IMAGINARY TRANSLATORS:
THE BOUNDARIES OF THE ENGLISH NOVEL, 1763-1818

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ABSTRACT

JANE LIM: Imaginary Translators: The Boundaries of the English Novel, 1763-1818
(Under the direction of Laurie Langbauer)

This dissertation rewrites the history of the English novel as translational and

transnational by examining how prose fiction was imagined to cross boundaries through

linguistic and cultural "translators." Previous studies on the English novel, propelled by Ian

Watt's theory of the novel, disregarded the role of translation in favor of a more endocultural and

nationalistic paradigm of the novel. Yet the eighteenth-century publishing market was full of

translated texts, as well as extranational fiction and "pseudo-translations." Transcultural

imagination fostered by such prose fiction turned the English writers, travelers, and domestic

readers as cosmopolitan translators who produce new meaning and relation for both native and

English culture. This project expands the scope of translation from textual practice to moments

of cultural crossing through writing, thinking, and reading about the relationship between

sameness and remoteness, self and other, the British Empire and the "rest of the world."

Specifically, I argue that translation as a metaphor and imaginative process helped the English

readers imagine a community different from their own that in turn demarcated boundaries of the

English nation, cultural values, and the novel. By attending to the multivalent modes of literal,

sympathetic, and cultural translation in the works of Horace Walpole, Lady Mary Wortley

Montagu, Elizabeth Marsh, and Jane Austen, this project shows how cosmopolitanism works in

concert with nationalism rather than against it. The English novel's engagement with

transnationalism and transmission through cultural translation, I argue, helped envision a

cohesive boundary of nationhood expressed through "the" English novel as national literature.

Translation served as a site where English identity can be rehearsed, calling forth a rise of

imaginary translators in the eighteenth century.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Introduction: Translator-Figures and the English Novel

Partway through Cervante's *Don Quixote* (1606), the readers learn that what they have been reading all along was an unfinished translation. The battle scene of Book 1, Chapter 8 in *Don Quixote* ends abruptly when the unidentified narrator suddenly declares that "the author of this history, in this very crisis, leaves the combat unfinished, excusing himself, that he could find no more written of these exploits of Quixote."[1] The narrator then goes on to explain how he had obtained an old manuscript in Toledo: he had bought a bundle of copies from the street, and finding the text's characters to be Arabic, had asked a Moorish rabbi to translate the tale for him. The document, originally written by Cid Hamer Ben Engeli, a fictional Arabian historiographer that Cervantes invented, was then translated from Arabic into Castilian. From this point on, the author is converted into a translator, or a transcriber of a translation. When the "author" confesses that "though I seem to be the father, [I am] really but the Step-father of *Don Quixote*," he questions his authorship as the focal point of storytelling because the intervention of an imaginary translator points to the unknown Orient as the source of literary imagination.[2] When translatability (i.e. that the novel is a translation) and extranationality (i.e. that this is a translation from a foreign text) prompt the fictional narrator of *Don Quixote* to "adopt" the novel rather than beget it, it revises the genealogy between author and text, fiction and reality, unfamiliar and familiar.

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[1] Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quixote de la Mancha*, ed. E. C. Riley, trans. Charles Jarvis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 66.

[2] Ibid., 15.

As arguably the first modern European novel, *Don Quixote* inserts a fabricated

framework of multiple authors, narrators, and textual origins to comment on the novel's meta-

fictionality. The pretension to adopt a text by creating pseudo-translation (i.e. fiction that

pretends to be a translation from elsewhere) modifies the genealogy of the modern novel as

based on illegitimacy instead of legitimacy— it tells a story of its own bastard-state as an

adopted or translated text. This illegitimacy suggests that the novel is always already written in a

different culture, underlining the innate translatability of the novel. Further, Cervantes' invention

of the fake translator reflects not just the relationship between author and text but also fiction and

reality, especially in Book 2 where the fictional characters themselves are made aware that Book

1 has been published and widely read. Fiction constitutes and sustains the fabric of reality when

Quixote later meets historical figures like Roque Guinart (1582-1611), or when Quixote meets

characters who have already heard about him because they have read Book 1.

As *Don Quixote* suggests, the Eurocentric insistence on the modern novel's rise stems

from imagining its fiction to have originated from extranationality, particularly from an

Orientalized locus.[3] Fictionality as a category in Europe emerged because Europeans could

fantasize that it came from elsewhere. Such turn to sources in another language is not just

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[3] Terms like Orient, East, Levant, and Asia have often been used interchangeably and discursively in academia as well as in common vernacular. Yet there is no such thing as a unified, coherent, and monolithic "East," just as there is no one European identity. At the same time, terms that describe the East are even more problematic because they attempt to subsume over 48 countries that share different races, languages, religions, and customs. Furthermore, the term "Orient" often includes parts of North Africa as well. When Said uses the term "Orientalism," he is really talking about the near or middle East and not the "Far" East. It would be ludicrous to assume that Morocco, Turkey, India, Cambodia, Korea, and Uzbekistan all fall under the same geographical and cultural category. Not to mention that these very terms (i.e. near, middle, far) are European inventions reflecting a Eurocentric point of view. It would be beyond the scope of this dissertation to outline a history of these terms and suggest a new geo-political category to reorganize these regions. For the sake of convenience, I will use Orient and Levant to indicate the eastern Mediterranean countries and parts of Northern Africa, and Asia to refer to the "Far East," or East Asia. See *Antinomies of Modernity : Essays on Race, Orient, Nation*, ed. Vasant Kaiwar and Sucheta Mazumdar (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003) and Vasant Kaiwar, *The Postcolonial Orient: The Politics of Difference and the Project of Provincialising Europe* (Boston: Brill, 2014).

important for this representative modern novel in the global tradition —as *Don Quixote* gestures beyond Spanish to Arabic—but also for the origin of what was considered a much more insular and nation-bound institution, the rise of the English novel in the eighteenth century. While Cervantes so cleverly pioneered the art of prose writing, the form of the novel did not undergo continuous development. Instead, the discourses of novelistic practice were far from agreed upon. Yet *Don Quixote* did begin a conspicuous yet overlooked tradition that constituted the English novel as a modern form: a self-fabricated textual genealogy rooted in actual and imaginary translations. It suggests that the novel writes its own ontology as extranational rather than strictly domestic. The novel's "rise," then, was a self-created "myth" that was secretly reliant on a multi-sited origin mediated by acts of translation.

  I begin with *Don Quixote* not to claim that translation and originality go hand in hand, but to provide an example of how the "translator-figure" writes an alternative genealogy for the novel that was traditionally, but mistakenly, treated as linguistically and nationally bound. I use the term "translator-figure" in conjunction with "translator" because this dissertation investigates a wide range of translators who do not actually "translate" in a strictly linguistic sense. Instead, I focus on moments of cultural-crossing in various forms of translation in the English novel: English authors who imagine "the rest of the world"[4] through fictitious translation similar to *Don Quixote*, English female travelers in Turkey and Morocco who "translate" English virtue into their bodies (as well as "translate" their Oriental experience to a sentimental narrative that transfers sympathy across borders), and English subjects as readers and cultural translators who attend imported fictions and goods to reflect on their new-found selfhood (as opposed to mere

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[4] I borrow this term from Mary Louise Pratt, who argues that European travel writing constructed the concept of "the rest of the world" as a viable and articulable one. She contends that travel literature, through its engagement with "contact zones," "transculturation," and "anti-conquest," produced "the rest of the world" as well as the domestic subject of Euroimperialism. See Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 1992).

reading and consuming). These translator-figures oscillate between different cultures — those they have read and those they have yet to experience in real life, those of their native culture and those of the foreign. The translator is a metaphor for a stranger who mediates two cultures, crossing boundaries of linguistic, cultural, and textual differences perceived by fiction. The term translation also implies a transposing of space— it moves from one point to another, the final point always being one's own culture. Translation, then, is not just reading about other cultures but a means to make sense of the interaction between self and other to understand the boundaries of domestic culture.

Rather than mapping out a history of literary translation, this dissertation underlines ways in which the English novel participates in an *imaginary* narrative traffic from which texts travel across national borders. By doing so, it rewrites the history of the English novel as translational and transcultural. The geography of transcultural exchange enabled by "translators" who are suspended between self and other suggests a discursive layout for the English novel. The translator's active imagining of "the rest of the world" demarcates boundaries of what the English novel as national literature can and cannot do, serving as an epistemological experiment on the novel's limitations. Using translator-figures as the framework to read the muddy, inconsistent, and transnational web that the early novel was entangled in, this research attempts to illuminate how translation served as an English mode of acquiring knowledge: knowledge about the "Orient" in particular, and how that knowledge creates a resolutely different Englishness. This process assumes, paradoxically, that the English novel's boundary was a flexible and elusive one, one that required strategies to draw up its own borderline. The result was to turn both its authors and readers into translators of imported texts, and of supposedly foreign imaginations and objects. Cosmopolitanism and national identity, therefore, worked in

concert rather than in conflict with each other. By reading translation as a mode of transculturation and transmission of different ideas that brings light to the fragmented English nationhood, this dissertation posits translation as a site where English identity can be rehearsed.

Translation in the History of the English Novel

The eighteenth-century English public market was full of translated texts. The number of translation in the collection of British circulating libraries, for instance, went up as high as sixty percent in the mid-eighteenth century.[5] It was also a time when translation was used as an imaginary metaphor as well as textual practice. It is not difficult to find instances of early English fiction that purports to be a translation from the exotic foreign when there was no foreign source to begin with. For instance, Eliza Haywood's *The Adventures of Eovaai, Princess of Ijaveo* (1736) feigns to be a pre-Adamitical history written in a "language of nature" translated to Chinese again translated to English by a Mandarin translator living in London. The transcultural consciousness of the novel is manifest in the preface where the counterfeit translator anticipates how the story will be read:

> I know the Chinese Account, concerning the Aera of this Earth's Formation, is so much exploded all over Europe, that any Relation of Facts, before the Reign of Adam, will appear fabulous; the Reader therefore, who woul'd be either instructed or diverted by this Book, must divest himself of the Prejudice of Education, and consider it as no Impossibility, that our Calculation should be more just than that he has been instructed in.[6]

The history of Eovaai, according to this "translator," will be received as "fabulous," even though it is a "relation of facts." The preface also attempts to carefully subvert the expectation of the contemporary readers by putting the knowledge of the Orient and Europe into question. What does it mean that the Chinese account "exploded all over Europe," rather than anywhere else?

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[5] Franco Moretti, *Atlas of the European Novel, 1800-1900* (London: Verso, 1998).

[6] Eliza Haywood, *The Adventures of Eovaai, Princess of Ijaveo: A Pre-Adamitical History*, ed. Earla Wilputte (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 1999), 48.

Why does Haywood claim that the pre-Adamitical account is allegedly recorded in Chinese history instead of a European narrative? At a time when pseudo-oriental tales were prominent, Haywood's preface inverts the equation of the oriental tale as fabulous but rather asserts that the Chinese account contains factual history despite the "Prejudice" of the English readers. Positing Orientalism as a frame for the text, *Eovaai* makes the fantastical oriental tale a vehicle for English verisimilitude.

Haywood's *Eovaai* shares strikingly similar tropes and sentiments with the "first" English gothic novel, *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), which this study will further explore in chapter 1. *Otranto* begins with a mock preface from a fictional translator who tracks down the source of the tale to an ancient Italian manuscript. Coincidentally, James Ridley's *Tales of the Genii* (1764) that claims to have been translated from a Persian text was published that same year. Walpole's attempt to draw fantastical elements from an unfamiliar landscape curiously parallels eighteenth-century fiction's engagement with "translated" oriental tales. By positing the novel as an imported product from a non-domestic source, these "translators" demonstrate the hybridity of the English novel. They also deny Walter Benjamin's claim that "the birthplace of the novel is the solitary individual," because the novel in its early form was presented as if written by multiple hands that crossed national borders.[7] If *Eovaai* is acutely self-conscious of the particular transcultural frame it adopts, *Otranto* and *Genii* similarly specify that their original manuscript is Italian and Persian. Or rather, English readers were reading what authors called Chinese, Italian, and Persian tales which were, in fact, English. Furthermore, such fake

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[7] Walter Benjamin, "The Storyteller," in *Theory of the Novel: A Historical Approach*, ed. Michael McKeon (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 80. Benjamin sees the novel's rise as a result of the storyteller's decline. The storyteller works from memory, like Scheherazade in Galland's *Arabian Nights*. The end of storytelling, for Benjamin, is the shift in the value of experience; the emergence of the novel was concomitant with the rise of industrialism and the rise of the novelist as individual.

translations signal a muddling between fiction and reality, as the "translator" proposes the imaginary events to be of true account when the very insistence on factual translation also turns out to be false, or itself just "fiction." The pretended quality of truth attempts to simulate verisimilitude represented by the translator figure. This imaginary translation, then, is a cultural site that constructs a different yet specific locale that revises the history of the English novel and domestic realism.

Eovaii, *Otranto*, and *Tales of the Genii* may seem minor fiction that nonetheless play a pivotal role in the development of the English novel. It is against this backdrop of translations that the supposedly major novels by Richardson, Fielding, and Defoe — English novel now taken to be canonical by critics such as Ian Watt— began to define itself against non-English prose fiction. For instance, Fielding, in his preface to Book XVII in *Tom Jones* (1749), attempts to revamp the novel as a respectable form by stating what the English novel is *not*: "The Arabians and Persians had an equal advantage in writing their tales from the genii and fairies, which they believe in as an article of their faith, upon the authority of the Koran itself. But we have none of these helps. To natural means alone we are confined; let us try therefore what, by these means, may be done for poor Jones."[8] Here, Fielding argues that the English novel, because it is by nature based on rationality, cannot resort to supernatural agency found in oriental tales. By doing so, he locates probability and realism as the prime index of English fiction. Ironically, that Fielding has to evoke "Arabians and Persians" to explain his own novelistic technique is a testament to how the English novel as national literature was implicitly reliant on extranational imagination to define its own status.

Yet despite Fielding's rhetoric, novel theories in the past few decades have disregarded the role of extranational fiction and translation in an attempt to define the English novel as

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[8] Henry Fielding, *Tom Jones* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 773.

domestically oriented. It would be difficult not to begin the history of novel criticism with Watt, since critics coming after him have in one way or another consistently based their arguments on revising his definition of the novel's ontology. Watt argues in *The Rise of the English Novel* that the novel emerged as national literature in eighteenth-century England. The novel celebrates the intersection of empiricism, formal realism, and economic individualism in which the worldview is centered on the social relationship between modern individuals of the middle class. The English novel, for Watt, begins with Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1717) and develops into a serious literary form through the publication of Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* (1740) and *Clarissa* (1748).[9] Watt claims that the novel is different from traditional forms like epic or tragedy because it attempts to portray the specificities of an individual's life by representing a particular time and space, thereby establishing "formal realism." According to Watt, and later to F.R. Leavis, the novel fully develops when it abandoned the moralism of Richardson, the picaresque episodic form of Defoe and Fielding, and the sentimentalism of Sterne for the tightly structured novel of manners celebrated by Austen. Watt's understanding of the English novel is a literary history that itself takes a novelistic plot, one that can be read as an "accurate representation of the flow of modern lives" acted out by "particular people in particular circumstances, rather than, as had been common in the past, general human types."[10] When Watt contends that the novel treats "daily lives of ordinary people," he puts "ordinary" as a code for both "modern" and "English." For instance, he claims that early fiction writers like Aphra Behn (1640-1689) or Delarivier Manley (1663-1724) use proper names that "carried foreign, archaic

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[9] Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957), 60.

[10] Ibid., 15.

or literary connotations which excluded any suggestion of real and contemporary life."[11] That is, something "foreign" and hence non-English becomes an antithesis to "real." Watt's reading hints at a pure literary genealogy in which "the" English novel as domestic novel (i.e. novels that deal with the everyday, domestic, and romantic encounters of two heterosexual English subjects) takes center stage as the precondition for modernity.

One of the obvious problems of Watt's model lies in that it fails to accommodate other genres of prose fiction such as amatory novels, romance, gothic fiction, and oriental tales that were often regarded as "foreign." He does not take into account narrative interchange, transport, and translation performed through the multiple translator-figures prevalent in the English novel. Not only did Watt dismiss these prose genres in favor of an endocultural genesis of the novel, he also disregarded non-English contemporary literary criticism that looked beyond the scope of nationhood. The French writer Pierre Daniel Huet's 1670 *A Treatise of Romance and Their Original* (*Traité sur l'origine des Roman*) is regarded as the first comprehensive study of prose fiction, though one that many critics have overlooked. *Treatise* was initially published as a preface to Madame de Lafayette's *Zayde* (1670) and was first translated into English in 1672. Huet, unlike literary critics who purport a nationalistic paradigm of the novel, affirms the transcultural influence that boosted the development of "*Roman*," or the "new" romance that is the novel.[12] Distinguishing new romance from fables, he locates fiction's origin in the East: "[Fiction's] invention is due to the Orientals, I mean to the Egyptians, the Arabians, Persians,

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[11] Ibid., 19.

[12] Always capitalized in Huet's text, "*Roman*" was translated to "romance" in English since the term "novel" was not a recognizable literary category at the time. Unlike the English term "novel" that is distinguished from "romance," the French term *roman* did not undergo the same lexical transformation. Huet thus uses the term "new romance" to distinguish it from "old romance." See Pierre Daniel Huet, *A Treatise of Romance and Their Original: Translated Out of French* (London: 1672).

and Syrians."[13] The ancient form developed due to cultural contact with the Orient, he argues, culminating in French culture that produced the sophisticated "new" romance.

Ironically, the anonymous English translator of Huet's treatise, while admitting to romance's hybridity, had an issue with Huet's French patriotism. In the 1672 translation, the translator writes in a note to his readers that the first romance was British: "[I] shall therefore onely [*sic*] entreat that thou mayst not impeach our Author for making Melkin and Thaliessin English: seeing that Foreiners [*sic*] think themselves not bound to take notice when this Isle was called Albion, when Britain, when England; besides that, writing in French, if he had call'd them Britains, they might have passed with some for French Britains, and thereby our Nation have lost the honour of having given Birth to the first Romances in Europe."[14] The translator also notes that "old" romance takes "Giants, Dragons, and enchanted Castles" as their subject, while new romances "consult Nature, and endeavor to exhibit her true and lively Portraict [*sic*] in all their works," anticipating Fielding's rhetoric that renders probability as an index of modern English fiction. The 1672 translation, then, ironically shows how the English novel was resistant to the idea of fiction's extranational interrogation in anticipation of Watt's nationalistic literary theory.

Huet's suggestion that the development of fiction should be considered with the narrative interchange of different languages, geographies, and cultures sheds light on the focus of this study: that the English novel's origin and dissemination was not a tightly closed system but in

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[13] Huet, 10. The 1672 edition is the first English translation of Huet's treatise by an anonymous translator. The second translation is by Stephen Lewis, *The History of Romances: An Enquiry into Their Original* (London: J. Hooke and T. Caldecott, 1715). A third translation is by Samuel Croxall in his *A Selected Collection of Novels and Histories* (London: J. Watts, 1720). See Robert Clark Malcom's "Pierre Daniel Huet: The history of Romances, an Annotated Text, Edit, with Introduction" (PhD Diss., University of Michigan, 1983) and Bethany Wiggin, *Novel Translations: The European Novel and the German Book, 1680-1730* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), 107-146.

[14] Huet, preface to *A Treatise of Romance and Their Original*. Interestingly, a German translation of Huet's treatise argues in its preface that modern romance can be traced to Germany, demonstrating the literary rivalry between these nations.

fact quite messy, discursive, and digressive. The novel according to Huet is by nature

transmissible and translatable because it "moves across" time and space. Even if that crossing is

not a physical or substantial one, the author's transformation as translators (as I have suggested

by *Don Quixote*, *Eovaai*, *Otranto*, and *Genii*) implies that the novel at least imagined that fiction

was created through multiple layers of transportation. In other words, the novel emerged as

national literature precisely when it became conscious of its own transnationalism. The novel, in

turn, necessitates a translator-figure to participate in such imaginary narrative transaction.

Many novel critics have attempted to subvert the parochial bounds of Watt's analysis,

although few focus on translation. Michael McKeon reads Watt as disregarding the persistence

of romance and the skepticism of Fielding. He historicizes the pre-history of the novel's rise,

arguing that the novel was a response to the dialectical relationship between naïve empiricism

and extreme skepticism. According to McKeon, the decline of "romance idealism" that

questioned the validity of romance was taken over by "naïve empiricism" that claimed for

historical veracity. Yet as naïve empiricism attacks romance, "the extreme skepticism of the

opposing party demystified this claim as mere 'romance.'"[15] He claims that the novel serves as

representations of social transformation, a social change towards modernity reflected in the

question of truth and virtue. For others like Nancy Armstrong or Deidra Lynch, the novel is the

precondition that drives society to imagine change towards modernity and middle class

consciousness. For feminist critics like Armstrong, that modern subjectivity was constructed

through domestic imaginary: "the modern individual was first and foremost a female" and "the

history of the novel and the history of the modern subject are, quite literally, one and the

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[15] Michael McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel, 1600-1740* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 48. Also see Lennard Davis, *Factual Fictions: The Origins of the English Novel* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).

same."[16] For others, the novel was less concerned with the development of individuals but more with the metonymic representation of the nation at large. Benedict Anderson and Patrick Parrinder argue that novel readers depended on a community of civilized men and women who speak the same language. [17] The novel stands for a national allegory intricately related to the birth of a modern nation state; the novel thus defines "national character."

More recently, scholars have renovated readings that emphasize the centrality of the nation by turning its attention to England's relationship with its exterior neighbors. Srinivas Aravamudan, for instance, turns away from the self-enclosed terms of the English novel and concentrates on the "Levantinization" of English texts.[18] According to Aravamudan, fictional forms such as oriental tales and pseudo-ethnographies "also constitute nationalism, but differently."[19] He sees pseudo-oriental tales like Haywood's *Eovaai* demonstrating the proximity of sex and politics by aligning a Chinese fantasy plot and the politics of Robert Walpole. Criticizing traditional novel theories as "the same old story of the nation and modernity

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[16] Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 8. Also see Nancy Armstrong, *How Novels Think: The Limits of British Individualism, 1719-1900* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 3.

