, *The History of the Nun*. Here, the heroine is driven by poverty to betray her vows to her first husband, whom she believes to be dead, and to remarry for security and survival. Her first husband promptly returns. Neither play is an allegory of the deposition of James, but both portray a movement away from the rule of the oath to a more materialistic mode of life, and both subliminally reflect the political changes that had gripped Britain.

Behn was fascinated by the occupied territory. It also occurs in *The Rover* (Naples is ruled by the Spanish) and *The Widdow Ranter*. She supported colonization (which in theory involved coexistence with native peoples rather than Spanish-style subjugation of them), yet at the same time she saw the colonized land as imaging the condition of the woman in a world ruled by men. Southerne addresses this topic more directly in the parallel between Oroonoko and Charlot Welldon: Both are dislocated figures, confronting a new world in new roles (as a slave and in male disguise), and both illustrate that the universal principle of human intercourse is the sale of the body, whether in the marriage market or the slave market. Yet, in portraying the transition from a world of bonds and oaths to one of naked commerce, Southerne clearly does not deplore the institution of slavery, but rather the inhumanity with which slaves are treated, and the treacherous enslavement of a prince. Southerne was, indeed, already courting the patronage of Christopher Codrington, a literary enthusiast who was also one of the greatest (if also one of the more humane) slave owners in the Caribbean.[28] When Oroonoko denounces the cowardice of the quickly

[28] Codrington College in Barbados was founded with a bequest in Codrington's will. One of his purposes was to provide slaves with a Christian education, though this was initially frustrated by the Barbados government. His desire for legislation against cruelty to slaves

cowed rebel slaves, his words express the contempt not only of the nobleman for the mob but also of the white man for the average black African, undignified by princely rank or aristocratic values:

> I wou'd not live on the same Earth with Creatures,
> That only have the Faces of their Kind:
> Why shou'd they look like Men, who are not so?
> When they put off their Noble Natures, for
> The groveling qualities of down-cast Beasts,
> I wish they had their Tails. (4.2,253)

This is the only approach to racism in any of the three principal texts in this volume, and even here the theme is the loss of humanity, not its innate absence.

Neither version of *Oroonoko* is a covert representation of events in England, yet both link the uprooting of the slave-prince to changes and upheavals in the authors' own societies. Behn was the daughter of a barber, yet in *Oroonoko* transformed her father into an aristocratic colonial administrator. As the university-educated son of a successful Dublin brewer, Southerne was of more substantial bourgeois origin and was more overtly critical of the gentry and aristocracy. The slaver captain who in Behn's version kidnaps Oroonoko has a veneer of gentility which belies his amoral and predatory commercialism; the principles of Southerne's captain, as Stanmore observes, are those through which most great aristocratic estates are brought into being (I.i.000). If Behn's captain points to a post-aristocratic world, Southerne's is a proto-aristocrat. Two of Southerne's comedies, *The Wives Excuse* and *The Maid's Last Prayer*, satirize a fashionable upper-class consumerism that hungers for exotic imports. Yet for him, as for Behn, humane values are aristocratic values, of honor and trust. The slaver is monstrous not because he kidnaps a brother human being, but because he kidnaps a prince. If neither writer condemns the slave trade, both view with suspicion the moral blindness of trade itself.

Other writers in the collection are more forward looking. Henry Neville was a serious thinker, who in *Plato Redivivus* (1681) argued that there was a severe tension between the traditional constitutional power of the aristocracy and the new economic power of the commons. In his *Two Treatises of Government*, John Locke argued trenchantly against the monarchic system

was also thwarted. Behn's comedy *The Younger Brother*, to which she alludes in *Oroonoko*, was after her death dedicated to Codrington by Charles Gildon, who brought the play to the stage.

that Behn throughout her career defended, albeit with great reservations. He developed a theory of property rights grounded upon labor. Such rights entitled the technologically and economically advanced to settle and exploit land that was under-exploited by less advanced natives; the failure to protect such rights deprived rulers of their authority to govern.

The foregrounding of property rights did nothing to benefit slaves, who were themselves considered to be property. In setting out the constitution of Carolina, Locke had given "Every *Freeman* of *Carolina*. . . absolute Power and Authority over his *Negro Slaves*."[29] Paradoxically, it was writers longing for the glamor of older, feudal values who entered imaginatively into the horrors of enslavement. Locke's attack on political absolutism in Britain is an important moment in intellectual and political history, but the European imagination had to develop a long way before his hatred of tyranny could be applied to the condition of black Africans. This anthology presents us with the fragments of the future, but they were not yet combined as the future was to combine them. Of the works represented here, perhaps only the Germantown Protest speaks to us in entirely familiar terms.

Yet Oroonoko's character was so powerful that later authors were able to transplant him to a more advanced moral atmosphere. Three revisions of Southerne's play appeared in the years 1759–60, all omitting the comic plot. The most successful, which displaced Southerne's play, was commissioned by David Garrick from John Hawkesworth. The others were by Francis Gentleman and by an anonymous author. All add to the pathos of the main characters and criticism of the ignoble elements in the planters, though only the anonymous version condemns the slave trade directly. A fully abolitionist version was provided in John Ferriar's *The Prince of Angola* (1788). In 1745, Pierre-Antoine La Place had brought out a French adaptation of Behn's novel, in which Oroonoko and Imoinda (white, as in Southerne) are freed and return to reign in Africa, and an adaptation of Southerne's play by Schiller's friend Wolfgang von Dalberg (1789) concludes with the abolition of slavery, after the death of the hero and heroine. In 1999, the Royal Shakespeare Company staged an adaptation of Behn's *Oroonoko* by the Nigerian writer 'Biyi Bandele. Bandele's principal contribution was in the first part, which is a greatly modified version of the Coromantien section (not previously dramatized), one of whose innovations is to increase African complicity in the slave trade (Oroonoko is betrayed by one of his own people). The second part is, silently, taken from Hawkesworth's version

[29] *The Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina* [London, 1670], 25.

of Southerne's version of Behn.[30] Yet newspaper reviewers had no difficulty in accepting as the work of a contemporary Nigerian that of an eighteenth-century gentleman, who was to become a director of the East India Company. One critic indeed praised Bandele for the historical fidelity of sentiment in the line "[They] bought us in an honest way of trade,"[31] which was in fact penned by Southerne, the slave owner's client: This is clear testimony that texts can resonate beyond the contexts that produced them.

Behn and Southerne wrote when opposition to slavery was being voiced, for the first time, in far-away Pennsylvania, by four German immigrants of whom they could not have heard; when even a Morgan Godwyn could commend benevolence to slaves on the grounds that it would make them more docile. They deplored the excesses of the institution, rather than the institution itself. Yet their moral indignation at the excesses of the institution was the precondition for indignation at the institution itself, and the figure of heroic suffering that Behn created proved a potent imaginative symbol, whose meaning evolved as the abolitionist cause advanced.

[30] *Aphra Behn's "Oroonoko": In a New Adaptation by 'Biyi Bandele-Thomas* (Charlbury: Amber Lane Press: 1999). See Jessica Munns, "Reviving *Oroonoko* 'in the scene': From Thomas Southerne to 'Biyi Bandele," in *Troping "Oroonoko" from Behn to Bandele*, ed. Susan B. Iwaniszw (Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2004), 174–97.

[31] Benedict Nightingale in *The Times*, December, 22 1999, 32. Bandele, 92. Southerne 3.2,236.

A Note on the Texts

The text of *The Isle of Pines* is taken from the final 1668 edition, which combines the original narrative (also published in 1668) with its sequel, *A New and Further Discovery of the Islle* [sic] *of Pines*. *Abdelazer* is taken from the first edition of 1677, the only text to be published in Behn's lifetime. The text of Southerne's *Oroonoko* is that of the first edition of 1696.