[17] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983) and Patrick Parrinder, *Nation & Novel: The English Novel from its Origin to the Present Day* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

[18] Aravamudan defines levantinization as "a creative response to orientalisms as a plural rather than singular category and the specifically dynamic interactions of European culture with Islamic ones that go back at least back to the Crusades." Srinivas Aravamudan, *Tropicopolitans: Colonialism and Agency, 1688-1804* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 19.

[19] Srinivas Aravamudan, "In the wake of the Novel: The Oriental Tale as National Allegory," *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 33, no. 1 (1999): 5-31. Also see Srinivas Aravamudan, "Fiction/Translation/Transnation: The Secret History of the Eighteenth-century Novel," in *A Companion to the Eighteenth-Century English Novel and Culture*, ed. Paula R. Backscheider and Catherine Ingrassia (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 48-74 and Ros Ballaster, "Narrative Transmigration: The Oriental Tale and the Novel in Eighteenth-Century Britain," in *A Companion to the Eighteenth-Century English Novel and Culture*, 75-96.

triumphing over the rest of the world and over older forms of storytelling," he postulates that

oriental tales performed functions of withdrawal and exchange that display the multitudinous

outside.[20] Aravamudan thus modifies previous novel criticism that, according to Judith Gardiner,

had been a "'Whig history— progressive, enlightened, and focused around values of freedom

and rationality."[21] Laura Doyle similarly puts the English novel in contact with the Transatlantic

world.[22] Doyle in particular expands the scope of the English novel to English-language novel

rather than stamping it with nationality, arguing that British, American, and Atlantic novels must

be read in conjunction to each other. She contends that the English novel's Atlantic crossing

shows the disruption, resistance, and reawakening of selfhood in a struggle for liberty.

Finally, Mary Helen McMurren more directly investigates the role of translation in the

dissemination of the English novel across different cultures. The novel emerges in the mid-

eighteenth century, she argues, due to the changing dynamics of translation: premodern

translation was an imitative writing that kept fidelity with the original text, while the eighteenth-

century publishing market administers a "libertine translation" where translation goes hand in

hand with literary production. Translated fiction was often introduced anonymously and heavily

edited to suit the English reader's taste. Prose fiction circulated promiscuously across Europe

without imprinting national origin. The association of Anglo-French translation belongs "both to

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[20] Aravamudan, *Enlightenment Orientalism: Resisting the Rise of the Novel* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2012), 6.

[21] Judith Kegan Gardiner, "The First English Novel: Aphra Behn's Love Letters, the Canon, and Women's Tastes," *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 8, no. 2 (1989): 204.

[22] Laura Doyle, *Freedom's Empire: Race and the Rise of the Novel in Atlantic Modernity, 1640-1940* (Durham: Duke University Press).

a nationalizing impulse and to a cosmopolitan one," one that spreads the English novel across the Channel and the Atlantic that in turn reinvigorated a sense of Englishness.[23]

Furthermore, McMurren's argument that the novel is "local and delocalized, domesticated and nationalized, yet globalizing" modifies Moretti's claim that the European novel followed a linear path towards nation building.[24] Moretti asserts that "narrative England becomes an island, repudiating its eighteenth-century familiarity with French books for Victorian autarky."[25]According to Moretti, translation hardly had a serious influence on the development of European novels. He takes the declining number of translations in England as an example: the percentage of translated fiction in British circulating libraries went from sixty percent in the mid-eighteenth century to as low as five percent by mid-nineteenth century. He also examines the geographical settings of French novels that showed a decrease in imaginary and utopian settings and an increase in French and British local geography. These are, he argues, "signs of the progressive contraction of novelistic geography."[26] Reviewing the quantity of translated fiction as an indication of translation's diminishing influence, Moretti claims that the novel treats "the

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[23] Mary Helen McMurran, *The Spread of Novels: Translation and Prose Fiction in the Eighteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 99. Also see Priya Joshi who argues that the circulation and translation of British novels in India both Anglicized the natives as well as critiqued that very process. She thus puts translation as an act of interpretation and meaning making, not a medium to transfer textual meaning. Priya Joshi, *In Another Country: Colonialism, Culture, and the English Novel in India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002)

[24] McMurran, 25.

[25] Moretti, *Atlas of the European Novel*, 156.

[26] Ibid., 53. Moretti charts that French narratives using France and Britain as background increased from 45 percent in 1751-60 to 58 percent by 1791-1800. The use of imaginary or utopian background decreased from 13 to 2 percent. Likewise, settings "outside Europe" also saw a gradual decline.

representation of the everyday, and prefers a nearby, well-known reality; short narratives thrive on the strange, the 'unheard-of.'"[27]

Yet the effect of translation can hardly be reduced to numbers. As this dissertation demonstrates, translation as novelistic technique as well as thematic concern occurs repeatedly through the embodiment of translator-figures both in the production and consumption of the novel. In fact, translation was not repudiated by the novel, but rather became a part of it in different forms— reading, consuming, and traveling as acts of cultural translation. It becomes so much part of the English novel that the novel absorbs it. That is, translation becomes more than a medium to circulate fiction: it also serves as a tool to produce and think about the English novel's origins, plural rather than singular, and the national character that they imply. Translation thus constitutes and sustains the English novel, suggesting that those "nearby, well-known reality" actually constantly points to an extranational impulse.

My interpretation of the correlation between translation and the English novel, which differs from Moretti's, begins by acknowledging the difficult task of defining just what translation means in eighteenth-century England. For Moretti, translation is an operation that involves textual transfer from an original source to a target language, while for McMurran, translation serves as a "hinge between a prior model of transmission that had directed rendering from ancient times through the Renaissance and modern, national literary exchange."[28] Indeed, the definition of translation has been far from agreed upon, as it taps into the vortex of linguistics,

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[27] Ibid., 57.

[28] McMurran, 7.

hermeneutics, post-colonialism, and cultural studies to name but a few.[29] Derrida expresses the

convoluted process of representation and cultural meaning evoked by translation in these words:

> In the limits to which it is possible, or at least appears possible, translation practices the difference between signified and signifier. But if this difference is never pure, no more so is translation, and for the notion of translation we would have to substitute a notion of *transformation*: a regulated transformation of one language by another, of one text by another. We will never have, and in fact have never had, to do with some 'transport' of pure signifieds from one language to another, or within one and the same language, that the signifying instrument would leave virgin and untouched.[30]

That is, translation is an impossible task that can never reach equivalence between manifest

meanings and cultural implications. Derrida complicates views that see translation as "a process

by which the chain of signifiers that constitutes the source-language text is replaced by a chain of

signifiers in the target language which the translator provides on the strength of an

interpretation."[31] Instead, he points out the incompatibility of transferring one meaning to

another set of culture.

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[29] For major readings on translation studies, see George Steiner, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); Susan Bassnett, *Translation Studies* (New York: Routledge, 2014); Susan Basssnett and André Lefevere, *Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation* (Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters, 1998); Edwin Gentzler, *Contemporary Translation Theories* (Buffalo: Multilingual Matters, 2001); Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (New York: Routledge, 2008); *The Scandals of Translation : Towards an Ethics of Difference* (New York: Routledge, 1998). For studies on translation and post-colonialism, see Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "The Politics of Translation," in *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. Lawrence Venuti (London: Routledge, 1998), 397-41. For more recent studies that read translation as significantly intervening in the history of English literature, see Stuart Gillespie and David Hopkins, eds., *The Oxford History of Literary Translation in English* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). This copious five-volume work catalogues translation from the middle ages to the twenty-first century, investigating how translation shaped the literary culture of English-speaking countries. Also see *Translation and Nation : Towards a Cultural Politics of Englishness*, ed. Roger Ellis and Liz Oakley-Brown (Buffalo: Multilingual Matters, 2001) and Gillian E. Dow, ed., *Translators, Interpreters, Mediators: Women Writers 1700-1900* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2007).

[30] Jacque Derrida, *Positions*, trans. A. Bass (London: Athlone, 1987), 20.

[31] Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, 17.

Furthermore, a return to Anderson's "imagined community" will help us parse out the specific cultural work that translation performs. Translation, because it assumes a textual migration from one culture to another, constructs two types of "imagined communities": one that belongs to the reader who shares the same linguistic and cultural language and one that is distinctively different from one's own. When Anderson brought up the term "imagined community" to explain how the origin of the novel and the origin of modern nationalism developed coterminously, he works under the assumption that the novel created a prescriptive realism for its readers. Nationalism was first perceived as "imaginary" through two new forms of writing that rose in the eighteenth century: newspapers and novels. For Anderson, novels and public media provide the "technical means for 're-presenting' the kind of imagined community that is the nation."[32] The nation is "imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion."[33] At a time when the sense of nationalism was not yet fully-fledged, reading created the illusion of "community in anonymity which is the hallmark of modern nations."[34] That is, reading newspapers and novels created a sense of belonging as one imagines other members of the nation engaging in the same activity. Jürgen Habermas also points to the reading public as constituting a public sphere that was not yet in place. Locating eighteenth-century England as the birthplace of the "bourgeois public sphere," he contends that the nation was imagined as a community of private individuals interacting

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[32] Anderson, 360.

[33] Ibid., 5.

[34] Ibid., 428.

rationally about their subjectivity.[35] Communicative freedom expressed through rational debate

is imperative for Habermas, and while such public sphere might be imaginary, it was still

dominant in the public consciousness: "if not realized, it was at least consequential."[36]

The "imagined community" of such nation state and national literature, I argue, begins

with conceiving, constructing, and creating communities of the outside through (imaginary)

translation, not vice versa. Nodding to Anderson's notion of novel reading as creating a sense of

citizenship, and acknowledging Habermas' contention that eighteenth-century England

witnessed the rise of a public sphere constituted of rational individuals who talked about what

they read, my dissertation further complicates the construction of eighteenth-century Englishness

by reading translation as a mode of producing that imagined community. That is, the translator-

figures of English novels elucidate how the novel first and foremost imagined the England's

exterior "outside" before it could begin to imagine its own community. The sense of not-

belonging preceded and the sense of belonging, compelling readers to compose a disparate

community that they could deny membership of. The English novel's supranational relations to

other texts in its production, dissemination, and consumption presuppose that authors and readers

construct an imaginary textual origin before the novel can be published as "English." Even if this

translation was just a metaphor for England's curiosity at foreign ideas, translation gains cultural

potency not least because it indicates that the English readers first imagined a community

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[35] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge: MIT, 1999). Habermas looks at eighteenth-century English coffee houses that functioned as the site for rational public debate. On the contrary, those like Peter Lake and Steve Pincus argue that the modern form of public sphere appeared much earlier than the eighteenth century. Lake and Pincus claim that a "post-Reformation public sphere" arose during 1530-1630, challenging the "representative publicity" expressed through political authority of the court. See Peter Lake and Steve Pincus, "Rethinking the Public Sphere in Early Modern England," *Journal of British Studies* 45 (2006): 270-92.

[36] Habermas, 36.

different from theirs. Put another way, national identity was constructed by pursuing dissimilitude rather than sameness. The English novel's transaction with "translation" helped its readers to evaluate their own cultural values in order to distinguish themselves from "the rest of the world."

To this end, translation cannot be confined to linguistic and empirical practices. It rather serves as a cipher for literary and cultural exchange, if not its agent. My approach to translation differs from previous studies in that it expands the scope of translation as a metaphor that enables cultural crossing at home. I see it as transnational exchange that sets the boundaries of domestic experience and, to that extent, the English novel. Translation occurs whenever one encounters a disparate culture. When one is faced with novels about un-domestic life, foreigners, and imported objects, one translates. Instead of focusing on the economic and political ideologies of translation, this project examines the ubiquity of translation as a cultural phenomenon: pseudo-translation, travel writing, and reading as sites operated by translation. Writers who imagine a mystified Orient, women travelers who are stripped of their nationality, and British readers who read supranational fiction all engage in translation because they cross cultural borders remote from their own. Translation, therefore, serves as a mode of acquiring cultural and political knowledge about the construction of English subjectivity and nationhood. Coinciding with the novel's emphasis on transmission and translation is an inherent desire to realize the British subject as an implicitly but centrally foreign and textual one, suggesting the pliable connection between selfhood and otherness throughout the eighteenth century.

The Stranger, The Spectator, The Translator

To understand how the desire for (imaginary) translations characterized and defined England's national identity, it is useful to start with a discussion about "the stranger." The

stranger, like the translator, rose as a dominant cultural icon in eighteenth-century England. In

1669, an English architect and Royalist named John Webb published *An Historical Essay*

Endeavoring a Probability that the Language of the Empire of China is the Primitive Language.

It argues that the Chinese written language was the primitive language spoken by Adam and Eve

in the Garden of Eden, and hence China served as the primitive model for England.[37] Webb

argues that unlike the Chinese who have kept their pristine cultural roots, England is threatened

by foreign influence symbolized by the cosmopolitan English gentlemen who enjoy consuming

foreign products:

> In such a Nation, where a general Commerce is permitted, and free access granted
> to *all Strangers* to trade and inhabit, aswel [*sic*] in the Inland parts of the
> Countrey; as upon the Frontires or Sea-coasts, there a change of Language may be
> degrees happen. . . . For, with us our selves, by this means chiefly, the Saxon
> tongue, since the time of the Normans, is utterly lost. Insomuch that what by
> Latinizing, Italianizing, Frenchizing, and (as we must have it called forsooth,)
> Refinizing, or rather Non-sensizing, our old Language is so corrupted and
> changed, that we are so far from Saxonizing, as we have scarcely one significant
> word of our MOTHER speech left.[38]

When England is crowded by all sorts of "Strangers," it loses its national integrity expressed, in

this case, in the English language. The stranger poses a threat to England because not only do

strangers invade, they "trade and inhabit" — they stay and alter English culture and language.

It is precisely this kind of xenophobia that Daniel Defoe argues against in *The True-Born*

Englishman (1701). In the explanatory preface of this political satire, Defoe scorns England's

anxiety about "foreigners," including William of Orange, by disclaiming the illusion of the

English as a pure race: "From hence I only infer that an Englishman, of all men, ought not to

despise foreigners as such, and I think the inference is just, since what they are to-day, we were

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[37] Webb's contention might also help us explain why *Eovaai* posits the prelapsarian language to have
been translated to Chinese and then to English.

[38] John Webb, *An Historical Essay Endeavoring a Probability that the Language of the Empire of China
is the Primitive Language* (London: Nath Brook, 1669), 40 (emphasis mine).

yesterday, and to-morrow they will be like us."[39] He highlights England's hybridity by declaring

that "speaking of Englishmen *ab origine*, we are really all foreigners ourselves." At the same

time, he also intimates a desire to make the foreigner "like us [English]." Even in his open

discussion about England's mixed genealogy, he still posits the foreign as belonging to

"yesterday," and the English as the foreigner's updated future. England's origins as foreign

strengthen rather than compromise Englishness, because that foreignness will easily assimilate

into England's domestic culture and therefore, the unfamiliar will become the familiar.

I bring up two different versions of the early eighteenth century's perspective on the

stranger, or foreigner, to show England's anxiety with the growing influence of global trade that

in turn betrays how the English public consciousness was preoccupied with the stranger. In his

essay "The Stranger," Georg Simmel introduces the stranger as a sociological category that is

distinguished from a passive "outsider"—a stranger, etymologically conceived as a tradesman

who comes bearing products from the outside world, is someone who "comes today and stays

tomorrow," unlike an outsider who "comes today and goes tomorrow."[40] Webb's "Strangers"

who "trade and inhabit" fit into this category. Exemplified as the wandering Jew, Simmel's

stranger becomes a member of community although not entirely engaged as a local. In fact, the

stranger functions as an integral part of community by combining nearness and remoteness as a

vehicle to make sense of what's common and uncommon for the natives. This unique in-between

status allows him to serve as a mediator to the community. The argument goes that locals are

more likely to confide in the stranger because he is uncommitted in the affairs of the locals. The

stranger therefore serves as a judge precisely because of his distance from originality:

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[39] Daniel Defoe, "The True-Born Englishman," in *The Earlier Life and the Chief Earlier Works of Daniel Defoe*, ed. Henry Morley (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1889), 178.

[40] Georg Simmel, *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, trans. Kurt Wolff (Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, 1950), 402.

"objectivity does not simply involve passivity and detachment; it is a particular structure composed of distance and nearness, indifference and involvement."[41] This objectivity allows a particular kind of freedom, allowing the impartial stranger the liberty to understand, judge, and intervene. In this sense, one might argue that communities necessitate the intervention of the stranger to uphold their own values against others. To borrow Defoe's words, the stranger will not only stay tomorrow, they "will be like us" tomorrow.

Further, the popularity of spy narratives exhibits the pervasiveness of the stranger as translator-figure in the development of the novel. In the late seventeenth century, Giovanni Paolo Marana (1642-1693) published *Letters Writ by a Turkish Spy* (1684-1686), a collection of fictional letters supposedly written by an Ottoman spy named "Mahmut the Arabian."[42] "Mahmut" lives in Paris in disguise as a Moldavian translator, carefully gathering information about European courts to report back home. The publication was an immediate success, going through fifteenth editions and inaugurating a great interest in similar spy narratives in France and England. Montesquieu was inspired to write *Persian Letters* (1722) in the epistolary style that presents two Persian spies, Usbek and Rica, who critique traditional European values ranging from political systems to upper class vanity. Persian culture functions as both a contrast and parallel to the French monarchy, displaying a fear and fascination with Oriental culture.

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[41] Ibid., 404.

[42] Marana's *Turkish Spy* has a complicated genealogy that revolves around translation. *Turkish Spy* is written in eight volumes with six hundred letters. While it is evident that Marana wrote the first edition, the author of the remaining seven volumes that appeared in English between 1691 and 1694 is unclear. These editions were published with a preface that claims to have discovered an Italian edition from which the text is translated; yet there is no literary evidence that corroborates the existence of such edition. The French edition appeared in 1696-7 and claims that it is a translation from English. For more information on the complicated authorship of Marana's *Turkish Spy*, see Ros Ballaster, *Fables of the East* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 207-10; William McBurney's "The Authorship of *The Turkish Spy*," *PMLA* 72 (1957): 915-35; Hasan Baktir, *The Representation of the Ottoman Orient in Eighteenth Century English Literature* (Stuttgart, Germany: Ibidem press, 2014).

Across the English channel, Charles Gildon (1665-1724) wrote *The Golden Spy: Or, a Political Journal of the British Nights Entertainments of War and Peace, and Love and Politics: Wherein are Laid Open, the Secret Miraculous Power and Progress of Gold, in the Courts of Europe* (1709) that was influenced by Marana's *Turkish Spy* and Galland's *One Thousand and One Nights* (1706). *The Golden Spy* is an it-narrative featuring a guinea coin that asserts the merits of British politics in comparison to its Spanish, Italian, and French counterparts. Defoe also published *The Conduct of Christians Made the Sport of Infidels; In a Letter from a Turkish Merchant at Amsterdam to the Grand Mufti at Constantinople* (1715), as well as *A Continuation of Letters Written by a Turkish Spy at Paris* (1718). *Continuation* adopts Marana's grand spy narrative, featuring a Turkish emissary who observes European culture from a distance but also longs for home. Significant to my argument, the vogue of spy narratives in which a foreign informant penetrates Europe suggests a cultural desire to see and be seen. They betray the desire to objectify European culture in the eyes of an outside spectator when the sense of national identity was not yet stable. Spectatorship, or the desire to invent spectators, played an integral part in constructing Europe's identity against the Orient.

Not surprisingly, eighteenth-century England can also be described as the age of the spectator. From Ned Ward's *The London Spy* (1703), Steele and Addison's *The Spectator* (1711-12), and Eliza Haywood's *The Female Spectator* (1744-46), the period was obsessed with devising different versions of the stranger who possessed the wit to gauge London civilization from a distance. These spectators possessed a keen insight precisely because they were outcasts from mainstream culture. For example, Steel and Addison create an anonymous persona, Mr. Spectator, as the connoisseur of London civilization in the very first article of *The Spectator* (1711): "I have passed my latter Years in this City, where I am frequently seen in most publick

Places, tho' there are not above half a dozen of my select Friends that know me. . . . I have been taken for a Merchant upon the Exchange for above these ten Years, and sometimes pass for a Jew in the Assembly of Stock-jobbers at Jonathan's."[43] Mr. Spectator participates in all the lively activities that center around London, yet is a wanderer, or a "stranger" in Simmel's sense, in that he does not claim full membership. Mr. Spectator further notes, "Thus I live in the World, rather as a Spectator of Mankind, than as one of the Species; by which means I have made my self a Speculative Statesman, Soldier, Merchant, and Artizan, without ever meddling with any Practical Part in Life. . . . In short, I have acted in all the parts of my Life as a Looker-on, which is the Character I intend to preserve in this Paper."[44] That Mr. Spectator "acted" as a "Spectator of Mankind" and "Looker-on" suggests that this identity is something he does rather than something he is. Spectatorship, then, was not something inherent in English culture but a phenomenon that had developed overtime.

The elaboration of spectatorship as an integral constituent of English subjectivity is expressed most prominently in Adam Smith's *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759). Smith argues that the capacity to sympathize with others, or "strangers," is the hallmark of civilized society. Sympathy, or fellow-feeling, produces a social cohesion that will promote self-command and self-sacrifice in a society driven by self-interest. Sympathizing is always hypothetical, since we have "no immediate experience of what other men feel . . . by the imagination only [can we] form any conception of what his sensations [are]."[45] Smith is therefore acutely aware of the distance that the sympathizer requires of the object of sympathy: "the thought of their own

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[43] Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, *The Spectator*, no. 1, January 3, 1711, ed. Donald F. Bond (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965).

[44] Ibid.