Oroonoko was first published separately in 1688. It was reissued the same year in a collection of novels by Behn entitled *Three Histories*, the other two stories being *The Fair Jilt* and *Agnes de Castro*. This printing is not strictly a new edition, but in the seventeenth century sheets were corrected while publication was in progress, and the text in *Three Histories* is in general more accurate than in the earlier printing. A copy in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, however, uniquely preserves something from very early in the printing history of *Oroonoko*: a passage in the dedication praising the Roman Catholic religion, which was excised, doubtless because of its political sensitivity. The text in *Three Histories* has been used as the basis for this edition.

Original spellings have been retained, but obvious misprints, including some eccentric spellings not sanctioned by seventeenth-century usage, have been corrected. *The Isle of Pines* is more carelessly printed than the other texts, and here some eccentricities of punctuation have been rectified. In the two plays, speech prefixes have been expanded and regularized. The original numbering of scenes has been retained, though not every change of scene is numbered.

Chronology

1620	Henry Neville born.
1625	Death of James I. Accession of Charles I.
1640	Aphra Johnson, the daughter of the barber Bartholomew Johnson, born in Canterbury. She is probably Aphra Behn.
1642	Start of the Civil War. Theaters closed.
1649	Charles I executed. England proclaimed a Commonwealth.
1650	Lord Willoughby's colony in Surinam established.
1653	Cromwell becomes Lord Protector.
1655	Cromwell's "Western Design," an attempt at colonial expansion in the Caribbean, is largely unsuccessful, but results in the acquisition of Jamaica.
1658	Death of Cromwell.
1659	Birth of Thomas Southerne.
1660	Restoration of the monarchy. The theaters reopen.
1663–64	Aphra Behn probably visited Surinam.
1665	Second Dutch War begins. Great Plague of London.
1666	Behn sent as spy to Antwerp to obtain information about Dutch. Great Fire of London.
1667	The Dutch humiliate the British by sailing up the Medway to Chatham and destroying and capturing a number of ships, including "The Royal Charles," which had brought Charles II back to England in 1660. The Treaty of Breda cedes Surinam to the Dutch.
1668	Publication of *The Isle of Pines*.

1670	Behn's first play, *The Forc'd Marriage*, staged by the Duke's Company.
1672–74	Third Dutch War.
1673	James Duke of York (Charles II's brother) acknowledges his Catholicism publicly and marries the Catholic princess, Mary of Modena.
1675	Neville's translation of Machiavelli published.
1676	*Abdelazer* performed.
1677	*The Rover*, Behn's most successful play, performed. From then until the first performance of *The City-Heiress* (1682) Behn had at least eight new plays performed.
	The Duke of York's daughter Mary marries William of Orange.
1678–81	In September 1678 Titus Oates reveals details of an alleged Roman Catholic plot to massacre Protestants and put the Duke of York on the throne. This leads to a campaign to exclude the Duke of York from the succession (the Exclusion Crisis), defeated in March 1681.
1681	Neville's *Plato Redivivus*.
1682	Thomas Southerne's first play, *The Loyal Brother*, performed. One of many plays (including *The City-Heiress*) celebrating the defeat of the Exclusion movement.
	Poor management of the King's Company led to a merger of the two rival theater companies in London. The absence of competition greatly reduced the demand for new plays. Behn diversified into prose fiction, poetry, and translation.
1683	Rye House Plot to murder Charles II and Duke of York is discovered.
1684	First part of Behn's novel, *Love-Letters Between a Nobleman and His Sister*, published anonymously. The second and third parts follow in 1685 and 1687.
1685	Death of Charles II. The Duke of York succeeds as James II. Charles's illegitimate son, the Duke of Monmouth, leads an unsuccessful rebellion and is executed.
1686	*The Luckey Chance*. First performance of a new Behn play since 1682.
1688	Publication of *Oroonoko*.