[45] Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, ed. Knud Haakonssen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 11.

safety, the thought that they themselves are not really the sufferers, continually intrudes itself upon them."[46] Furthermore, the process of sympathy works similarly to that of translation in that one makes meaning of what is empirically unavailable to them. Like translation which inevitably caters to the target culture, people can only judge others by terms familiar to them: "I judge of your sight by my sight, of your ear by my ear, of your reason by my reason, of your resentment by my resentment, of your love by my love."[47] Thus lies the inherent paradox of sympathy: one can sympathize with others only when one acknowledges that he/she is *not* the other. Sympathy requires a sense of identification and distancing at the same time, an ironic space or buffer that keeps the spectator and spectacle together and apart.

Most relevant to my discussion on the translator, Smith introduces the concept of the "internal spectator" that informs the interaction between self and other. He argues that it is not just the spectator but also the object of sympathy who participates in fellow-feeling: the sufferer, being aware of the gaze that is projected on him/her, gazes back at the spectator. In other words, the object of sympathy internalizes the gaze and reciprocally imagines "in what manner he would be affected *if he was only one of the spectators of his own situation*."[48] And so the spectacle becomes the spectator, the other the self. This self-awareness created by the internal spectator poignantly echoes the assumption of spy narratives that put England in the position of both spectacle and spectator. Furthermore, sympathy can be deceptive, as fellow-feeling must always be manifested visually, the body functioning as a site for sympathetic expressions. The sympathizer cannot articulate one's sympathy without first visualizing it. As such, the

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[46] Ibid., 27.

[47] Ibid., 23.

[48] Ibid., 28 (emphasis mine).

theatricality of sympathy makes it difficult for others to discern true sympathy from artificial

sensation.

Sympathy as theatrical performance that can be affected informs our understanding of

translation as cultural performance. Interestingly, Simmel does not take the role of language into

account, not explaining how the stranger communicates with those from the original culture. One

might therefore assume that the stranger also becomes a translator himself, if not a linguistic one

then a cultural one. For instance, Marana claims in the preface of *Turkish Spy* that the following

tale was found by an Italian who had discovered the papers by chance on a visit to Paris. Upon

learning that the letters were Arabic, he mastered the language so quickly that he ends up

translating the manuscript himself. He also learned from his landlord that a "*Stranger*, who said

he was a Native of Moldavia," had occupied the room where the paper was discovered.[49] The

essence of the Turkish spy is his status of not-belonging to a new cultural system; he is therefore

named a "Stranger" who "reasons not as a Barbarian, but like an able Statesman, and wise

Philosopher, on the Rise and Ruin of States."[50] The similarity of this description to that of Mr.

Spectator is striking, suggesting that Addison and Steele's spectator was possibly modeled after

this foreign informant figure. After all, Mr. Spectator keeps his "Complexion and Dress" as

"very great Secrets" and is often taken as a Jew. In this sense, one may position the translator as

embodying the role of the stranger/spectator, speaking two transcultural languages and posing as

"near and far *at the same time*."[51]

The invention of the stranger not only suggests Europe's fascination with exotic culture,

but implies that the stranger/spy/translator is in effect invented from within. If communities need

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[49] Marana, *Letters Writ by a Turkish Spy*, in *Fables of the East*, ed. Ros Ballaster, 212 (emphasis mine).

[50] Ibid., 216

[51] Simmel, 407.

to create strangers in order to test their own rules of conduct, then the tradition of pseudo-translated fiction displays a cultural desire by Britons to *become* (or at least pretend to be) strangers. It is an impulse, like Smith's "internal spectator," to locate oneself as both insider and outsider, agent and spectacle. The devised translator desires to be understood and misunderstood, projecting domestic concerns through displacement and dislocation. The devising of the spectator-figure implies that the construction of subjectivity requires a distancing and defamiliarization of the self. The English novel searches for that "in-between-ness" manifested through the imaginary translator. That the search for the perfect spectator takes a transcultural turn further signifies that eighteenth-century English consciousness relied on a foreign origin to make sense of people's relation to each other and to the outside; the alienation of selfhood through the eyes of the stranger betrays an inherent desire to realize the British subject as cosmopolitan translators.

With this in mind, the chapters of this dissertation focus on moments of encounter between the familiar and unfamiliar mediated by different translator-figures. Each chapter builds on the claim that the "rise" of the eighteenth-century English novel derived from a cultural inclination to invite and further realize "the rest of the world" as a means to explore domestic reality. To this end, this project explores the cultural vortex of eighteenth-century prose fiction by investigating cultural crossings in the form of literary forgery, real and imaginary translation, letter writing across cultures, and reading and consumption. The project aims to answer the following questions: What happens to the idea of English identity when stories travel and origins are fabricated? How are femininity and nationality reconfigured when the English presence is stripped away? In addition, focusing on the intercultural narrative traffic of the novel will help

deconstruct the artificial unity of the so-called "rise" of the English novel and consider the accounts of realism as discursive rather than coherent.

The first chapter considers the invention of English authors as fictitious translators. Following the cult of pseudo-translations, it investigates why English novels turn to a self-fabricated disguise in the name of translation to tell its own story of conception. Reading the popularity of literary forgery as well as impostors like George Psalmanazar, a European who posed as an Asian by pretending to translate Formosan into English, I focus on Orientalized knowledge as the product of English imagination. Horace Walpole's pseudo-gothic and pseudo-oriental tale are the subject of discussion. Walpole invents an imaginary translator in both *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) and *Hierglyphic Tales* (1785), a collection of pseudo-oriental tales allegedly translated from the East. This chapter examines how the practice of translation, fabrication, and imitation serves as sites of agency that negotiate cultural sameness and difference. When the English author encounters imaginary alterity, that author imparts knowledge about the foreign as an antithesis to understanding English fiction. The trope of imaginary translation and the lost manuscript have been taken for granted, very much like the novel's "fictionality," when they in fact constitute the English novel's realism. Even when stepping out of bounds of Watt's "domestic realism," the imaginary translator allows for a move towards a "modern" and "English" novel by turning to the Orient as a distant but relevant past. That Clara Reeve and Sir Walter Scott, key figures who elevated the novel to a modern progressive form, take up the framework of imaginary translation indicates the crucial role of translation in the development of the novel.

The second chapter investigates traveling women as translators who navigate a myriad of linguistic, cultural, religious, and sexual trials in the Orient. In the Latin sense of *translatio* that

means "move across," it reads the presence of the English body in a foreign land as a site to universalize English values. It investigates travel writing as cultural translation, one in which femininity and nationality are reconfigured when the English presence is caught between intercultures. I focus on Lady Wortley Montagu and Elizabeth Marsh's travel writing as performative act that is then translated to fit the English audience's taste. If being English is a "performance," writing about that experience further confirms the performativity of nationhood. Both women play a double masquerade; one for the Oriental spectators whose gaze they find both fascinating and haunting, another for the imagined English readers back home. When linguistic translation fails with the natives, these women attempt to inscribe English virtue onto their body as texts— Montagu famously resists the offer to strip naked at the Turkish bath, while Marsh refuses the sultan's invitation to become his concubine.

The chapter begins with the letters of Lady Montagu who traveled to Turkey with her husband, the English ambassador. I read travel accounts as translational inventions, the text signifying an English female body navigating and resisting foreign gaze. I then turn to Marsh's *The Female Captive: A Narrative of Facts, which happened in Barbary, in the Year 1756*, a captivity narrative published fourteen years after her abduction. As a captive, Marsh finds a way to universalize English virtue by pretending to be a married woman. Significantly, both writers "translate" their experience as a sentimental narrative that marks the English women's chastity as a token of national virtue. They help English readers imagine new worlds radically different from theirs, yet potentially similar because English virtue expressed through the female body presents itself as a valid cultural currency. As such, Montagu and Marsh serve as translators for both English and Oriental culture, constructing an imagined community of sentimental readers who will sympathize with their travel accounts. Travel writing brings the "contact zone" into the

homeland, demonstrating the masquerading and translating qualities of Englishness in the eyes of the foreign.

Finally, chapter 3 examines the construction of English readers as cultural translators and cosmopolitan readers. Jane Austen presents reading as the work of translation by questioning her female protagonists' ability to "translate" the relationship between supranational narratives and foreign objects. I read Austen's *Northanger Abbey* and *Mansfield Park* as an indication of the English novel's insistence on producing cosmopolitan readers of domestic objects and books. Both Catherine and Fanny read exotic and imported "things" that they encounter on a surprisingly daily basis, such as old pseudo-castles, japanned chests, modern china, imported muslins, and the new publication in style— the novel. They engage in works of cultural translation as readers and consumers, making meaning of "imported" ideas like gothic fiction to harbor a transcultural awareness. Their ability to "translate" the cultural and political implications of novels and things defines their relationship with the outer world as well as their romantic encounters. When they learn to command alien objects and ideas that have penetrated England's social fabric, they grow from mere readers to translators who translate England's imperial desires into tools to reflect on their interiority. They learn to read novels and things the "English" way — Catherine realizes that gothic imagination cannot serve as models for England, while Fanny's ability to translate Britain's imperial relations into moral responsibilities of English aristocracy allows her to "grow up." In this way, Austen not only refines the English novel as national literature but at the same time defines that national character and readership as transnational.

The act of translating non-domestic sympathies and communities both alienate and foster the English novel into being. Translation does not just occur between texts, but between

spectators and spectacles, self and other, the distant and the near. Taking translation into account, the history of the English novel becomes not an evolution from old romances but a vibrant and digressive transaction of multiple sources. The translator-figures discussed in this dissertation illuminate the fact that the eighteenth-century novel imagined its boundaries as constantly shifting. The construction of Englishness was predicated on imagining and translating the "outside" that is also England's integrity. For Moretti, cultural and political hegemonies condition literary translations to be constrained by products from the core: "the culture of the periphery is intersected and altered by another culture from the core that completely ignores it."[52] Yet the prominence of translation in the eighteenth century suggests the opposite; translation displays a cultural compulsion to construct the periphery as a means to validate, perform, and authorize the cultural currency of the "core."

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[52] Franco Moretti, "Conjectures on World Literature," *New Left Review* 1 (2000): 56.

Chapter 1.

Faking Origins: Pseudo-Translation and Imaginary Translators in Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* and *Hieroglyphic Tales*

The history of the Novel is never pure. The stories told by the Novel are not "pure." They are stories of mixture and variety, of boundary-crossing and changing. The Novel itself is not "pure" and refuses ever to *pretend* to be so.

Margaret Doody[53]

The perfection of [the novel] is to represent every scene, in so easy and natural a manner, and to make them appear so probable, as to *deceive* us into a persuasion (at least while we are reading) that all is real, until we are affected by the joys or distresses, of the person in the story, as if they were our own.

Clara Reeve[54]

When Margaret Doody asserts that the novel's pureness is a fiction cast by later novel

theorists who teleologically read the novel's progress as a symptom of modernity and bourgeois

individualism, she refuses to confirm the novel's birthplace to eighteenth-century England.

Arguing that the English novel in its inception was a mixed hybridized form, she tries to posit the

novel's development in a much more discursive narrative transaction than Ian Watt makes it out

to be in *The Rise of the Novel* (1957). According to Doody, the novel is a "'foreign' import— or

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[53] Margaret Doody, *The True Story of the Novel* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1997), 485 (emphasis mine). In this book, Doody argues against the claim that the novel was bred in England around the eighteenth century. She instead claims that the novel has a history of about two thousand years, beckoning back at ancient classics. This bold claim has been highly criticized by numerous critics, most notably by Lennard Davis who calls her argument "loopy" and "ditzy." According to Davis, Doody confuses the history of the novel with the history of prose narrative. See Lennard Davis, "Review: Novel Worship," *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 30, no. 3 (1997): 405-408.

[54] Clara Reeve, *The Progress of Romance; and The history of Charoba, Queen of Aegypt* (New York: The Facsimile text society, 1930), 111.

rather, it is the product of combination, of contact between Southern Europe, Western Asia, and Northern Africa."[55] Yet when she claims that the novel never pretends to be pure, she disregards the fact that late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century English fiction actively and persistently *did* pretend to pose as "pure." In order to tell wild and exotic tales, the English novel fabricated a fake preface and translator who purports the novel to have originated from outside of England. That is, instead of admitting its hybridity, the early novel pretended to be non-English, keeping the "English" novel intact. It attempted to stamp alternative nationality as the source of narrative imagination and demarcated the border between English and non-English when the two were in fact porous rather than distinctive.

As Clara Reeve points out, the early novel attempted to establish probability "as to deceive [the readers] into a persuasion that all is real." Reeve's focus is on the construction of verisimilitude that invites the readers to sympathize with the characters of the novel. Yet her assertion that the novel must "deceive" to be real brings attention to the focus of this chapter, "pseudo-translation"— a text that pretends to be translated from an ancient or foreign locus when it is in fact produced in England. Pseudo-translation deceives the readers to believe the text as authentic because it claims to be a translation from an original text based on a true story. Tales of superstitions, perverted sexual desires, and supranational impulse cannot take hold in English soil because the English novel must pretend to be "pure," but make sense in their Catholic or Oriental neighbors. To tell a story of novelty, early fiction writers assumed the text to have crossed an imaginary narrative, linguistic, and cultural boundary while posing as a translator who accidentally comes across an old manuscript. This encounter with a story told elsewhere allowed them to write "non-English" fiction that was, in fact, English.

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[55] Doody, 18.

This chapter attempts to show that mimicking, imitating, and assuming its own textual origin serviced as a means to set the boundaries of the English novel as national literature. By pretending to be imported, pseudo-translation taps into the discourse of translation, authorship, and cultural-crossing. The popularity of pseudo-translations in the eighteenth century signifies a cultural desire to contrive translators who will speak languages of the past and present, foreign and familiar, illegitimate and legitimate. This chapter reads the invention of the early novel's framework of pseudo-genealogy as a consistent cultural practice that constitutes the English novel's fictional borders. Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) and *Hieroglyphic Tales* (1785), one an English Gothic and another an English oriental tale, reflect the framework's search for originality by pursuing true ownership. Both texts search for origins — the original owner of the castle, lost fathers and children, or the rightful empress of an empire — by examining how "things" operate. Just as Walpole's fake prefaces rely on an ancient manuscript as imaginary textual origin, both novels attempt to legitimize the protagonists' search for lineage through moving statues, crumbling castles, forged wills, and tea-cup readings. Supernatural agency is significant because it was this very operation that stamped these prose fictions as "non-English." Yet Walpole meant for this non-English agency as a vehicle to think about how the nation produced and acquired knowledge about itself. The supernatural operation of objects provides a *deus ex machina* to the questions of origin in *Otranto* and *Tales*, suggesting an alternative to traditional historiography seemingly based on fact and truth.

This chapter will explore how pseudo-translation serves as an epistemological experiment on the English novel's fictionality, realism, and probability. It attempts to show that even though it deviates from Watt's "formal realism," Walpole's pseudo-translation constructs a different yet potent reality that brings improbability and realism together. Followed by a discussion on the

relationship between pseudo-translation and the "rise of fictionality," as Catherine Gallagher

calls it, the chapter turns to the cult of literary forgers and imposters of the eighteenth century.

The popularity of Psalmanazar, a European who posed as an Asian, specifically merits attention.

Psalmanazar's cultural presence will explain how Orientalized knowledge, like pseudo-

translation, was an English invention that did not concern the Orient at all. This idea of projected

knowledge will guide our understanding of why Walpole's pseudo-translation and imaginary

translator in *Otranto* and *Tales* became so integral to the novel's development. After

investigating how the English and non-English mesh in Walpole's imaginary translation, this

chapter turns to Reeve and Walter Scott who played an important role in distinguishing romance

from the novel, making the latter a prominently modern genre. Coincidentally, both refer to

Walpole as the prime inspiration for their "new" novel. They borrow the trope of pseudo-

translation, further confirming the role of the imaginary translator in constructing the English

novel.

Pseudo-Translation and the Rise of Fictionality

The infamous first preface of *Otranto* asserts: "The following work was found in the

library of an ancient catholic family in the north of England. It was printed at Naples, in the

black letters, in the year 1529. How much sooner it was written does not appear. The principal

incidents are such as were believed in the darkest age of Christianity; but the language and

conduct have nothing that favours of barbarism."[56] William Marshall, the fictional "translator"

who allegedly translated the Italian manuscript into modern English, speculates the text to have

been written between 1095, the era of the first crusade, and 1243. This Anglo-Saxon translator

further claims: "Though the machinery is invention, and the names of the actors imaginary, I

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[56] Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto: A Gothic Story*, ed. W. S. Lewis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 5.

cannot but believe that the groundwork of the story is founded on truth."[57] This spurious

framework to the novel ventriloquizes an ancient extranational voice over a modern English one.

That is, Walpole as author speaks two languages when posing as a translator: one of a medieval

Italian, another of modern English. The novel is indeed dialogic in Bakhtin's sense, but it is not

the dialogue that negates the possibility of a dominant voice: it is the voice of the imaginary

translator that removes the voice of the author's.

Walpole's insertion of a translator's note, regardless of its inauthenticity, invites the

readers to believe the story as truth. As will be discussed, contemporary readers did not seem

particularly interested in verifying the origin of this novel and were ready to accept Walpole's

claim as part of a literary game. For instance, the poet Thomas Gray writes to Walpole in 1764:

"I have received the Castle of Otranto, and return you my thanks for it. . . . We take it for a

translation, and should believe it to be a true story, if it were not for St. Nicholas."[58] Evading the

question of authenticity, pseudo-translation instead provides a viable means to turn the readers'

attention to something old, something imitated, and something foreign — in other words,

something not English as a tale of true account. The novel thus celebrates fictionality by

paradoxically leading the readers to believe that the account is an actual translation and therefore

not fiction. And so Walpole successfully establishes an important rubric in novel writing: it is

fiction because it denies its own fictional status.

The irony, of course, lied in that not only was *Otranto* an English tale but a surprisingly

modern one heralded as the first instance of the English-gothic novel. The very term "English-

gothic" at first glance seems oxymoronic. The term "gothic" suggested a period of barbarism and

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[57] Ibid., 8.

[58] Thomas Gray, *The Works of Thomas Gray, Esq.; Collated from the Various Editions with Memoirs of his Life and Writings*, ed. William Mason (London: J. F. Dove, 1827), 354.

superstition, a distant antiquity that eighteenth-century England had seemingly moved away from.[59] Whether *Otranto* was authentic or not stirred up some literary controversy, and Walpole's fake preface soon became the center of debate. Thomas Chatterton (1752-1770), a literary forger himself, was one of the many who was outraged at Walpole's deceit. Chatterton initially introduced himself as an antiquarian offering material to fill gaps in Walpole's collections of pseudo-antiquarian relics. Chatterton created pseudo-Medieval poetry under the pseudonym Thomas Rowley, an imaginary monk of the fifteenth century. Upon learning that Chatterton had been lying about Thomas Rowley's poetry, and a little embarrassed that he initially failed to detect this deceit, Walpole disclaimed Chatterton's work as counterfeit and thereby refused to grant him patronage. The indignant Chatterton responds to Walpole's hypocrisy through a poem dedicated to his name:

> WALPOLE! I thought not I should ever see
> So mean a Heart as thine has proved to be;
> Thou, who in Luxury nurs'd behod'st with Scorn
> The Boy, who Friendless, Penniless, Forlorn,
> Asks thy high Favour, —thou mayst call me Cheat—
> Say, didst thou ne'er indulge in such Deceit?
> Who wrote *Otranto*? But I will not chide,
> Scorn I will repay with Scorn, and Pride with Pride.[60]

Chatterton interestingly deploys the very rhetoric that favors the primacy of the author charged against him as a literary hoax, questioning the authenticity of *Otranto*'s textual genesis. John Davis, author of *The Life of Thomas Chatterton* (1806), echoes this accusation and condemns

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[59] E. J. Clery, "The Genesis of 'Gothic' Fiction," in *Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, ed. Jerrold E. Hogle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 21-40.

[60] Thomas Chatterton, *The Complete Works of Thomas Chatterton*, ed. Donald S. Taylor (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 1: 341.

Walpole as an "egregious literary imposture."[61] William-Henry Ireland (1775-1835), another infamous literary forger who claimed to have "discovered" Shakespeare's original letters and manuscripts from an old chest, shares Chatterton's view: "If an untruth in literary manners were so heinous an offence, whence comes it that the late Sir Horace Walpole, afterwards Lord Orford, escaped the lash of reproof, for palming off his 'Castle of Otranto' as the translation from an old Italian MS.?"[62] In other words, why was Walpole not criticized on the same basis of literary forgery that others were charged against? Ireland defends himself against the changing perceptions that considered literary forgery as theft and therefore economic treason, which was an argument Walpole used to accuse Chatterton.

The different reaction to Walpole and Chatterton's literary scandal provides an insight into the complex nature of fictionality produced by literary forgery. Unlike Walpole whose gothic story was received with enthusiasm, Chatterton received public condemnation for forgery and was ostracized from polite society, allegedly taking his own life at a young age. Unlike recent critics who acknowledge Chatterton's great influence on Romanticism, it seemed at the time as though Chatterton was written out of the literary canon.[63] Walpole, however, was never put under the same type of scrutiny. Responding to John Davis' public censure, Walpole spent the next decade defending himself against the accusation of those who held him responsible for

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[61] Interestingly, there is some debate on whether Chatterton actually wrote this poem. See Donald S. Taylor, ed., *Thomas Chatterton's Art: Experiments in Imagined History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978). For more information on Chatterton's literary forgery, see Margaret Russet, *Fictions and Fakes: Forging Romantic Authenticity, 1760-1845* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Ian Haywood*, The Making of History: A Study of Literary Forgeries of James Macpherson and Thomas Chatterton in Relation to Eighteenth-century Ideas of History and Fiction* (Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1986); Paul Baines, *The House of Forgery in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997).

[62] William Henry Ireland, *The Confessions of William Henry Ireland* (London:1805).

[63] Recently, more critics have begun to review Chatterton's work as meriting literary value. Margaret Russet, for instance, reads Chatterton's textual creation as an articulation of the construction of Romantic subjectivity.

Chatterton's suicide. Luckily for Walpole, his reputation as an "egregious literary imposture" did not persist for long, as the literati were more interested in Walpole's influence on Chatterton rather than his participation in literary forgery. Being the eccentric that he is, Walpole's fakery seemed characteristic of his persona and the campy genre he pioneered, gothic fiction. In spite of Chatterton's accusation, he was therefore able to successfully excuse himself of the same "deceit" and "cheat." He argues that by encouraging Chatterton, he would have "encouraged a propensity to forgery, which is not the talent most wanting culture in the present age. All of the house of forgery are relations."[64] Little did he acknowledge that he was an active participant in that "house of forgery."

In fact, despite public censure, Walpole's penchant for creating fiction with absurd and fake origins continued: two years after the publication of *Otranto*, he wrote *Hieroglyphic Tales* that further exaggerates its textual origin. In this collection of six short pseudo-oriental stories posthumously published in 1785, the unnamed fake translator states: "The *Hieroglyphic Tales* were undoubtedly written a little before the creation of the World, and have ever since been preserved, by oral tradition, in the mountains of Crampcraggiri, an uninhabited island, not yet discovered."[65] This absurd claim pokes fun at its own pseudo-ness, locating the tale as an imported commodity from a vaguely Orientalized, but "not yet discovered" Levant traced back to pre-history. The Levant, a vague projection of many muddled Eastern identities and languages, serves as the pseudo-Oriental locus for Walpole. If *Otranto*'s textual origin was probable enough to deceive at least a few critics, the exaggerated preface of *Hieroglyphic Tales* seems to laugh at the fact that a debate on *Otranto*'s textual origin ever existed. These fake

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[64] Horace Walpole, *The Works of Horatio Walpole, Earl of Orford* (London: Printed for G.G. and J. Robinson, Paternoster-Row, and J. Edwards, Pall-Mall, 1798),4: 218.

[65] Horace Walpole, *Hieroglyphic Tales*, ed. Kenneth W. Gross (Los Angeles: Augustan Reprint Society, UCLA, 1982), 10.

origins suggest an imaginary narrative traffic, albeit a fabulous one, that posits the author not as a lonely Romantic genius but a wandering traveler and translator in search of a story. Walpole's employment of an imaginary translator gave fiction a specious appearance of novelty and authenticity, serving as a site of imaginary cultural exchange that negotiates the boundaries of fictionality.

Put another way, authenticity is legislated not against forgery but through the insistent practice of forgery as a means to validate "the rise of fictionality." According to Gallagher, fictionality has been taken for granted and therefore neglected as a key feature of the novel when in fact "a discourse of fictionality appeared in and around the novel" of the eighteenth century.[66] She argues that the nature of fictionality changed drastically when readers and spectators became increasingly familiar with the notion of fiction as "non-referential," or as divorced from the real world. *Robinson Crusoe* (1720) and *Joseph Andrews* (1742) are different kinds of novels, she explains, because the former claims to be a true account while the latter purports to be a representation of species and not of a specific individual. The novel allegedly liberated fictionality as it increasingly abandoned attempts to convince readers that their story was literally true. Instead, Gallagher contends, the novel strove for an emotional identification with the readers through the representation of "nobody."[67] The novel further tried to conceal its fictionality behind verisimilitude or realism, which, according to Michael McKeon, gradually becomes accepted as signs of truth form, not of lying.[68] He claims that by acknowledging

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[66] Catherine Gallagher, "The Rise of Fictionality," in *The Novel*, ed. Franco Moretti (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 1: 344.

[67] Catherine Gallagher, *Nobody's Story: The Vanishing Acts of Women Writers in the Marketplace, 1670-1820* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

[68] McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel*.

fictionality as falling under the rubric of the novel, the readers find the novel's probability acceptable.

Luiz Costa Lima, unlike Gallagher in her claim that the novel invented fictionality, argues that the eighteenth and nineteenth-century British novel and national culture were predicated on a repudiation of romance.[69] The nation in turn celebrated history and utilized the novel as a tool to promote ideas of daily normativity. He thus claims that rather than inventing fiction, the novel destroyed it.[70] Pseudo-translation complicates the history of fictionality and provides an alternative reading to the novel's fictional signs, bringing together both Gallagher and Costa Lima's arguments. Walpole's insistence on fiction's veracity mouthed by an invented translator creates what John Bender calls "manifest fictionality" and verisimilitude at the same time.[71] That is, pseudo-creation creates a type of fictionality that is so novel yet so familiar that it is later taken up by following novelists without ever being acknowledged as a distinctive feature of the novel. The fictional translator does what Gallagher and Costa Lima both claim in that s/he promotes and disbars fictionality simultaneously. Factuality is not basis for truth, fictionality is.

So at a time when many eighteenth-century novels like *Robinson Crusoe* were circulated as "true history," "secret history," or "true relations," a claim to authenticity through fake

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[69] Luiz Costa Lima, *Control of the Imaginary: Reason and Imagination in Modern Times* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988).

[70] Srinivas Aravamudan similarly contends that the "realist novels usurped the mantle of fictionality as everything else was declared insufficiently or faultily fictional." Aravamudan, *Enlightenment Orientalism*, 25.

[71] John Bender, "Enlightenment Fiction and the Scientific Hypothesis," *Representations* 60 (1997): 1-23.

translation became a key feature in defining fictionality.[72] In other words, the translator's claim

to textual authenticity reverberates as an open secret that marks the fictionality of the novel. The

invention of imaginary translators serves as an integral constituent of the novel and fictionality.

In fact, the discourse on novelistic writing was founded on the dissemination and dissemblance

of imaginary texts spoken by an intertextual translator. This textual traffic is an imaginary one

that is, significant to my argument, also a multicultural one. The English author as translator

willingly crosses cultural borders to import ideas of "the rest of the world" as truth, when that

claim to authenticity was a means to validate fictionality.

The History of Lies: Pseudo-translation, Literary Forgers, and Impostors

Even though Walpole escaped the critics' "lash or reproof," to quote Ireland, readers and

critics of the time were not insensitive to the idea of literary forgery. In fact, the literary

landscape of eighteenth-century England was painted with an array of literary forgers and

imposters, from the aforementioned Chatterton to James McPherson to George Psalmanazar to

name a few.[73] A contextualization of "literary forgery" will help us understand that this age of

deceit was also a period bursting with creative ingenuity expressed in the form of a "lie."

According to K. K. Ruthven, "forgery" once meant "to make" instead of indicating fakeness or

criminality. The term "forge" derived from the old French "forgier" and Latin "fabricare" (fabric,

or to fabricate). As the *Oxford English Dictionary* puts it, "forgery" meant both "invention" and

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[72] For more discussion on secret histories, see Michael McKeon, *The Secret History of Domesticity* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005).

[73] To read more about literary forgery of the period, see Donald Rayfield, "Forgiving Forgery," *The Modern Language Review* 107, no. 4 (2012): xxv-xli; K. K. Ruthven, *Faking Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Debbie Lee, *Romantic Liars: Obscure Women Who Became Impostors and Challenged a Nation* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Joseph Rosenblum, *Practice to Deceive: The Amazing Stories of Literary Forgery's Most Notorious Practitioners* (New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 2000); Nick Groom, *The Forger's Shadow: How Forgery Changed the Course of Literature* (London: Picador, 2002); Jack Lynch, *Deception and Detection in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008).

"excogitation" as well as "deception" and "lie."[74] Nick Groom also points out that the critical

definition of literary forgery in Britain was fixed only at the end of the eighteenth and beginning

of nineteenth century. A continuous debate on forgery and its incriminating effect ensued ever

since. Because there was hardly an agreement on the definition of literary forgery, Chatterton's

deceit was considered fraud while someone like Walpole's was accepted as entertaining. Stories

of falsified manuscript and fake histories are also described as both "forgeries" and "impostures"

in Issac D'Israli's *Curiosities of Literature* (1791). Despite this liberal displacement of making

and copying, Groom distinguishes between forgery and counterfeit in the sense that forgery can

still be considered creation; literary forgery has no original source and is therefore, paradoxically,

"original." Plagiarism or counterfeit, on the other hand, is a reproduction of what already exists

and therefore a copy. Russet further clarifies the term's use in the eighteenth century: "imposture"

concerns persons, whereas "forgery" involves texts and the art of making. "Forgery" was

understood as "the fraudulent making or alteration of a writing to the prejudice of another man's

right" whereas "imposture" was the assumption of a false name or false attribute that was not

quite considered a crime.[75]

Macpherson, Chatterton, and Ireland were some of the renowned poets who created a

pseudo persona to claim "discovery" of original manuscripts from the past. In doing so, they

created "originals" that could pass as archaic, inventing the language of the past. Like Ireland,

William Lauder (d.1771) interpolated fake translations in order to accuse Milton of plagiarism.

He quoted from several modern Latin poets as "originals" from which Milton had allegedly

plagiarized *Paradise Lost*. Yet his conceit was later exposed by Reverend Dr. Douglas who

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[74] "forgery, n.". OED Online. March 2016. Oxford University Press.
http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/73317?redirectedFrom=forgery (accessed April 25, 2016).

[75] Russet, 7.

proved that those passages were actually taken from Hogg's Latin translation of Milton's. Turns

out, Lauder had improvised a fake translation taken from an actual translation from the original

in order to erase that original document.[76] Literary forgers thus rewrite and reinvent the literary

past, not merely resuscitating dead artists but creating dead authors to modify literary genealogy.

In this sense, literary forgers actively reinvent history; they reverse the process of historiography

by inventing the past to suit present concerns.

Then there were sequels to novels written by hack writers claiming to be of the original

author. For instance, after the publication of Defoe's *Roxana* (1724), the novel's shocking

demonization of motherhood was soon corrected through a false sequel that supplements an

alternative ending. Instead of having Roxana murder her daughter like the original, Roxana's

daughter Susan remains alive in the revised version. The 1775 edition of the novel subtitled *The

New Roxana*, falsely published and signed in Defoe's name, inserts an interesting preface to

explain why this change takes place. The anonymous author pretending to be "Defoe" provides a

sham anecdote concerning Thomas Southerne's reaction to the original novel: "When

[Southerne] had read my book, he paid me a visit at my house in Islington; and, agreeable to his

usual facetiousness, for he was an excellent companion, rallied me severely in making the Lady,

the Heroine of the work, so unnatural to her children in her disowning them."[77] Many believed

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[76] These literary forgers reverberate T. S. Eliot's view of how contemporary poets define themselves in the face of their predecessors: "No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relations to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him alone; you must set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead." Whether one reveres the past or deliberately counters and misinterprets their predecessors like Harold Bloom suggests, literary forgers complicate the present's relationship with past literature in that they create and therefore invent a non-existent origin as the source of creative subjectivity. See T. S. Eliot, "Tradition and Individual Talent," in *Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot*, ed. Frank Kermode (London: Faber and Faber, 1975), 37-44 and Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

[77] Defoe, *The History of Mademoiselle de Beleau; or, the New Roxana, the Fortunate Mistress* (London: 1775).

the edition to have been written by Defoe himself, including one reviewer of the *Monthly Review*: "It is not improbable that this is really one of Daniel's productions; for he wrote books of all kind, romantic as well as religious; moral as well as immoral."[78] Defoe's authorship, then, was usurped by this unknown author who performed censorship on the "unnatural" vices described in the original text.

Further, original texts were invented or even reversed in the flux of cheap translations that often abridged or modified the original. In 1744, Eliza Haywood published *The Fortunate Foundlings*, a novel about the life of twin foundlings, Horatio and Louisa. This work was later translated and liberally rewritten by Crebillon *fils* in 1754 under the title *Les Heureux Orphelins, histoire imitee de l'anglois*. Four years later, *The Happy Orphans, An Authentic History of Persons in High Life* (1758) was published anonymously under the subtitle: "With a variety of uncommon events, and surprising turns of fortune. Translated and improved from the French original." *The Monthly Review* quickly pointed out its similarity to Haywood's original, calling the novel's claim to a French original "all a lie," while the *Critical Review* concluded that its work was different from Haywood and acknowledged the French novel as the origin.[79] The anonymous author of this novel misplaces its origin to the French translation and thus erases Haywood's original text, providing an example of liberal translations that spread across the English Channel.

As in the example of *Hieroglyphic Tales*, there were also pseudo-oriental tales produced in France and England that claimed to be translations from the East. The French-English translation of *One Thousand and One Nights* by Galland—an actual translation out of an Arabian

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[78] Anonymous, *The Monthly Review, or Literary Journal* 52 (March 1775): 274.

[79] For more discussion on this liberal translation, see Helen Sard Hughes, "Notes on Eighteenth-Century Fictional Translations," *Modern Philology* 17, no. 4 (1919): 225-231.

manuscript into French and then to English— sparked a cultural cathexis for tales of the strange and the exotic.[80] Eighteenth-century writers were quick to capitalize on the vogue of oriental tales, soon producing their own versions but positing them as direct translations from the Levant. As discussed in the introduction, Haywood's *The Adventures of Eovaai* is supposedly a translation from the pre-Adamiticial language that was translated to Chinese and then to English. William Beckford's *Vathek* (1786) also pretends to be a translation from Arabian to English when there was no Arabian text to begin with. The novel's publishing actually involved a complicated web of translation, since *Vathek* was initially written in French and translated to English against Beckford's will. Significantly, it wasn't just the liberal appropriation of authorship but also the dissemblance of nationality that allowed fiction a unique opportunity to experiment with its own textual origin. As such, this messy transaction of pseudo-translations and literary forgery enabled a vibrant transcultural literary market that informed the publishing needs of the time.

Finally, with literary forgers appeared literary imposters who became instant celebrities by adopting a foreign persona. Of particular, the case of Psalmanazar illuminates why Walpole's pseudo-translation became accepted as part of a cultural game. Psalmanazar's disguise, very much like the imaginary translator in Walpole's preface, seems to be an open secret that

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[80] The publication history of *Nights*, however, is further complicated by the fact that some of Galland's translations don't have an Arabic manuscript to base the story on. In fact, a reverse-translation occurred in which later Arabian fiction translated Galland's French version back into Arabian, compromising literary creation on the basis of translation and forgery. The Grub Street English translations also often used pirated versions of Galland. In this sense, the most original translation of the oriental tale can already be read as promiscuous pseudo-translation. France actively translated and produced oriental tales which were later imported to England, indicating that England's oriental imagination was already mediated by European influence. See Robert Irwin, *The Arabian Nights: A Compan*ion (London: Allen Lane, 1994); Peter L. Caracciolo, ed., 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); and Rebecca Carol Johnson, Richard Maxwell, and Katie Trumpener, "The Arabian Nights, Arab-European Literary Influence, and the Lineages of the Novel," *Modern Language Quarterly* 68, no. 2 (2007): 243-79.

discounts verisimilitude for an imaginary transaction with Oriental fantasy. Psalmanazar (1679?-1763) was an Englishman who pretended to be a native from Formosa, an island today known as Taiwan. Claiming that he was captured by Jesuit priests and brought to Europe against his will, he attempted to deliver fresh knowledge about Formosa to the English audience. If Chatterton and Macpherson unsettled Englishness by constructing archaic or Celtic exoticness, Psalmanazaar specifically Orientalized such origins. The publication of *An Historical and Geographical Description of Formosa* (1704), replete with Oriental fantasy that was "not-quite-China, not-quite-Japan, but at the same time not quite not China or Japan" as Keevak cleverly puts it, brought him immediate public fame.[81] Psalmanazar also forged an entire system of Formosan language and alphabets, which fascinated many including Samuel Johnson.[82] He was even asked to lecture at Oxford on Formosan, a new Oriental language that no one had heard of because it was complete bogus. His fame continued even after he dwindled to a Grub Street hack, although at this point his authenticity was being questioned. By 1711, he had become the butt of the public's joke: *The Spectator* published a sarcastic advertisement that poked fun at Psalmanazar's role-playing as a savage eating his own children as accounted in *Description of Formosa*: "On the first of April will be performed at the Play-house in the Hay-market, an Opera call'd 'The Cruelty of Atreus. N.B. The Scene wherein Thyestes eats his own Children, is to be

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[81] Michael Keevak, *The Pretended Asian: George Psalmanazar's Eighteenth-century Formosan Hoax* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2004), 15.

[82] For more on Psalmanazar, see Robert Adams Day, "Psalmanazar's 'Formosa' and the British Reader (Including Samuel Johnson)," in *Exoticism in the Enlightenment*, ed. G. S. Rousseau and Roy Porter (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989), 197–221; Jack Lynch, "Forgery as Performance Art: The Strange Case of George Psalmanazar," *1650–1850: Ideas, Aesthetics, and Inquiries in the Early Modern Era* 11 (2005): 21–35.

performed by the famous Mr Psalmanazar, lately arrived from Formosa; The whole Supper being set to Kettle-drums."[83]

Figure 1: George Psalmanazar, unknown artist. His features are distinctively European, not Asian. © National Portrait Gallery, London.

Psalmanzar's popularity as a real-life personality — because his celebrity is built on fakery and imposture — is not as odds with eighteenth-century enthusiasm for consuming fictional characters, especially given that there was ample evidence to contradict his accounts.

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[83] Addison and Steele, *The Spectator*, no. 14, March 16, 1711.

He managed to dupe the public even when Jesuits and Dutch colonial explorers who had actually visited Formosa brought forth contestations against his inaccurate ethnography. That is, Psalmanazar's imposture whetted the cultural desire for an extranational account of knowing *about* Formosa rather than for any actual historiography. Oddly enough, his knowledge of Formosan custom and language did not concern Formosa itself so much as creating an abstractness that Orientalizes knowledge. He either erased or exaggerated any actual and particular cultural differences to make himself believable. Tellingly, he was able to pose as an Asian without ever changing his physical appearance, thereby appearing familiar to the English eyes. Yet he also appeared unfamiliar and mysterious by speaking an entirely different cultural language.

Psalmanazar resonates Edward Said's observation that the Orient, or rather the knowledge or discourse about the Orient, is a European projection that does not concern the Orient at all.[84] For Said, Orientalism is a type of will to power that insists on an intellectual authority over the Orient that exceeds the boundaries of scholarly tradition. Instead, the Orientalist's (re)construction of the Orient is material, academic, ideological, imaginary, and most significantly, textual. Indeed, knowledge of the Orient enabled Europeans to create a system of understanding "the other" in order to rhetorically reconfigure their own national identity. For the Orientalists, the Orient as object could only be understood with relation to the spectator, the West; otherwise the East did not (have to) exist. The structure of such knowledge and power necessitates not just the other as a spectacle but an active "spectator" to take it in, one who is willing to make judgments about what is real or imaginary— and by doing so, actually inscribe the rules of English thoughts about what must be real or imaginary about the East.

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[84] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).

Psalmanazar as a fake Formosan and translator accomplishes this very Orientalized system of knowledge. Of course, Said reads the history of imperialism retroactively; some of the preconceptions of his knowledge of Victorianism turn out to be mistaken if we look at eighteenth-century history, particularly because the distinction between different race and culture was yet slippery. For instance, Psalmanazar was able to pass as a Formosan native despite his racial origin as Caucasian.[85] When asked why his skin was fair, he simply answered that upper class Formosans dwelled in caves and were not exposed to the sun. Yet Said's understanding of the structure of knowledge and power sheds an important light on explaining Psalmanazar's popularity as a cultural symptom— to invent the Orient as imaginary projections from within, positioning England as the spectator.

Especially of significance to my discussion, Psalmanazar's oscillation between the other and the self, spectacle and spectator is reliant on his performance as a translator. *Description of Formosa* was written in Latin, and was later translated and published into English, although Psalmanazar claims that the Latin version is already a translation of Formosan. In this sense, *Description* is a pseudo-translation in its own form. The instantaneous popularity of *Description* was not limited to England, as it was later translated to French and German. By that time, however, his sham was divulged by a rather interesting trial in which his ability to translate was called into question. While he had no trouble pretending to translate English into Formosan, he was dumbfounded when asked to translate the already translated Formosan back into English, not remembering the "original" which was his own invention. He later apologized for the "base and shameful imposture" and his "fictitious account of that Island" in a posthumously published

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[85] Psalmanazar's ability to pass as Asian is indicative of how racialized distinctions of physical complexion were not yet established at the time. For more discussion on race in the eighteenth century, see Laura Doyle, *Freedom's Empire*; Cristina Malcomson, *Studies of Skin Color in the Early Royal Society: Boyle, Cavendish, Swift* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2013); Kathleen Wilson, *The Island Race: Englishness, Empire, and Gender in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 2003).

memoir in 1764, entitled: *MEMOIRS OF ****. Commonly known by the Name of George Psalmanazar; A Reputed Native of Formosa. Written by himself, In order to be published after his Death: Containing An Account of his Education, Travels, Adventures, Connections, Literary Productions, and pretended Conversion from Heathenism to Christianity; which last proved the Occasion of his being brought over into this Kingdom, and passing for a Proselyte, and a member of the Church of England.* Yet this confession verges on another attempt at self-promotion, as demonstrated by his refusal to acknowledge his real name and birthplace. He is forever known as Psalmanazar, the "fake" Formosan native, while his true identity remains "blank." Psalmanazar's fraud is disclosed when translation becomes a means of authenticating rather than mystifying, debunking the fictionality of his accounts.

The consideration of eighteenth-century literary forgers, imposters, and Walpole's pseudo-translation interrupts the rhetoric of literary criticism that prioritizes originality and authenticity, instead placing fictionality and mimicry as strategies of narrative creativity. According to Ruthven, literary forgery is "a sort of spurious literature, and so is literature."[86] That is, all literature is "fake" to the extent that it is fiction. Novels not only mediate fictionality but flirt with the process of *producing* fictionality, making fictionality manifest by creating knowledge about fake origins. Psalmanazar's alterity as a Formosan tellingly did not derive from performing racial identity— he never wore costumes or painted face, he merely *talked* about being a Formosan and a translator. In other words, his disparity was a linguistic one demonstrated and ultimately compromised by translation. Psalmanazar's imposture indicates that Orientalized knowledge, and to that extent novels that pretend to have been bred in the Levant, is first and foremost constructed textually and imaginatively. All Psalmanzar had to do to become Formosan was, simply put, pretend to translate.

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[86] Ruthven, 200.

Horace Walpole as Gothic Impostor: *The Castle of Otranto*

It is against this backdrop of literary forgers and impostors that Walpole as a literary forger and gothic impostor invented an imaginary translator. Walpole was preoccupied with providing fake histories to architecture, objects, and letters that served as creative faculty rather than deceit. To understand why Walpole utilizes tropes of fraudulence through objects (i.e. the lost manuscript, the moving helmet, the forged will), we must first consider his fascination with faux antiquity and his role in pioneering gothic literature as a new genre of prose fiction that blends the ancient and the modern romance. Although the term gothic referred to a distant antiquity, for Walpole it was also an expression of modernity that translates the past into subjects of the present.

Walpole's firsthand interest in the gothic was conveyed through his neo-gothic castle, Strawberry Hill, an imitation of the medieval gothic style built by the Thames at Twickenham. Filled with medieval tombs, rose windows, and dramatic stairways, the edifice quickly became the emblem of English-gothic which was really neo-gothic, or "fake" gothic. The castle was embellished with second-hand and imitated knick-knacks carefully staged to enhance the visitor's visual experience. "I was the first soul that ever endeavoured to introduce a little taste into English antiquities," Walpole writes to his friend Mason on the architecture of Strawberry Hill.[87] This "taste," referring to the gothic, was a controversial aesthetic fashion that was considered artificial and unnatural due to its emphasis in exaggerated embellishments. The newly revived gothic vogue of the eighteenth century was to be demonstrated foremost through

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[87] Walpole to Reverend William Mason, 10 July 1775, in *The Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, ed. W. S. Lewis (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1937), 28: 213. For more reading on Strawberry Hill, see Warren Hunting Smith, *Architecture in English Fiction* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934); Brian Fothergill, *The Strawberry Hill Set: Horace Walpole and his Circle* (London: Faber and Faber, 1983); George E. Haggerty, "Strawberry Hill: Architecture, Friendship, and the Erotics of Collecting," in *Horace Walpole's Letters: Masculinity and Friendship in the Eighteenth Century* (Plymouth: Bucknell University Press, 2011), 69-88.

architecture, physical space and a multiplicity of ornaments. In this sense, gothic taste was always a response to physical objects. Reasons like this made gothic aestheticism the source of critical debate. For instance, responding to Walpole's desire to construct a gothic castle, his friend Horace Mann lamented: "Why will you make it gothic? I know that it is the taste at present but I really am sorry for it."[88] Furthermore, this castle, according to Walpole, was the prime inspiration for creating his own gothic story. Walpole confesses that before writing *Otranto*, he had a dream in which he saw "a gigantic hand in armor on the utmost banister of a great staircase."[89] If so, Strawberry Hill embodied a cultural space that occupies the mind; the gothic objects dictated and governed the way Walpole's fiction was produced and read. While Walpole acknowledged that his castle was a rewriting of ancient models, he also desired to assert verisimilitude by providing material evidence from the past. Accordingly, he would often collect items that could pass as "the personal estate and movables of [his] great-great-grandmother" in an attempt to dub his fictional castle with a touch of fictitious historicity, giving real things fake histories.[90] Walpole even wrote a guidebook for visitors to Strawberry Hill called *Description of the Villa* (1774), suggesting that the castle was meant to be seen than lived in.

Walpole was a master of manipulating fiction and reality, as his inclination for fabrication further promoted him to take on fake personae and in that way counterfeit authorship in his daily life. For example, in 1765, Walpole wrote a sardonic letter to Rousseau (1712-1778) in French, purporting to have been written by Frederick, the King of Prussia. The letter is said to have circulated in Paris and London to Rousseau's indignation: "You have even dared to

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[88] Horace Mann to Walpole, 13 Feb. 13 1750, in *Correspondence*, 20: 111.

[89] Walpole to Reverend William Cole, 9 March 9 1765, in *The Works of Horatio Walpole, Earl of Orford* (London, 1798), 4:328.

[90] Walpole to Henry Conway, 8 June 1747, in *Correspondence*, 37: 439-40.

transcribe his Signature, as if you had seen it written under his own Hand. I inform you, Sir, that that Letter was fabricated at Paris, and, what rives and tears my Heart, that the Impostor has his Accomplices in England," probably alluding to James Boswell.[91] At the same time, Walpole was also an avid proponent of detecting forgery. In a pamphlet titled *A Detection of a late Forgery called Testament Politique du Chevalier Robert Walpole* (1767), he defends his father sir Robert Walpole's honor by claiming that his father was never associated with the said *Testament*.[92] Walpole participated, took advantage of, but also separated himself from the practice of literary forgery, examining the limits of what could eventually be considered as material and historical archive.

Walpole's participation in different types of literary manipulation was a means to challenge the process of history writing based on "facts." Yet such experiment was interpreted as Walpole's penchant for dissemblance that seemed reflective of his frivolous character as an "impostor," leading critics like James Watt to question his place in the history of the English novel.[93] Walpole is partly responsible for the marginalization of gothic literature since literary critics, now and then, refused to take him seriously. In fact, Walpole was considered an eccentric for his "ostensibly bad taste" in gothic, not least because fabrication and deceit seemed so central to the culture of gothic revival that Walpole did not seem any more an "imposter" than any other author engaged in that mode. *Otranto* is oftentimes accorded merit only as the founding text of a

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[91] Jean-Jacques Rousseau to the editor of St. James's Chronicle, 7 April 1766, in *Horace Walpole: The Critical Heritage*, ed. Peter Sabor (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987), 102.

[92] Walpole explains that he had read a spurious production called *Testament Politique du Chevalier Robert Walpole* that pretended to have been written by his father Robert Walpole. Walpole claims that this testament was a mere compilation of pamphlets, magazines, and newspapers. He claims that "all the ideas are foreign as the language," as there is no original to the French version. Horace Walpole, *The Works of Horatio Walpole, Earl of Orford* (London, 1798), 2: 323-338.

[93] James Watt, *Contesting the Gothic: Fiction, Genre and Cultural Conflict, 1764–1832* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

genre, providing the vocabulary of "gothic conventions" that was later imitated by other gothic writers.

It is particularly surprising that Walpole's framework of pseudo-translation and the imaginary translator is hardly recognized as a distinctive feature that helped define not only gothic as a literary genre but novelistic discourse in general. His fictional framing of gothic novels has been overlooked as a feature of the English novel that we now seem to take for granted. Because *Otranto* was presented in what seemed like a literary hoax and dealt with supernaturalism that defied the rules of realism, Walpole was written out of the English canon in favor of novel theories that put psychological realism, interiority, and individualism as focal points for the novel's development. The subtext of fictionality and pseudo-ness that was so critical in the development of the novel's rise, as I argue, has been substituted for verisimilitude and therefore erased. Yet Walpole's pleasure in "faking"— faking letters, giving objects pseudo history to set up his gothic castle, faking the origin of his novel, even detecting other literary forgery— should be read as an attempt at revamping textual history, tying the past and present, the imaginary and the real to present new meaning relations.

The accidental "discovery" of an ancient manuscript was a favorite hoax of Walpole's. The infamous first preface of *Otranto* argues that the "translator" serendipitously found the manuscript in "the library of an ancient catholic family in the north of England." Interestingly, Walpole is also known to have coined the term "serendipity." According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, in a letter to Horace Mann in 1754, Walpole used the term for the first time to indicate accidental sagacity: "this discovery, indeed, is almost of that kind which I call Serendipity, a very expressive word."[94] He refers to the fairy tale *The Three Princes of Serendip*, "Serendip" an old name for Sri Lanka: "'The Three Princes of Serendip', the heroes of which

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[94] Walpole to Horace Mann, 28 January 1754, in *Correspondence*, 20: 407.

were always making discoveries, by accidents and sagacity, of things they were not in quest of."[95] *The Three Princes of Serendip* is a pseudo-oriental tale published in 1557 in Venice by Michele Tramezzino, and was allegedly translated from Persian to Italian to French to English. It begins with a preface told by a translator named Christoforo Armeno, an Armenian who claims to have translated the text from Persian. Yet there is no evidence that a Persian manuscript ever existed, and the name Armeno cannot be found in Armenian or Italian bibliographies. It is therefore quite probable that Walpole borrowed the idea of pseudo-translation from *Three Princes*.

The discovery of an ancient manuscript is significant to Walpole not just because it manifests a playful fictionality as previously discussed, but because such return to an imaginary past served as a vehicle to create something new. The second preface admits to the author's literary hoax in the first preface only to posit an even bolder statement regarding the treatise of novelistic writing:

> [I]t fits that he should ask pardon of his readers for having offered his work to them under the borrowed personage of a translator. As diffidence of his own abilities, and the novelty of the attempt, were his sole inducements to assume that disguise, he flatters himself he shall appear excusable. . . . It was an attempt to blend the two kinds of romance, the ancient and the modern. In the former all was imagination and improbability: in the latter, nature is always intended to be, and sometimes has been, copied with success.[96]

Walpole argues that the imaginary translator was a device to create "a new species of romance." He thus brings together the traditional form of romance with a "modern" twist that subscribes to the rules of probability, surprisingly resonating Watt's idea of "formal realism" in which Walpole is excluded from. Like Watt, Walpole attempts to describe ordinary manners of everyday life however extravagant the circumstances, and "to make [the characters] think, speak

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[95] Ibid., 20: 407-408.

[96] *Otranto*, 9.

and act, as it might be supposed mere men and women would do in extraordinary positions."

After all, the second preface asserts that though Otranto is "A Gothic Story," his "rule was

nature. . . . That great master of nature, Shakespeare, was the model [he] copied."[97]

Yet this treatise, like the first preface, was hardly taken seriously. According to James

Watt, even though the second preface purports its fiction to be of a higher literary purpose, both

of Walpole's prefaces were meant to confound and amuse his audience and serve as no more

than a source of absurd novelty written solely for the diversion of his leisured audience.[98] This

was a popular view echoed by contemporaries like Chatterton: "Had I the Gifts of Wealth and

Lux'ry shar'd/ Not poor and Mean— Walpole! Thou hadst not dared/ Thus to insult, But I shall

live and Stand/ By Rowley's side— when Thou art dead and damned."[99] One critic similarly

claims that Walpole's translation gambit was "not the courage of the enthusiast or reformer;

rather the timidity of a child who is half-ashamed of having given publicity to a wild dream."[100]

Yet readings that dismiss gothic literature based on Walpole's frivolity inadvertently assume that

literary merit is predicated on the gravity of authorial intention, not the text itself, and also

discount the meta-fictionality of Walpole's invented translation that bends the boundaries of the

English novel.

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[97] *Otranto*, 11.

[98] James Watt, 5.

[99] Chatterton, *The Complete Works of Thomas Chatterton*, 341.

[100] K. K. Mehrotra, *Horace Walpole and the English Novel: A Study of the influence of "The Castle of Otranto" 1764-1820* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1934), 10. Many critics have traditionally read gothic fiction as a cultural or psychological nightmare of repressed libido. However, recent readings of gothic literature move away from psychological readings to survey what kind of cultural work gothic imagination performs. For instance, see Carol Davison, *Anti-Semitism and British Gothic Literature* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) who reads the gothic as channeling historically specific phobias, or Gail Turley Houston, *From Dickens to Dracula: Gothic, Economics, and Victorian Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) that read gothic as complementing Victorian economics.

The framework of pseudo-translation in *Otranto* replicates its theme in several ways: like the first preface's search for the original manuscript, the novel is fascinated with rectifying the rule of the Father and restoring the rightful owner of the castle. Most significantly, it speculates on how to reinstate order when the truth is distorted by sham origins and history. If the framework displays a pseudo-origin, the novel itself is a myth about how to debunk and therefore correct such forgery. It details Manfred's failed attempt to legitimize his lordship at Otranto castle, which his ancestors had usurped based on a counterfeited will. Manfred, the illegitimate prince and tyrant of Otranto castle, is fixated on producing a proper heir by marrying his son Conrad to Isabella, a distant descendant of the legitimate ruler of the castle. When Conrad is crushed by a giant helmet on his wedding day, Manfred decides to marry his son's fiancé himself. Hints of incestuous desire mingled with the thirst for power drive Manfred to frenzy, while an unknown "stranger," Theodore, visits the castle and falls in love with Manfred's daughter, Matilda. Misconstruing Theodore as a sexual rival and suitor for Isabella, Manfred slays his own daughter, mistaking her for Isabella. Theodore by the end proves to be the rightful owner of Otranto, but it is only after numerous supernatural events including the advent of the giant helmet, sighing portrait, and a mysterious suit of armor that Manfred finally concedes his throne. *Otranto* is a novel about an object behaving like a subject, a tale in which the agency of things outweighs the rule of governance. It presents gothic as "what happens when things crowd out human history," while others point out that "the helmet 'knows' the plot in a way [the characters], and the readers, do not."[101]

I bring up the agency of things and supernatural events because Walpole utilizes them to correct and revise a wronged family history. That is, he rewrites history by inventing a past to

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[101] Sean R. Silver, "Visiting Strawberry Hill: Horace Walpole's Gothic Historiography," *Eighteenth Century Fiction* 21, no. 4 (2009): 545; and Clery, 77.

objects that, in turn, tell their own stories. It was precisely this kind of supernaturalism and works of wonder that Fielding cast off as non-English. Yet Walpole presents supernaturalism as a new mode of producing history that intersects with his political consciousness of England as a burgeoning nation state.[102] Walpole's supernaturalism pushes the readers to rethink the strategies of learning and writing history through fabrication and imitation when "things" impinge on reality. It questions the origin of origins, modeling a pre-history that modifies a chronicle written by an authoritative hand. In this sense, through textual and material "deceit," Walpole challenges the writing of history and the ways knowledge is produced and delivered.

It is this supernatural agency that grants order in *Otranto*. In the opening of *Otranto*, an "ancient prophecy" is presented which "was difficult to make any sense of"; "*That the castle and lordship of Otranto should pass from the present family, whenever the real owner should be grown too large to inhabit it.*"[103] Unable to decipher its meaning, Manfred hastens the marriage of his son and Isabella lest he may be divested of the castle's ownership. The giant helmet that crushes Conrad responds to Manfred's undertaking of the ancient prophecy; supernatural effect is orchestrated to produce a counter history to the "fake" one forged by Manfred's ancestors. Only by the very end of the novel do we find out that Manfred's insistence as the prince of

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[102] The search for rightful ownership and inheritance is one of the key features of gothic literature. For instance, in Clara Reeve's *The Old English Baron* (1777), Edmund struggles to reclaim the castle that had been usurped from his parents, while Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) is also about the orphaned Emily who must defend her body and estate from the villain Montoni. Traditionally, critics have read the gothic novel's obsession with genealogy and ascendancy as an anxiety posited by the rising bourgeoisie. David Punter, for example, argues that gothic as a genre emerged when "the bourgeoisie . . . began to try to understand the conditions and history of their own ascent." That is, gothic literature's trope of inheritance reflects the middle class' fear on the nature of ascendancy, ancestry, and transmission of property. Similarly, J. Hogle argues that early gothic fiction beckons back to the middle ages and the Renaissance in an attempt to overthrow outdated authority in favor of a rising middle-class ideology. Setting aside the debate on what exactly constitutes the anxiety of the middle class or whether a middle class even existed during this period, my focus lies rather in how gothic fiction challenges traditional historiography by telling its own story of ownership. David Punter, *Literature of Terror* (New York: Longman, 1996), 112.

[103] *Otranto*, 17.

Otranto was predicated on false textual evidence— a forged will made up two generations ago. After accidently murdering his daughter, the repentant Manfred finally discloses the dark family secret he has been holding onto: "Ricardo, my grandfather, was [Alfonso's] chamberlain— I would draw a veil over my ancestor's crimes—but it is in vain: Alfonso died by poison. A *fictitious will* declared Ricardo his heir. . . . [T]he saint appeared to him in a dream, and promised that Ricardo's posterity should reign in Otranto until the rightful owner should be grown too large to inhabit the castle."[104]

That is, Manfred's occupancy of the castle remained unchallenged until the appearance of the stranger, Theodore, and the supernatural effect he brings in. Theodore bridges two distant worlds— the claustrophobic Otranto castle and the outside— in order to rectify order of the castle. After Manfred's confession, Jerome, a priest from a neighboring convent, explains Theodore's legitimacy as the rightful descendent of Alfonso. Apparently, Alfonso had secretly wed during his journey for the Holy Land, leaving an undisclosed successor. As Jerome unravels the secret family history, he attempts to validate the story by providing written proof: "my Lord, I have an authentic writing" to which Manfred replies: "It needs not. . . . the horrors of these days, the vision we have but now seen, all corroborate thy evidence beyond a thousand parchments."[105] In other words, it is not the textual evidence of accurate documentation but the intervention of supernatural events that modifies a wronged history in Walpole's gothic world. The overly exaggerated features of supernatural power override false history. Things tell the truth in ways that textual history cannot. Walpole's gothic tale, then, introduces a new way of understanding human relations; he presents ways in which traditional historiography is challenged through fabrication and supernaturalism.

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[104] Ibid., 113-4 (emphasis mine).

[105] Ibid., 114.

As such, *Otranto* is not so much about underlining patriarchal lineage but rather

manifesting the process of reclaiming history that takes the posterity as scapegoats. Walpole,

speaking through the voice of the translator William Marshall, notes the consequences of

wronged history on the present: "It is natural for a translator to be prejudiced in favour of his

adopted work. . . . Yet I am not blind to my author's defects. I could wish he had grounded his

plan on a more useful moral than this; that *the sins of fathers are visited on their children to the*

third and fourth generation.[106]" When Manfred finally acknowledges Theodore as the rightful

owner, supernatural entities vanish from the scene:

> The moment Theodore appeared, the walls of the castle behind Manfred were thrown
> down with a might force, and the form of Alfonso, dilated to an immense magnitude,
> appeared in the centre of the ruins. Behold in Theodore, the true heir of Alfonso! Said the
> vision: and having pronounced these words, accompanied by a clap of thunder, it
> ascended solemnly toward heaven.[107]

If the present was pregnant with the gothic past, Walpole separates the two by ultimately

divorcing rational subjects from mystified objects. That is, he turns to gothic fiction to perform

disenchantment of material objects as a way to redeem history. Walpole's framework of pseudo-

translation shows a material history mediated by imagination. By fibbing that the novel is of a

true nature discovered as an old manuscript, *Otranto* blends fiction and reality to find an

alternative mode of thinking and writing about historical legacy. By insisting on its irrational

materiality, Walpole finds a "gothic" mode of talking about historical reality engaged in

translation, substituting Watt's "formal realism." As this gothic mode goes through cultural

transmission, translation not only makes cultural disparity transparent, it at the same time

questions values of English culture that insists on traditional historiography. Walpole's initial

playfulness in fabricating fake origins to his exotic tales—a curious quest to reinvent the past—

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[106] Ibid., 7.

[107] Ibid., 112-113.

mediates thought about origins, authenticity, and legitimacy without subscribing to the rules of probability. In this sense, the revived gothic taste is England's distant medieval history; Walpole's invoking of exotic foreignness is a mirror that reflects England's way of understanding its own history. The gothic past is a reality far and yet curiously close to eighteenth-century England, brought back to life through imaginary translation.

Hieroglyphic Tales: When East meets West

Because *Hieroglyphic Tales* was initially published for a very small audience of Walpole's acquaintances, and due to the extravagant nature of its tales, it received almost no critical attention to date.[108] Written during 1766-1772 and posthumously published in 1785, it was received with less enthusiasm and more public disapprobation. Madame du Deffand, one of the few who read the *Tales* before it was published, thought Walpole must have been "raving or delirious," a review that Walpole did not appreciate.[109] An ironic fact, since Walpole himself admitted to the extraordinary nature of *Hieroglyphic Tales*. In a letter to Reverend William Cole in 1779, he writes that there was "some strange things in my drawer, even wilder than the *Castle of Otranto* . . . but they were not written lately, nor in the gout, nor, whatever they may seem, written when I was out of my sense."[110] Walpole's pseudo-Oriental fantasy, like *Otranto*, is mediated through a fictional translator that distances the tale in terms of locality and temporality. Instead of a lost manuscript, the translator refers to an oral tradition that has survived through the years: "Of these few facts we could have the most authentic attestations of several clergymen,

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[108] It wasn't until the Yale edition of 1937 that *Hieroglyphic Tales* was catalogued as Walpole's oeuvre, and Ros Ballster had recently rediscovered the tale in her edition of oriental tales, *Fables of the East*. One of the very few articles on *Hieroglyphic Tales* includes Paul Nash, "'Mi Li' Revisited: Horace Walpole and the Idea of China," *Journal for Eighteenth-century Studies* 32, no. 2 (2009): 215-34.

[109] Walpole's correspondent for fifteen years, Madame du Deffand writes in 1772 that the tales seemed to her "des délires ou des rêves." Walpole to Madame du Deffand, *Correspondence*, 5: 215.

[110] Walpole to Reverend William Cole, *Correspondence* 2:141.

who remember to have heard them repeated by old men long before they, the said clergymen, were born."[111] On the tale's author, the translator conjectures that "[w]e might ascribe them with great probability to Kemanrlegorpikos, son of Quat; but besides that we are not certain that any such person ever existed, it is not clear that he ever wrote any thing but a book of cookery, and that in heroic verse. This is the nearest we can come to any certainty with regard to the author."[112]

If *Otranto*, despite its reliance on supernaturalism and extranationality, asserts that it was written in the style of Shakespeare, Walpole similarly declares that *Hieroglyphic Tales* was modeled after, if not the model for, Homer:

> [T]here are so many passages in them exactly resembling Homer, that any man living would conclude they were imitated from that great poet, if it was not certain that Homer borrowed from them, which I shall prove two ways: first, by giving Homer's parallel passages at the bottom of the page; and secondly, by *translating* Homer himself into prose, which shall make him so unlike himself, that nobody will think he could be an original writer: and when he is become totally lifeless and insipid, it will be impossible but these Tales should be preferred to the Iliad; especially as I design to put them into a kind of style that shall be neither verse nor prose.[113]

By referencing Shakespeare and Homer, Walpole familiarizes these exotic tales as recognizable form for the English audience. At the same time, he also attempts to "translate" Homer into prose so that he will appear "unlike himself." Translation, then, serves as a vehicle to introduce familiarity and alienation. This unnamed translator, like Simmel's stranger, makes the familiar strange and the strange familiar, unsettling the dualism between cultural disparities. So when the "translator" edits these odd oriental tales into English, he transcends specific locality or

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[111] Walpole, *Hieroglyphic Tales,* 10.

[112] Ibid., 11.

[113] Ibid., 12 (emphasis mine).

temporality. Instead, he strives for a "universal citizenship," as he "design[s] this present for all nations."[114]

Hieroglyphic Tales is consisted of six short pseudo-oriental tales that satirize both oriental tales and Eurocentric desires about the Orient. Yet it differs from other pseudo-oriental tales in that it deals not just with Oriental fantasy but with Europe's participation in orientalism, describing the contact between two civilizations. The first tale, "A New Arabian Night's Entertainment," is a response to Galland's more famous version. A Dutch princess plays the role of Scheherazade, who is a captured prisoner in the kingdom of Cucurucu where she must tell stories to the emperor, the giant, to save her life. She decides to recount the European genealogy: "short account of the troubles that have agitated Europe for these last two years, on the doctrines of grace, free will, predestination, reprobation, justification, &c. you will be more entertained, and will believe less, than if I told your majesty a long story of fairies and goblins."[115] Yet her account of European history was so tedious that the emperor ends up falling asleep. She then suffocates the sleeping emperor, is declared empress, and takes a new husband every night.

The second, "The King and his Three Daughters" is a response to the cult of chinoiserie, or England's obsession with imported Chinese commodity. It is about a three-legged Egyptian prince who visits England in search of a bride, prompting a craze in Egyptian clothing and fashion. "The Dice Box: A Fairy Tale" is a translation within a translation, as it reads: "Translated from the French Translation of the Countess DAUNOIS, for the Entertainment of

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[114] Ibid., 7.

[115] Ibid., 22.

Miss CAROLINE CAMPBELL, Eldest daughter of lord William Campbell."[116] Walpole shared

friendship with Caroline Campbell (1764-89) and her father Lord William Campbell (1731-

1778), governor of South Carolina. The tale was written as a joke for young Caroline, as attested

in a letter by Lady Mary Coke in 1771: "[Walpole] wrote a ridiculous fairy tale which he sent to

Mr Conway, as he said to divert Caroline, but in it he introduced the Queen of Sheba &

Solomon, & said that the Queen of Sheba went every October to visit Solomon, 'tho She did not

understand Hebrew."[117] The fairy tale, instead of an actual translation, is Walpole's original

invention featuring Pissimissi, a daughter of a Damascus merchant, off on an adventure to fulfill

the prophecy that she will become one of Solomon's concubines. "The Peach in Brandy: A

Milesian Tale" is another absurd tale about Queen Grata of the kingdom of Kilkenny whose

"heart was Irish." The tale ends abruptly with a story-within-a-story in which an Archbishop

accidentally swallows a picked fetus, mistaking it for a peach in brandy. Finally, "A True Love

Story" is about a Milanese hero and a young African slave called Azora whom we learn in the

end are pet dogs.

Walpole's tales at first glance seem wild and fantastic, defying all rules of realism and

novelistic discourse. It shows digression, deviation, and fragmentation of the mind all muddled

up in an odd oriental illusion. As ludicrous as these accounts may appear, Walpole's tales

nonetheless suggest a new way of producing, reading, and thinking about transcultural narrative

traffic. The "translator" brings the ancient and the modern, the East and the West, and imaginary

and the real not as antithesis but as a site of interaction that play off of each other. Many of the

stories hardly make any sense, which is precisely what Walpole accounts for: it resists the

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[116] Gillian Avery reads the story as a nursery tale and part of juvenile literature, since it was dedicated to Caroline Campbell who was probably about eight years old at the time. See Gillian Avery, "Written for Children: Two Eighteenth-Century English Fairy Tales," *Marvels & Tales* 16, no. 2 (2002): 143-155.

[117] Lady Mary Coke, 4 July 1771, in *Horace Walpole: The Critical Heritage*, 152.

conventions of novelistic plot, defiantly putting disorder, digression, and oriental fantasy to work as reflections of England's place in the world.

Walpole's fifth tale, "Mi Li: A Chinese Fairy Tale," is perhaps the most coherent narrative that illustrates his concern with British ascendency. Mi Li, prince of China, learns from his fairy godmother that he is to marry a princess whose name was the same as her father's dominions, although the name is not specified. Upon learning that there is a Mr. Bob Oliver who gave his daughter the same name, miss Bob Oliver, Mi Li arrives in Dublin only to learn that she is already married. He then receives another oracle in a dream in which "he would find his destined spouse, whose father had lost the dominions which never had been his dominions, in a place where there was a bridge over no water, a tomb where nobody ever was buried nor ever would be buried . . . and a more beautiful menagerie of Chinese pheasants than any in his father's extensive gardens.[118] He then moves onto England and enters a garden resembling the description of the dream. Following the scene, he finally encounters a company with a young damsel and cries out: "Who she? Who she?" in broken English, to which the party replies, "Why, she is miss Caroline Campbell, daughter of lord William Campbell, the late governor of Carolina." As the oracle is achieved, the tale concludes: "And so she became princess of China."[119]

Walpole's satirizes chinoiserie and pseudo-oriental fantasy in this tale, a misplaced projection of the British Empire. For instance, the myth of fortune telling is performed through tea-cup reading, a highly charged and desired mercantile commodity from the East: tea and china. The use of such clichéd objects reflects the complexities of Britain's commercial and imperial impulse towards China as well as its relationship with American and British taxation over

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[118] Walpole, *Hieroglyphic Tales*, 62.

[119] Ibid., 68.

imported products like tea.[120] At the same time, tea-cup fortune telling seems a rather arbitrary

supernatural supplement that seems divorced from reality. This supernatural agency fulfills a

peculiar fantasy to rewrite the genealogy of Chinese royalty so that such royalty actually

originates in England: it is a story of how an English maid becomes a consort to a Chinese prince

because her father governed the American colonies. Fiction and reality become muddled once

again, as Caroline's father Lord Campbell devoted his life for the British Empire: he had joined

the Royal Navy in 1752 and was appointed governor of Nova Scotia and South Carolina. By

evoking accounts of British imperialism before and after the American Revolution, "Mi Li"

seems historically conscious of England's declining status as a ruling empire.

On the other hand, the tale is romantically fantastic with no ethnographical accuracy—

the oracle is told by Mi Li's fairy godmother, Hih, and achieved ultimately through a

prophesized dream. The Chinese customs described by Walpole is inaccurate, because they are

imaginary. For instance, after the initial oracle told by the godmother, the narrative explains that

> As the Chinese have not the blessing (for aught I know) of having family surnames as we
> have, and as what would be their christian-names, if they were so happy as to be
> christians, are quite different for men and women, the Chinese, who think that must be a
> rule all over the world because it is theirs, decided that there could not exist upon the
> square face of the earth a woman whose name was the same as her father's.[121]

This false explanation is a mere decoy for the prince to search his bride outside of China, as the

Chinese in fact do carry family surnames. Yet accurate ethnography is hardly necessary, because

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[120] To read more about chinoiserie and Britain's relationship with China in the eighteenth century, see
Chi-ming Yang, *Performing China: Virtue, Commerce, and Orientalism in Eighteenth-Century England,
1660-1760* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2011); Gerald MacLean, *Looking East: English Writing and
the Ottoman Empire before 1800* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Eugenia Zuroski Jenkins, *A
Taste for China: English Subjectivity and the prehistory of Orientalism* (New York: Oxford UP, 2013);
David Porter, *The Chinese taste in eighteenth-century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2010). On
Walpole's attitude towards chinoiserie, see David Porter's "From Chinese to Goth: Walpole and the
Gothic Repudiation of Chinoiserie" *Eighteenth-Century Life* 23, no. 1 (1999): 46-58. Porter argues that
Walpole chose Gothic over Oriental taste, which functioned as a fountainhead to mainstream culture.

[121] Walpole, *Hieroglyphic Tales*, 59-60.

the tale is not really about China but about chinoiserie that stages the East as mystified and illogical. Moreover, when the tale laughs at the fact that the Chinese "think [their customs] must be a rule all over the world because it is theirs," it equally dismisses the English audience's expectation of what is and is not considered Chinese. The extravagant origins of the tale, estimated by the translator to be more than 6,000 years old, and the fake footnotes in "Mi Li" similarly serve as tongue-in-cheek gestures that seem overtly trying that they underline the tale's faux status rather than authenticity. On introducing Ms Bob Oliver, the footnote farcically reads: "There really was such a person" without any further explanation.

Curiously, a review of *Hieroglyphic Tales* in the *Monthly Review* in 1798 mentions nothing about the manifest orientalism in the *Tales*. Instead, it shakes its head at Walpole's "great many *odd fancies*" and reads the *Tales* as an exclusive satire on English politics.[122] According to the reviewer, "The King and his Three Daughters" is a "ridicule on the marriage of Princess Mary with the Prince of Orange— on Princess Anne—and on the Revolution of 1688," "The Dice-Box: A Fairy Tale" a ridicule on the Bible. "The Peach in Brandy: A Milesian Tale" is a satire on the King's first speech at parliament in which "his majesty said that 'his heart was English,'" as well as a buffoon on other political figures like Lord Bute. Finally, "Mi Li: A Chinese Fairy Tale" is a satire on "The late King, the Prince of Wales, and his consort (Brunswickers)."[123] In other words, the review reflects the idea that orientalized projection is translated to uncover what is at stake culturally and politically in England. When the East meets West, this reviewer sees the East not worth mentioning, rendering it a vehicle to talk about English concerns only.

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[122] *The Monthly Review*, October 1798, in *Horace Walpole: The Critical Heritage*, 154-5.

[123] Ibid.

The fact of the matter is, Walpole's imagined interaction between the Orient and England in turn romanticizes England, transforming England into a fairyland in which oriental fantasies are performed. As demonstrated in "Mi Li," *Tales* not only tests the rules of probability, but its narrative technique of pseudo-translation also reflects Walpole's concern with genealogy and historiography of both China and England. By mixing oriental fantasy and English politics, Walpole erases the distinction between history and romance. As Walpole writes in his postscript to *Tales*:

> It would scarcely be credited, were it not evident from the Bibliotheque des Romans, which contains the fictitious adventures that have been written in all ages and all countries, that there should have been so little fancy, so little variety, and so little novelty, in writings in which the imagination is fettered by no rules, and by no obligation of speaking truth. There is infinitely more invention in history, which has no merit if devoid of truth, than in romances and novelty which pretend to none.[124]

Ultimately, Walpole's pseudo-translations create a specific fictionality that suggests the boundary between oriental fantasy and English politics to be discursive and interchangeable. The invention of an imaginary textual past like this China from 6,000 years ago refines the borders between lie and truth.

In this sense, Walpole's pseudo-translation performs a critical cultural work that enables an imaginary interaction between English and non-English. The complex relationship of Walpole's authorship, his response to Chatterton, and the invention of the first gothic novel told by a fake English translator negotiates cultural difference by defining them in terms of sameness; the Orient they imagine is all imaginary, the product of English fantasy, not research or history. Walpole's framework suggests that gothic and pseudo-oriental fictions work from the outside into the core of English consciousness, pseudo-translation serving as an imagination of a

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[124] Walpole, *Hieroglyphic Tales*, 79.

cosmopolitan origin that can easily be translated with a winking gesture that should be taken with a grain of salt.

The Myth of the Lost Manuscript: Authors of Novels as Translators

The invention of a fake foreign past was replicated as a convention so well integrated into the practice of novel writing that by the mid-eighteenth century, English authors were using the trope of translation or the myth of the lost manuscript to actively blend romance and history. I now turn to Reeve and Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832) who both pointed to Walpole's *Otranto* as inspiring their historical novels. By borrowing the framework of pseudo-translation and the myth of the lost manuscript, they transform their role from authors to translators and transcribers. Their concern with origins is reflected in the theme of ascendency, legitimacy, and historiography, featuring protagonists in search of true noble origins. Reeve's *The Old English Baron* (1778) and Scott's *Waverly* (1814) domesticate Walpole's gothic and oriental imagination by translating extranational supernaturalism onto British landscapes.

In the preface to the novels' second edition, Reeve points to Walpole for fathering her gothic inspiration as a translated medieval English text: "This Story is the literary offspring of the Castle of Otranto, written with the same plan, with a design to unite the most attractive and interesting circumstances of the ancient Romance and modern Novel."[125] She attempts to rewrite *Otranto* by polishing it to fit what she thought *should* be the English audience's taste, changing the scenery to England and eliminating all works of supernaturalism. *The Old English Baron*, initially published as *The Champion of Virtue* (1777), echoes Walpole in that it claims to found a new genre of prose fiction. Reeve presents a similar preface to Walpole in which a fictional editor claims to have translated an Old English manuscript for the modern audience, as if the strangeness of even this ancient English text is so archaic that it needs the buffer of translation:

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[125] Clara Reeve, preface to *The Old English Baron* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 2.

"During these reflections, it occurred to my remembrance, that a certain friend of mine was in possession of a manuscript in the old English language . . . and if it were modernized, might afford entertainment to those who delight in stories of this kind. Accordingly (with my friend's permission) I transcribed, or rather translated a few sheets of it."[126]

To "modernize," for Reeve, was to fabricate a fake and ancient English origin for the tale instead of turning East. Set in England in 1430, Reeve's Gothic tale embraces Catholicism as part of England's ancestral familiarity. Putting Englishness in an archaic context, it imagines a textual, cultural, and historical basis permissible within the boundaries of the English novel that deals with the common, everyday life. Reeve therefore responds to *Otranto* by limiting the effects of supernatural agency while still employing the gothic themes of usurpation and legitimacy. In *The Old English Baron*, Sir Philip Harclay returns to England to discover his childhood friend Arthur, Lord Lovel, dead. Lord Lovel's brother, Walter Lovel, had murdered his brother and his wife to usurp his estate, although it is later revealed that his wife had escaped in time to secretly give birth to a son, Edmund. After a series of combats and revelations, Edmund, who grew up in a peasant's home, learns that he is the lawful owner of the castle of Lovel and avenges his parents. Walter Lovel is banished from England, but fabricates his past and ends up marrying a Greek officer's daughter, ironically reverberating the novel's theme of reinventing oneself by modifying past history. Just as supernatural agency is banished from the novel, the evil Walter's deportation cleanses England's sinful past to reorganize the legitimate son's ownership. The novel's "translator" plays a pivotal role, as the claim to authenticity turns fancy into reality, and thus "translates" gothic fiction to interact with English history.

Walpole found this revisionist work in bad taste, and complained that Reeve's novel was "a professed imitation of mine, only stripped of the marvelous, and so entirely stripped, except in

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[126] Ibid., 139.

one awkward attempt at a ghost or two, that it is the most insipid dull thing you ever saw."[127]

Scott later agreed with Walpole's objection, questioning Reeve's logic in purporting probability over supernaturalism: "It may be said, and it seems to be Miss Reeve's argument, that there is a verge of probability, which even the most violent figment must not transgress; but we reply by the cross question, that if we are once to subject our preternatural agents to the limits of human reason, where are we to stop?"[128] According to Scott, the appearance of ghosts or apparitions does not contradict reality so long as they portray manners according to their supernatural character. Reeve lacks imagination and passion, Scott says, and "her apparition is an ordinary fiction."[129]

For Reeve, "ordinary" was a code for the English novel's attempted realism. In fact, she set up a dichotomy of literary hierarchy by effectively divorcing the novel from romance. In *The Progress of Romance, through Times, Countries, and Manners; with Remarks on the Good and Bad Effects of It, on Them Respectively* (1785), Reeve accounts for the antiquity of romance and distinguishes them from realist novels: "As a country became civilized, their narratives were methodized, and moderated to probability. From the prose recitals sprung History,—from the war-songs Romance and Epic poetry."[130] Spoken through the character of Euphrasia, Reeve contends that romance treats fabulous persons and things that are "of universal growth, and not confined to any particular period or countries" whereas the novel "is a picture of real life and

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[127] Walpole to William Cole, *Correspondence*, 40: 379.

[128] James Ballantyne, *Ballantyne's Novelist's Library* (London: 1821), 5: lxxxii-lxxxiii. Scott wrote the prefatory memoirs on selected authors including Walpole and Reeve as well as other novel writers like Sterne, Fielding, Smollet, Goldsmith, Johnson, and Radcliffe.

[129] Ibid., lxxxiii.

[130] Reeve, *The Progress of Romance*, 14.

manners, and of the times in which it is written."[131] Novel writing is a symptom of

modernization and civilization because "the word Novel in all languages signifies something

new."[132]

Views that see the novel as growing out of romance served as a fountainhead for the

Whiggish novel theories that believe in the novel's progress towards modernity. According to J.

Paul Hunter, Reeve's definition of the novel allowed us to assume a parent-child relationship

with romance; romance grew up to become the novel. Scott later refined Reeve's theory,

succinctly pointing out that "in its first appearance, the novel was the legitimate child of the

romance."[133] Scott's proposition was a way to introduce Jane Austen's *Emma* (1815) as the

prime example of domestic realism that demonstrates "art copying from nature as she really

exists in the common walks of life."[134] The admiration for Austen as fostering domestic realism

has been challenged in recent decades, most recently by Moretti or Homer Brown who

acknowledge that the kind of domestic realism found in Austen was in fact an exception to the

formal discourse about early fiction. Brown points out the flaw of such grand narrative, arguing

that genealogical lines of literature are always imagined retrospectively. He contends that the

history of the novel and the history of the institutionalization of the novel is not the same thing.

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[131] Ibid., 111.

[132] Ibid.,110.

[133] Sir Walter Scott, "Review of Emma by Jane Austen," in *On Novelists and Fiction*, ed. Ioan Williams (New York: Barnes and Nobles, 1968), 227.

[134] Ibid., 227

By rewriting the history of institution, critics and novelist all along have been fulfilling an anti-family romance in which the child legitimates the father, not vice versa.[135]

Pseudo-translation and the interjection of an imaginary translator, whether as an author or a fictitious character, complicate the widely accepted father/son genealogy of the novel and romance. When Cervantes claimed that he was the "step-father of *Don Quixote,*" or when Walpole and Reeve insists that their fiction was born elsewhere and merely adopted, it signals that the novel invents sophisticated lies about its own origin. If the art of storytelling and novel-ness render the author as mere translator/transcriber, the novel can only be a "step-father" to romance, therefore failing to establish legitimacy. Pseudo-translation similarly tells stories about their own bastard-status; they are not bred out of the author, they are merely adopted. Significantly, bastardization is a necessary process of elimination that constructs election; the rewriting of the past to modify one's origin shapes the novel into a fictionalized literary production by turning to the process of writing.

It is then of significance that Scott's *Waverly*, published in 1814 and considered to establish a new genre called the "historical romance," presents an interesting genealogy that backtracks and parodies none other than Walpole's *Otranto*. He turns himself as a translator/transcriber by tracing the novel's origin to an "old manuscript." 15 years after its initial

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[135] Homer Brown, *Institutions of the English Novel from Defoe to Scott* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 9. Freud's "family romance" may also help us reconsider the role of the imaginary translator that interrupts the relationship between romance and novel as child/parent. According to Freud, it is quite natural for children to fantasize about substitute parents of higher social standing; they paint out a fantasy that's both neurotic and erotic, born out of sexual rivalry with their parents. Unlike maternal origin, paternal status is always questionable and therefore unstable. So the child places his/her mother in a secret affair in order to rewrite paternal authority; imagining a different father offers new possibilities for the child. This formula is a clichéd one found in romance and gothic fiction in which the seemingly humble hero or heroine recognizes their affiliation to a higher status. See Sigmund Freud, "Family Romance," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1964), 9: 235-41.

publication, Scott writes a long and apologetic second preface unraveling the truth about the novel's textual origin, putting an end to the controversy on "the paternity" of his novel.[136] Initially published anonymously, he had pretended that the story belonged to nobody and had kept silence on his authorship. On the novel's conception, Scott accounts that "I had nourished the ambitious desire of composing a tale of chivalry, which was to be in the style of the Castle of Otranto, with plenty of Border characters, and supernatural incident."[137] The reference to Walpole was missing in the 1814 introduction, in which the original preface specifically claims that the readers should not expect to read something like Ann Radcliffe's *Udolpho*. Instead, it declared that *Waverly* is about "description of men than manners" that is "neither a romance of chivalry, nor a tale of modern manners."[138]

   Waverley presents a romantic English soldier, Edward Waverley, whose curiosity to learn more of Scotland leads him to an involvement in the Jacobite Uprising of 1745. Brought up reading poetry and romance, Waverley's daydreams are awakened through a series of political trials: "the romance of his life was ended, and its real history had now commenced."[139] Scott synthesizes Britain's historical subject matter with supernatural mystery and romantic intrigue in an attempt to establish, or rather to refine, what Walpole pioneered as the new modern romance. This "historical romance" became a popular mode of fiction writing, granting the novel a new authority and prestige. By making the novel respectable, it also established the English novel as "national" literature. So why would Scott refer back to *Otranto* after 15 years when Walpole's fame, as well as the cultural validity of gothic literature, had diminished?

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[136] Sir Walter Scott, *Waverly* (London: Penguin Classics, 1972), 532.

[137] Ibid., 522.

[138] Ibid., 35.

[139] Ibid., 415.

As described in the first preface, Scott was conscious of what literary legacy *Waverley* would bequeath and attempted to found a new genre of prose fiction distinguished from previous romance. In an attempt to synthesize romance and history, Scott tellingly employs the rhetoric of the lost manuscript to confirm the author's status as cultural mediator. After apologizing for not admitting his authorship of *Waverley*, Scott recalls the accidental discovery of an old manuscript that prompted the novel's genesis. Only this time, the ancient manuscript is not from Italy or the Orient, but from his own past. As the story goes, after fidgeting with his initial draft on and off for years, Scott had forgotten about the manuscript entirely until one day "[he] happened to want some fishing-tackle for the use of a guest, when it occurred to [him] to search the old writing-desk already mentioned, in which [he] used to keep articles of that nature. [He] got access to it with some difficulty, and in looking for lines and flies the long-lost manuscript presented itself."[140]

Scott's rhetoric suggests that the "long-lost manuscript," which was neither archaic nor foreign, had a life of its own. It then goes through a process very similar to pseudo-translation. He explains that "the original manuscript, or, as it is technically called, copy, was transcribed under Mr Ballantyne's eye by confidential persons" so that he could enjoy the pleasure of removing himself as the author of the novel.[141] Scott as original author disappears from the forefront, allowing a third-party transcriber to produce his work in lieu of himself. His initial purpose, he claims, was due to an anxiety that the novel might be considered "an experiment on the public taste which might very probably fail." Yet even after the novel was met with popularity and critical acclaim, he chose to remain anonymous to "retreat from the stage at

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[140] Ibid., 525.

[141] Ibid., 526.

pleasure," posing as a spectator to his own work.[142] In this way, Scott turns his familiar

manuscript into an unfamiliar and distant text transcribed by a third hand.

Tellingly, he admits that he was "guilty of affectation" that compromised the truth about

his novel's origin.[143] Put another way, he participates in a quasi-literary forgery in which he

unsettles his own authorship. Of course, long before Scott wrote the apologetic second preface in

1829, many suspected Scot's "paternity" to the novel. For instance, Jane Austen writes to her

niece Anna in September 1814 that "Walter Scott has no business to write novels, especially

good ones. It is not fair. He has fame and profit enough as a poet, and should not be taking the

bread out of the mouths of other people. I do not like him, and do not mean to like '*Waverley*' if

I can help it, but fear I must."[144] Besides, foreign booksellers published the novel in his name,

and therefore Scott's right to the novel was an open secret that the public was willing to look

away from. Scott's "serendipitous" encounter with his own manuscript turns him into a cultural

translator as well: his historical novel piqued a national interest in the past, a remote age of

manners and customs that reflects the political concerns of England. Scott's turn to the past

created a romantic national identity for Scotland and, to that extent, for the entire British Union.

For this reason, critics like Terry Eagleton contend that *Waverely* brought together Scott's value

of liberty, progress, and imperial order that set the meaning of Britishness.[145] If so, Scott's

revision of *Otranto* prompted his readers to imagine an ideal and stable political identity that set

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[142] Ibid., 527.

[143] Ibid., 528.

[144] Jane Austen to Anna, 28 September 1814, in *Jane Austen's Letters: To Her Sister Cassandra and Others*, ed. R. W. Chapman (London: Oxford University Press, 1979), 404.

[145] See "Walter Scott and Jane Austen" in Terry Eagleton, *The English Novel* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 94-122.

up the boundary of the British nation. It allows for a romanticized yet enlightened Scottish identity, rendering it a symbol for Britain's post-union that is both ancient and new.

That Scott imitates the framework of Walpole's gothic romance as a vehicle to modernize the past suggests that the early novel's framework of pseudo-genealogy by an imaginary translator confirms the novel's fictionality in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. The English novel, then, was conceived by means of pseudo-translation. English novels pretended to be translations from other exotic languages in order to seem central— those stories only made sense and found audiences when they became English, because England was the center of the world as implied by the act of translation. The fictional translator navigates past antiquity and modern progressivism, crossing boundaries of culture, temporality, and imagination. The invention of counterfeit manuscripts signals an unstable origin that needs to be renegotiated, rebuked, and ultimately rectified through an imaginary translator. The action of looking back (i.e. England's own past history) and looking out (i.e. outside of England) through the eyes of the translator invents a national ideology that finds its most prominent expression through fiction— the English novel.

Chapter 2. Translating the Orient:

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's *Turkish Letters* and Elizabeth Marsh's *The Female Captive*

This chapter turns to actual historiography and letters written by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689-1762) and Elizabeth Marsh (1735-1785) who use translation as a self-fashioning tool to perform Englishness in the Orient. In the Latin sense of "translatio" that means "move across," these women move across national border and are put under trials that test their female modesty. I will argue that their travel serves as a site of contact, transmission, and translation that helps the British readers imagine a national and cosmopolitan community in which sexual virtue serves as a universal token of Englishness. Travel allows for readers to envision a world strikingly different from their own which in turn demarcates boundaries of their cultural limitations. Montagu and Marsh traveled to Turkey and Morocco respectively at a time when female traveling was hardly permitted. Montagu accompanied her husband, the English ambassador Edward Wortley Montagu, on a diplomatic mission to Turkey between 1716-1718. Upon her return, she wrote *Letters of the Right Honourable Lady Mary Wortley Montagu: Written, during her Travels in Europe, Asia, and Africa, To Persons of Distinction, Men of Letters, &c. in different Parts of Europe. Which Contain, Among other Curious Relations, Accounts of Policy and Manners of the Turks; Drawn from Sources that have been inaccessible to Other Travellers* that was met with great enthusiasm, going through twenty-three editions between 1763 and 1800. Marsh, on the other hand, was the daughter of a ship carpenter from Portsmouth who was taken captive on her way back to Britain from Jamaica. Fourteen years after

her abduction, she wrote *The Female Captive: A Narrative of Facts, which happened in Barbary in the Year 1756* (1769). Despite the different circumstances of their travel, their writings accomplish the same goal: that of translating their Oriental experience to a sentimental narrative.

Particularly, it is through their bodies that they "translate" their moral virtue as signs of Englishness. Documents generated by these women travelers put the female body at the "contact zone" of narrative and cultural exchange.[146] Specifically, their bodily encounter in exotic spaces shows how femininity and nationality are reconfigured when the English presence is stripped away and caught between intercultures; these women must navigate a myriad of linguistic, cultural, religious, and sexual trials by "translating" their sexual virtue and, with that, their Englishness, into something tangible. Translation occurs in a linguistic, metaphoric, and cultural sense. These women rely on a translator to navigate the Oriental world, but also use their body as part of a sentimental language that masquerades as universal. They perform a double masquerade during this process: they translate their English womanhood to signs of nationhood for their Oriental audience, while also translating their travel experience into a seduction plot as they write to their English readers back home. Thus, travel as translation creates new meaning and relations for both cultures.

If early romance or amatory fiction confined the women's sphere to the English household, Montagu and Marsh violate this boundary by crossing borders and entering forbidden

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[146] Mary Louise Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone," *Profession* 91 (1991): 33-40. Mary Louis Pratt defines the term "contact zone" as "social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today." According to Pratt, European Romanticism as symptom of modernization originated not in Europe but "in the contact zones of America, North Africa, and the South Seas." This term is extremely useful in modifying the English novel's origin not as endocultural but transnational and transcultural. I expand the scope of this term to indicate how writing travel narratives about the "contact zone" strengthens national identity, integrated as part of mid eighteenth-century imagination and public consciousness that celebrate cosmopolitanism and nationalism at the same time.

territory: the harem— the culmination of oriental sexuality, luxury, and violence where only women were allowed access.[147] By participating in a metropolitan dialogue of cultural hybridity and empire, their travel letters try to universalize, or rather assume as universalizing, the English women's propriety as the only translatable and viable means of achieving imperial subjectivity. In fact, these women reinstate their Englishness precisely by violating cultural boundaries and testifying to their survival through two bodies: one, their corporeal body, and their letter writing as a body of text. Textuality and sexuality become intertwined when linguistic translation fails in their travelogues. Their female bodies mediate an Englishness that meets the test of cultural assimilation, or the fear of "going native."[148] Always dependent on an interpreter, their linguistic authority is often compromised while their bodies emanate sexual virtue that requires no literal translation. Montagu famously refuses to present her naked body at the Turkish bath, while Marsh in essence becomes Pamela in the Orient, using the art of deceit and masquerade to navigate her way out of the harem. Specifically, Marsh becomes an impostor of her own culture when she poses as a married woman to escape the sultan's invitation to become his mistress.

Montagu and Marsh's travelogues thus function as cultural translation that transfers sympathy, above all else, among disparate communities. They reflect the way women were

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[147] The "harem" was a sacred space within Islamic household where general access from the public, especially men, was forbidden. Leslie Pierce states that the harem was a "term of respect, redolent of religious purity and honor and evocative of the requisite obeisance." It was utterly separated and segregated from the public space, and the Sultan's harem symbolized Islamic degeneracy and sexual licentiousness. Leslie Peirce, The *Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 5. For more reading on the harem, see Malek Alloula, *The Colonial Harem*, trans. Myrna Godzich and Wlad Godzich (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986) and Mary Ann Fay, *Unveiling the Harem : Elite Women and the Paradox of Seclusion in Eighteenth-century Cairo* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2012).

[148] I use this idiomatic expression to refer to cultural assimilation that poses a threat to the original culture. One of the most popular signs of "primitive" culture was the status of being naked as often found in descriptions of the "primitive man" in eighteenth-century philosophical treatises. For example, Jean Jacques Rousseau notes in "A Dissertation On the Origin and Foundation of The Inequality of Mankind and is it Authorised by Natural Law?" (1754) that the man of natural state is "naked and unarmed."

supposed to behave according to eighteenth-century decorum, but also critique those cultural preconceptions by posing as strangers to their own culture. By investigating the translability and masquerading qualities of travel narrative, this chapter attempts to demonstrate how women travelers helped the English readers envision a nation of sentimental readers that informed the rise of the English novel. Travel writing as translation brings the "contact zone" to the metropole in which English and Oriental culture clash. Travel writing transcends geographical or ethnographical constraints of the contact zone by shaping it as psychological and social space expressed through the body as sympathetic agent. Put another way, travel writing transforms England into a transnational "contact zone"— it is not just the travelers who experience the way of the natives in exotic places, but also the English readers who envision themselves as female subjects by imagining their own encounter with the Orient. Though Montagu and Marsh explicitly export English femininity as an index of modern civilization, that Englishness depends on the very exoticness that they supposedly oppose as a frame of reference. If the foundation of national ideology or the modern individual is performed over "new domestic women," as Nancy Armstrong agues, this chapter further suggests that this performance relies on a transnational crossing as translational events.[149] By making the English female body a desirable one coveted by oriental gaze, Montagu and Marsh employ their body as translatable text to inscribe signs of Englishness.

Travel Writing as Cultural Translation

To understand how Montagu and Marsh's travel letters can be read as translations, a reexamination of the relationship between culture, travel, and translation is in order. Travel writing as a genre had been neglected by literary critics up until the 1970-80s, when an increased

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[149] Armstrong reads conduct books and domestic novels to explain why women's virtue and desire became a cultural and national obsession in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. See Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction.*

interest in cultural studies brought forth new discussions on travel writing and cultural migration. For instance, critics like J. Clifford discuss the concept of culture *as* travel. He asks, "[H]ow is a culture a site of travel for others? . . . To what extent is one group's core another's periphery?"[150] According to Clifford, culture can be defined as the recipient of the dynamic quality of travel and translation. He uses travel as a "translation term" defined as "a word of apparently general application used for comparison in a strategic and contingent way." [151] More recently, critics such as Homi Bhabha, Susan Bassnett, André Lefvere, and Michael Cronin have also highlighted translation as a key component of travel writing that mediates ethnographical thinking.[152] For instance, Lefevere comes up with the concept of "rewriting" in which the traveler writes up "any cultural product that projects a 'slanted image' of the original" that "functioned as reality for generations of professional and non-professional readers alike."[153] By "slanted," he suggests that travelers as rewriters manipulate, color, and pre-form one meaning in comparison to another set of culture. Translation operates as active mechanisms for this "slanted" rewriting. In this sense, translation "invents" the original, just as Montagu and Marsh's anecdotes invent the Orient in a particular way that champions their female body as cosmopolitan currency.

Maria Tymoczko and Edwin Gentzler similarly argue that translation is not a text but an act, since translation looks beyond itself in order to justify its existence as textual practice: "Translation thus is not simply an act of faithful reproduction but, rather, a deliberate and

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[150] James Clifford, *Routes : Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997), 25.

[151] Ibid., 39.

[152] See Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994); Bassnett, *Translation Studies*; André Lefevere, *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame* (London: Routledge, 1992); Michael Cronin, *Across the Lines: Travel, Language, and Translation* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2000).

[153] Lefevere, 7-8.

conscious act of selection, assemblage, structuration, and fabrication — and even, in some cases, of falsification, refusal of information, counterfeiting."[154] The manipulating features of translation pointed out by Lefvere, Tymoczko, and Gentzler warrant that because travelers translate foreign context into familiar discourse, they often exaggerate cultural difference at the stake of authorial insecurity. [155] Travel writing "masquerades" as authentic representation so as to create an illusion of reality and to make cultural disparity recognizable. Such description puts travel in close proximity to literary forgery discussed in the previous chapter, proposing that travel writers, as well as translators, are potential forgers and impostors of cultural exchange.

In particular, Bassnett's concept of "collusion" elucidates how translation serves as cultural "masquerade."[156] Bassnett claims that translation undergoes the process of collusion between writer and reader in order to coordinate a sense of authenticity; the readers agree to suspend disbelief and pretend to accept the translation as "an operation that involves textual transfer across a binary divide" even when issues of originality, truth, and ownership dissolve during the process.[157] Put another way, the readers collude in the fantasy that translation reenacts an actual correspondence rather than factoring in misinterpretations and fictionality. Thus, she argues that one way to decode travel writing is to examine the role of translation and to consider

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[154] See Maria Tymoczko and Edwin Gentzler, *Translation and Power* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002), xxi and Maria Tymoczko, *Enlarging Translation, Empowering Translators* (Manchester: St. Jerome, 2007).

[155] This theory might explain why fictions that deal with exotic culture consistently project, reiterate, and reproduce cultural stereotypes. For instance, gothic literature includes an array of predictable and campy tropes, such as a maid in distress, a tyrannical and incestuous father figure, subterraneous passages, and isolated households. Eve Sedgwick was one of the first critics to point out the repetitious tropes and conventions in gothic literature in *The Coherence of Gothic conventions* (New York: Methuen, 1986).

[156] Susan Bassnett, "When is a Translation Not a Translation?" in *Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation*, ed. Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere (Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters, 1998), 25-40.

[157] Ibid., 27.

how the writer reconstructs dialogues and correspondences retroactively. To what extent is the conversation represented as it really happened if the original dialogue, presumably in another language, is translated in English for the sake of the readers? While Bassnet refers to the linguistic discrepancy in such translations, one might expand this concept to explain how "collusion" allows the reader to subscribe to the cultural difference portrayed in travel writing. Just as the reader colludes in accepting the traveler's correspondences as fact, they also readily believe the representations of the original culture as truth. The traveler thus interacts with the reader's imagination, reproducing cultural assumptions but also prescribing a way of reading and knowing about the East as a foil to England's tension with imperialism. In this sense, the oriental experience of female travelers is strictly an English construct rather than a foreign one.

Consequently, collusion also rendered translation to become a tool of colonization, transforming indigenous textual and reading practices into replicas of the conquering culture. That is, translators impose their values even when they claim to be translating value in a neutral way. Translation becomes an issue of representation, as it implies power struggle over who becomes the subject to speak to whom about what. Translation, then, serves as a political, cultural, and social endeavor that contextualizes and transmits foreign culture to a seemingly homogenous community. According to Agorni, travel writing, like translation, "produces images of the foreign which are the result of an asymmetrical relationship between perceiver (who belongs to target culture) and perceived (who belongs to the source culture)."[158] It is this "asymmetrical relationship" that travel writers as translator-figures create to rewrite both original and target culture— their authorial agency is negotiated through the practice of textual and linguistic crossing that is fictionalized or masqueraded.

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[158] Mirella Agorni, *Translating Italy for the Eighteenth Century : Women, Translation, and Travel Writing, 1739-1797* (Manchester, UK : St. Jerome Pub., 2002), 3.

Because eighteenth-century translation presupposes a fluid cultural and literary exchange between England and "the rest of the world," it can be read as an intercultural strategy that allowed England's cultural system to overcome its own domestic crises. At a moment when literary value was at its flux as the novel began to "rise," translation and travel writing put England's search for national literature in contact with the Orient. That is, the English novel looked outside its national borders to an oriental mode of storytelling — either by adopting an oriental tale such as *The Arabian Night*, creating English pseudo-oriental tales, or by sending out members of the British Empire to the Orient— to define its nationalistic property.[159] Moreover, Montagu and Marsh posit the image of the East as molded by specific sexual assumptions of orientalism to construct a national identity away from home. According to Said, repetitions of orientalist stereotypes as "a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, [and] remarkable experiences" function as an antithesis to the ideology of British imperialism.[160] Yet as Gerald MacLean argues, one must also factor in the English subject's encounter with the East as a site of performance and theatricality that complicates Said's framework of the Orient as mere Occidental projection.[161]

Montagu and Marsh put translation on the forefront of their travel experience by becoming part of the translation process, even when their ability to speak Turkish or Morisco

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[159] By discussing an "oriental mode of storytelling," I am referring to James Beattie's treatise in "On Fable and Romance" (1783) in which he argues that Oriental nations and their fabulous narratives allow for a fantastical setting "by fairies, genii, and demons, and wooden horses, which, on turning a peg, fly through the air with inconceivable swiftness." It also refers to the voice of an oriental tale-teller like Scheherazade whose life depends on the art of fiction making. Montagu and Marsh also practice what I call "writing in the Orient" by participating in and then testifying their experience in the East. By transposing their concerns of sexuality and nationality on to an Oriental stage, they translate the ancient, fantastical setting of the Orient to discuss some of the most contemporary and immediate concerns of the British nation. See James Beattie, "On Fable and Romance" in *Dissertations Moral and Critical* (Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey, 1999), 509.

[160] Said, *Orientalism*, 1.

[161] MacLean, *Looking East*.

was limited. Instead, both women serve the critical role of transcribing and translating the oriental experience, rather than language, into an English context. Montagu and Marsh translate the Orient just as much as they affirm their representation as English subjects, contemplating how to behave as English when put in a metropolitan context. As Englishness is performed at the site of otherness, travel writing as translation serves a cultural act of moving across borderlines and placing the self in the eyes of foreigners. Through travel writing as translation, these English women travelers construct an ideological frame for national identity.

History of Women's Translation and Travel Writing in the Eighteenth Century

Both translation and travel writing were two of the few genres available to women writers in eighteenth-century England. In fact, women's translation and travel share a similar history in that they were readily accessible to women but seldom recognized as a serious literary genre. Translation, especially classical translation, was a popular and respected literary activity; some of the most prominent figures of Augustan literature were engaged in translation, including Alexander Pope, Samuel Johnson, and John Dryden. Many women writers equally partook in this tradition, although their translation was limited to contemporary European language rather than classical. As one critic points out, translation either "condemned women to the margins of [literary] discourse or, on the contrary, rescued them from imposed silence."[162] Their works were seldom published under their own name, nor did they receive scholarly reviews since reviews on modern European translations were scarce. In this sense, modern translation in the eighteenth century was a highly gendered and class-bound literary genre. Many well-known women writers of the time, from Eliza Haywood to Aphra Behn to Lady Montagu, vigorously engaged in modern translation, although they received at most marginal attention. Interestingly, the women

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[162] Sherry Simon, *Gender in Translation: Cultural Identity and the Politics of Transmission* (London: Routledge, 1996), 46.

writers in the Bluestockings produced poetry, translation, and essays but not novels.[163] In fact, according to one critic, Eliza Haywood is the only female member of the Bluestockings who went on to produce prose fiction after the 1740s.[164] Agorni claims that the different literary genres produced by these women, including modern translation, have been neglected by even recent feminist critics who privilege the novel over other genres of writing. Yet as I will argue, the crosscurrent of women's translation and travel writing contributed just as much, if not more, to the shaping of the English novel's development.

Travel literature, likewise, was one of the most popular genres of prose writing in the eighteenth century. Travel was established as a fashionable and respectable social experience of polite society and more women travelled for the purpose of leisure and entertainment than ever before. As the cultural norm dictated that women's experience be limited to particular social settings, travel served as the only means for women to participate in political, aesthetical, and economical discourses outside the home. With the rising interest in the picturesque in the eighteenth century, travelers were educated on how to admire the beautiful and the sublime, what to look for when engaging the natives, and what to feel: a novel like Sterne's *Sentimental Journey* exemplifies the height of such vogue, very much like the early Romantic poets' nature poems.[165] Yet this did not mean that women were not imposed with social restrictions about

[163] The Bluestocking was a group of intellectual women in eighteenth-century England, organized by Elizabeth Montagu (1720-1800), although it initially started as a community of both male and female writers. It went on to produce some of the most prominent female writers of the period such as Frances Burney. For more information on the Bluestocking, see Elizabeth Eger, *Bluestockings Displayed : Portraiture, Performance and Patronage, 1730-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Elizabeth Egar, *Bluestockings: Women of Reason from Enlightenment to Romanticism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

[164] Agorni, 46.

[165] As Wordsworth points out, the nature poems of Romanticism center around cultivating one's sentiment mediated by nature: "For all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings." For more information on the picturesque, see Stephen Copley, *The Politics of the Picturesque: Literature,*

travel. Travel, along with the popularity of the Grand Tour, was still predominantly male-oriented and class-bound; one had to be a gentleman to travel and practice the excursion of fine sentiments. Further, as Addison points out in *The Spectator*, discussions on the picturesque and the sublime often positioned women as beautiful aesthetic objects rather than subjects. Even when women traveled, few women published their travel letters nor did they engage directly in philosophical discussions about travel. Instead, travel writing by women before the eighteenth century was often religious in nature, not aesthetic or philosophical, as seen in Margery Kempe's pilgrimage in 1420.

It was not until Montagu's *Letters* that a cultural impetus to document the female travel experience became recognizable. Billie Melman points out that there seems to be no secular tradition of female travel before Montagu: there is only one female travelogue written between 1500-1763, three between 1763-1801, and 240 in 1801-1911, showcasing the increase in female travel writing only after the nineteenth century and the expansion of the British Empire.[166] Before Montagu, and even after her publication of the *Letters*, "traveling women" was still considered a symptomatic oxymoron, as women's mobility was restricted to the boundaries of domestic space, or the English household.[167] Travel, while granting women access to a world

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Landscape, and Aesthetics Since 1770 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) and Jacqueline M. Labbe, *Romantic Visualities : Landscape, Gender, and Romanticism* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1998). On the Romantic poet's relationship with nature, see Onno Oerlemans, *Romanticism and the Materiality of Nature* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002). Also see Andrew Warren, *The Orient and the Young Romantics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014) for information on Romantic poets and oriental traveling.

[166] Billie Melman, *Women's Orients: English Women and the Middle East, 1718-1918: Sexuality, Religion and Work* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992).

[167] Of course, one cannot draw up a simple binary of male vs. female's boundaries. See Michael McKeon, *The Secret History of Domesticity* and "Historicizing Patriarchy: The Emergence of Gender Difference in England, 1660-1760," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 28, no. 3 (1995): 295-322 on the fluidity of the private and public sphere in the early modern period. McKeon argues that the ramified opposition between domestic and public realms was not generally accepted until the mid-eighteenth century.

outside of the domestic home, was only allowed when accompanied by a proper chaperone and on socially accepted occasions. And while few women traveled outside of England, those who did travel internationally were literate women entitled by class, not gender, to the authority of aesthetic and diplomatic subjects. Montagu, for instance, was able to travel to Turkey because of her husband's social status as English ambassador. Under his protection, she immersed in the vibrant culture of the "Tulip Era" (1718-30) of the Mediterranean, visiting the forbidden harem and Turkish bath also known as hammam. Her status as a noblewoman put her at close proximity to Islam politics, as she was introduced to Sultan Ahmet III (1703-30) and engaged with his concubines. Marsh, on the other hand, defied the convention of female travel writing in that she belonged neither to polite society nor the upper class gentry. Born to parents who were involved in transatlantic colonial trade, Marsh was also traveling alone at the time of her abduction, without a female chaperone or tutelage of patriarchal authority. Eighteenth-century travel writings by women, in this sense, by no means represented a communal experience nor can they be considered monolithic.[168]

Even though the politics of the British Empire feature as the backdrop to Montagu and Marsh's narratives, their writings were still relegated to the periphery of philosophical, political,

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[168] One of the problems of previous feminist critics lies in the assumption that a common primitive experience exists in all women writers. Gilbert and Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic*, although brilliant in its description of oppressed female writers, suggests that because women breathed the contemporary air of patriarchy, they must have had a shared, collective experience. For this reason, they claim that women's writings can be read as a quest for "self-definition" where the author manifests her anxiety and rage. The problem with this reading is twofold. First, it reduces the text as a Freudian wish-fulfillment of the author in which characters and authors are read in dangerous proximity. The second concern is that this feminist reading inadvertently contributed to reducing women's writings as a reflection of their biographical details. See Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Woman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-century Literary Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 76. This kind of emphasis on women's biography has resulted in what Mary Jacobus calls "[positing] the woman author as origin and her life as the primary locus of meaning." Mary Jacobus, "Is There a Woman in this Text?" *New Literary History* 14, no. 1 (1982), 138. My focus on Montagu and Marsh's letters lies rather in questioning the cultural assumptions and expectations of the British imagination, and how this imagination in turn shaped the self-definition of subjectivity, nationality, and the novel.

and imperial enterprise mainly because women's travel experiences were considered private and apolitical. After all, women seldom served as political agents of British maritime trade. That is, women's "writing in the Orient" evolved outside of metropolitan knowledge and power, to quote Foucault, and was not recognized as belonging to the corpus of institutionalized knowledge about the Orient. Not only was women's participation in British economy, politics, and diplomacy actually limited, but their access to knowledge *about* the Orient was equally restrained, as they had been excluded from communities that specialized in learning "things Oriental." Their only access to transnational trade was through reading and— for a limited few— travel. Female interest or participation in the Orient was either considered journalistic or imaginary. Even as nineteenth-century Britain witnessed a dramatic rise in female travelogues, many of them were evangelical in nature and therefore not considered an official index of formal political network.

In fact, women were not admitted to the Royal Geographical Society, a learned society of geography founded in 1830, until 1913. Women were also not permitted in the Royal Society until 1945. The Royal Society was founded in 1660 under the subtitle "the President, Council, and Fellows of the Royal Society of London for Improving Natural Knowledge." Heavily influenced by the empirical philosophy of Francis Bacon, it specifically promoted travel writing as an instrument to systematize empirical and natural knowledge.[169] In his essay "Of Travel," Bacon lays out the primary principles of travel writing. First, the purpose of travel is education above all else: "He that travelleth into a country . . . goeth to school, not to travel."[170] Furthermore, upon his return, the traveler is to refrain from ornamental rhetoric but instead use

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[169] Daniel Carey, "Truth, Lies and Travel Writing," in *The Routledge Companion to Travel Writing*, ed. Carl Thompson (New York: Routledge, 2016), 3-14.

[170] Francis Bacon, "On Travel," in *The Essays of Francis Bacon*, ed. Mary Augusta Scott (New York: Charles Scribner's Son, 1908), 79.

tools of plain language to document the truth: "let his travel appear rather in his discourse than in his apparel or gesture; and in his discourse let him be rather advised in his answers, than forward to tell stories; and let it appear that he doth not change his country manners for those of foreign parts."[171] This epistemological protocol defined the nature of travel narratives as based on facts, written by an impartial and objective observer who, like Bacon, believed that true knowledge derived from experience. Moreover, Bacon's insistence that one keeps his national customs intact while probing into the target culture anticipated the use of travel writing as a means to expand and even prescribe colonial knowledge and behavior— points that Montagu and Marsh later circumvent.

To comply with such standards of travel writing, travelers attempted to confirm veracity to their accounts. For instance, in 1681, Robert Knox published *An Historical Relation of the Island Ceylon together With somewhat Concerning Severall Remarkable passages of my life that hath hapned since my Deliverance out of Captivity*. Knox was taken prisoner for nineteen years in Ceylon, or the modern day Sri Lanka. In *Relation*, he uses direct and precise language to describe the details of Ceylon ethnography. Furthermore, Robert Hooke, a natural philosopher, polymath, and member of the Royal Society, wrote the preface for the narrative in an attempt to promote its authentic quality. The narrative was printed by Richard Chiswell, the printer to the Royal Society, as a guarantee of veracity. Christopher Wren also stated that Knox's travel narrative "seems to be Written with great Truth and Integrity."[172]

Both Montagu and Marsh's narratives challenge the nature of travel writing purported by Bacon and the male-dominated Royal Society. While both do emphasize the authenticity of their travel, their travelogues focus more on sentimentalizing their experience rather than representing

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[171] Ibid., 81-2.

[172] Carey, 5.

the Orient verbatim, or in "plain style" as was preferred by the Royal Society. Rather than adding to the corpus of imperial knowledge, Montagu and Marsh seem to be more interested in the sympathetic effect of their cultural crossing, a point I will return to in the following pages. Their travel writings satirize the English's supposedly empirical way of acquiring knowledge about themselves and the Orient. Montagu in particular critiques cultural preconceptions just as much as she internalizes them, challenging traditional accounts of oriental travel written by men. She questions the difference between mediated knowledge delivered through translation and those experienced firsthand, whether the two are in fact binary, and how such gap opens up creative space for fictionality. The two female travelers, constantly exposed to different cultural norms and mores, are asked to judge what is right from wrong, English and non-English, Christian and non-Christian. At the same time, they ask the English audience to participate in that very judgment. Just as the readers are asked to judge where documentation ends and fictionalization begins, the boundaries of familiar and unfamiliar knowledge intertwine and collapse. As such, both Montagu and Marsh's travel letters challenge the function of traditional travel writing that contributed in expanding colonial knowledge. Instead, by translating sympathy, they present a new way of documenting travel that modifies Bacon's treatise significantly.

Double-Masquerading in Montagu's *Turkish Letters*

Keeping in mind the cultural work that travel writing performs in the name of translation, I now turn to the masquerading and translatable qualities of Montagu's *Turkish Letters*. As she states, she made a "journey that has not been undertaken by any Christian since the time of the Greek emperors."[173] From August 1716 to November 1718, Montagu accompanied her Whig husband, a recently appointed British Ambassador, on a diplomatic mission to Turkey. He was

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[173] Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, *The Turkish Embassy Letters*, ed. Teresa Heffernan and Daniel O'Quinn (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 2013), 98.

also a representative of the London-based Levant Company, which traded luxury goods such as tulips, coffee, and silk. Her husband's occupation naturally put Montagu at close proximity to British imperialism and maritime trade. Just as Psalmanazar's pseudo-account of Formosa outweighed actual accounts of ethnography, many western travelers still relied on previously published sources of the Orient. Even fictional representation of the Orient passed as fact, such as Galland's *Arabian Nights* that Montagu kept in her library. Male travel writers such as Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, Jean Dumont, Aaron Hill or Ottaviano Bon also reported their encounter with the Orient. Specifically, they painted the harem as teeming with lascivious sexual activity despite the fact that they did not have physical access to the seraglio. All this focus on the harem demonstrates how the "Orient" figured as a politically and culturally charged topos rather than a specific geographical locus. The East was considered the object of effeminization and eroticization that the West could somehow control and penetrate, the harem representing what the English have fantasized as the heart of Turkish culture.

Montagu was especially keen on revising misconceptions about the harem that were derogatory and hostile. For instance, Dumont notes in *A new voyage to the Levant containing an account of the most remarkable curiosities in Germany, France, Italy, Malta, and Turkey: with historical observations relating to the present and ancient state of those countries* (1696) that "no slavery is equal to that of Turkish woman," arguing that the Islamic women's veils represent patriarchal despotism and imprisonment.[174] Hill echoes this observation, stating that "'Tis but very rarely that they go abroad, and then to no Place but the Publick Bagnio's or the Funeral, or Marriage, of some near Relation . . . They hide their Faces in Obedience to the Precepts of their Prophets Law, which tells 'em tis unlawful to discover any of those Beauties God has given

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[174] Jean Dumont, *A New Voyage to the Levant Containing an Account of the Most Remarkable Curiosities in Germany, France, Italy, Malta, and Turkey* (London: 1696), 268.

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them."[175] Carefully setting up normative sexual ideology by pointing out the Turkish women's restraints, Dumont further reconfigures oriental masculinity by showing how Turkish men appear to be feminized: they "crouch down to Piss, like Women," wear dress-like habits, and are inclined to sodomy.[176] In addition, the restriction on women, he suggests, prompts them to find perverse ways to channel their sexual inhibition: "so lascivious are [the women's] Inclinations, that if by the ingenuity of their Contrivances they can procure the Company of some Stranger in their Chamber, they claim unanimously an equal share of his Caresses, and proceed by Lots to the Enjoyment of his Person."[177] These accounts generated a stereotypically monolithic view of the effeminized Orient— hypersexual women and castrated men— that pervaded the British imagination.

The eroticization of the harem also went hand in hand with the despotic sultan's supposed thirst for political and sexual prowess. The sultan, unlike other Turkish men, was described as overwhelmingly sexual with the power to blatantly express and act on his desires. By describing oriental sexuality in such colorful terms, both Dumont and Hill imply that England's sexual normativity is different— more sound, civilized, and appropriate compared to the East. This binary assumption concerning the Turkish Empire implied that England set up women's sexual desire as a symptom of the East's irrationality and an antithesis to Western modernity. It also meant such travel narratives tried to effeminize the East as a whole, placing the Orient as an object of Western dominance and penetration.

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[175] Aaron Hill, *A Full and Just Account of the Present State of the Ottoman Empire in All its Branches* (London:1709), 95.

[176] Dumont, 149

[177] Hill, 111.

If the eroticization of the East positioned Europe as a male predator and the Orient as a female victim, Linda Colley poignantly challenges such premise by arguing that the power struggle between West and East was not as clear-cut or heterosexual.[178] She instead suggests that the sexualization of the East displayed an underlying fear of (male) Europeans who imagined themselves falling victim to the (male) East. For instance, she claims that it was actually the male English captives, not the Turkish men, who were historically described as feminized: "British captivity literature had traditionally been far more concerned to stress the sexual threat to male captives in Barbary."[179] Instances of sodomy were prominent in English men's captivity narratives, in which they feared Islamic power and aggression to be performed on male agents of British imperialism. For instance, in *Relation of Seaven yeares Slaverie under the Turkes of Argeire* (1640), Francis Knight notes that Muslim men "are sayd to commit Sodomie with all creatures, and tolerate all vices."[180] In fact, representing Barbary as a place of sexual threat for captive British women had been unusual until Marsh's narrative publicized female captivity. According to Colley, it was only after the Ottoman Empire's gradual recession from the global stage that Britain began to envision the Muslim despot's heterosexual, not homosexual, lust as a threat to the West. Only then is the fear of sodomy overwritten by descriptions of lustful heterosexual sultans and amorous Turkish women.

While the term "Turk" was used pejoratively as an emblem of violence and tyranny, the Ottoman Empire also inspired what McLean calls an "imperial envy" among Britons, the

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[178] Linda Colley, *Captives: Britain, Empire, and the World, 1600-1850* (New York: Anchor Books, 2004). Also see Gerald MacLean, *The Rise of Oriental Travel: English Visitors to the Ottoman Empire, 1580-1720* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) that documents the English traveler's fascination with the East.

[179] Colley, *Captives*, 128.

[180] Francis Knight, *Relation of Seaven Yeares Slaverie under the Turks of Argeire* (London: 1640), 50.

Ottoman serving as a stable model of imperial dynasty.[181] MacLean argues that the prosperity of the Ottoman Empire from the early sixteenth to eighteenth century helped shape England's own ambition for national self-importance. If so, then Britain's fascination with the Orient not so much effeminized Islam as an object of British domination but instead harbored an anxiety that the East might reduce British men to submission. Colley suggests that as the Islamic world gradually lost its power to frighten, the preferred captivity plot changes to something like what Mozart adopted for his opera, *The Abduction from the Seraglio* (1782), where English women fall victim to the sultan's sexual advances.[182] Colley and MacLean thus unsettle the premise of Western-Eastern power dynamics that endowed sexual privilege over the West as aggressor.

Montagu further complicates this binary opposition of the West and East gender politics by dismissing orientalist construction of female sexuality. She celebrates her status as a cultural spectator/voyeur/spy distinguished from previous male travelers, invited into the private realms of Turkish women— a supposed "empirical" vantage point which in turn establishes her authorship and subjectivity. So when she becomes an object to the gaze of two hundred naked Turkish women, not men, she finds the experience surprisingly pleasurable. Her fascination at the Turkish women's sexually charged body is of significance because it eroticizes her own English body in return. Unlike her predecessors, she transforms the English traveler from judgmental spectators to active participants of oriental aesthetics. Placed on the outskirts of diplomatic mission, she is offered a unique opportunity to travel into the harem that was previously banned to male travelers:

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[181] Gerald MacLean, *Looking East*, 21. Chi-ming Yang makes a similar argument about the relationship between England and China. According to Yang, the Chinese Empire influenced the concept of virtue in eighteenth-century England, serving as an economical and moral model of a commercial empire.

[182] Colley, *Captives*, 130.

> You will perhaps be surprised at an account so different from what you have been entertained with by the common voyage writers, who are very fond of speaking of what they don't know. . . . they can only speak of the outside, which makes no great appearance, and the women's apartments are always built backwards, removed from sight.[183]

Aestheticizing the political landscape of the Turkish women, she reads their social habit as signs of liberation rather than oppression. "I look upon Turkish women as the only free people in the empire," she claims, much to the contrary to Dumont.

In perhaps one of the most obvious ironies, this demonstrates that what writers of the time denounce about the condition of the supposedly foreign other is actually a projection that points to England's own dissatisfaction about women's role. In an attempt to translate the Turkish bath as a foil to England, Montagu claims that the bath functions as a Habermasian public sphere that promotes civic discourse: "In short, 'tis the woman's coffee-house, where all the news of the Town is told, scandal invented, etc."[184] This observation is in fact a sardonic joke in disguise, as English women were actually not allowed into the English coffee houses, unlike the French *salons* in which women as salonnières were free to enter. Through Montagu's testament, and despite her internalization of the harem as an avenue of closeted hypersexuality, her experience translates the primitive and sexually charged Turkish bath into a neo-liberal site in which free women express the desire for rational discourse and gossip that was not available to English women like herself.

As she prepares to visit the Turkish bath, she chooses to go *incognito*, hiring a Turkish coach that veils the person in it. If popular pseudo-oriental tales such as Marana's *Letters Writ by a Turkish Spy* (c.1684) or Defoe's *The Turkish Spy* (1718) featured a solitary Muslim male spy assessing European civilization, then Montagu inverts the cultural assumptions about

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[183] Montagu, *Turkish Letters*, 85.

[184] Ibid., 102.

metropolitan relations and puts herself— a woman traveler— as the anonymous English spy leering at Turkish culture. Anonymity is therefore an important constituent in constructing Montagu's subjectivity. At the same time, that anonymity is an integral part of Turkish culture that liberates women from social restrictions. Particularly, when Montagu enters the Turkish bath, she recalls that the Turkish ladies and their slaves were "without any distinction of rank by their dress" because they were "in the state of nature, that is, in plain English, stark naked."[185] Montagu later uses the same rhetoric to discuss the eradication of gender constraints as well as class distinctions of Muslim women enabled by their dressing habits. She repeatedly shows admiration at the Turkish women's veils and *ferigée*, a "riding-hood" that conceals the upper body, arms, and fingers. She recalls: "You may guess how effectually this disguises them, that there is no distinguishing the great lady from the slave, and 'tis impossible for the most jealous husband to know his wife when he meets her. . . . This perpetual masquerade gives them entire liberty of following their inclinations without danger of discovery."[186] The act of stripping down, or dressing up, then, has the same effect: granting women sexual freedom. Because Montagu sees both the private and public presentation of the Turkish women as opposed to men who could "only speak of the outside," she puts the Turkish women's naked bodies and seemingly constraining sartorial habit both as signs of female agency that break down artificial rank.

That Montagu reads their veils and their "state of nature" as masquerade is particularly telling, as it alludes to the female body as a performative site to project nationality as social construct. Montagu's insistence on holding onto her clothes can be read in this light. Montagu's visit to the Turkish bath provided quite the stir for the English readers, particularly for its audacity and frankness in description. As such, Montagu's rendition of the hammam, much like

[185] Ibid., 101.

[186] Ibid., 115.

the harem, fetishized the Turkish bath despite her endeavor to circumvent that very imperial, orientalized, and male gaze.[187] Yet she complicates such oriental projection by stepping into the aestheticized scene and placing herself, a European, as spectacle. As she enters the Turkish bath, she immediately grabs the Turkish women's attention. Much aware that she "appears very extraordinary to them," she understands the layers of othering in which she is made a stranger to the Muslim women. Yet her exotic look is unfamiliar not so much to the Turkish women but to her polite English audience:

> 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 such a stranger. I believe in the whole there were two hundred women and yet none of those disdainful smiles, or satiric whispers that never fail in our assemblies, when anybody appears that is not dressed exactly in the fashion.[188]

By pointing out English society's fear of not fitting in, she inadvertently underscores how much *she* is "out of place" but in the eyes of her English audience rather than the Muslim ladies in the bath. If imaginary and actual translation betrayed the process of constructing the British subject as spectator, Montagu's experience shows that by crossing national boundaries, she becomes both a spectator and spectacle at the same time. As the object of foreign gaze, Montagu alienates herself from both English and Turkish culture, unsettling traditional travel writing that posits the imperial subject as the sole gazer. Because Montagu is both herself and not herself, the English

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[187] Montagu's description had inspired Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres to paint "Le Bain Turc" ("The Turkish Bath") in 1862 which portrays naked Turkish women lying around in a public bath. Perhaps the most popular and erotic rendition of the hammam, Ingres was directly influenced by Montagu's oriental fantasy. As a young man, he had copied a French translation of Montagu's letters which read: "I believe there were two hundred women there in all. Beautiful naked women in various poses... some conversing, others at their work, others drinking coffee or tasting a sorbet, and many stretched out nonchalantly, whilst their slaves (generally ravishing girls of 17 or 18 years) plaited their hair in fantastical shapes." See Rose-Marie Hagen and Rainer Hagen, *Les Dessous Des Chefs-d'oeuvre* (Köln: Taschen, 2010), 410-15.

[188] Ibid., 101.

readers must parse out what it is that makes her uniquely English in the eyes of the Turkish audience.

Montagu's refusal to strip naked in the bathhouse can be read as a double masquerade to retain her English modesty, just as her awareness of an imaginary English public audience functions as a performative negotiation to solidify her national origin. Moreover, this refusal seems at odds with Montagu's experimental spirit, unafraid to learn the Turkish language and participate in cross-cultural dressing. In fact, Montagu found great pleasure in describing the details of her Turkish dress and hair, and even had her portrait painted twice by Jean-Baptiste Vanmour, both times in her Turkish attire. She also notes several times that she chose to put on a Turkish dress at the Turkish Exchange and at the Mosque of Selim the first. Contrary to Bacon's claim that travel accounts must "appear rather in [the traveler's] discourse than in his apparel or gesture . . . and let it appear that he doth not change his country manners for those of foreign parts," Montagu is unafraid to stage herself in the Turkish custom.[189] All in all, she is very much amused and enamored with the idea of posing as an orientalized object to her English readers and an occidentalized object to the Turkish ladies. Cultural masquerade, then, serves as an entertaining attitudinizing of material substance. In a letter to her sister, Montagu notes: "I will try to awaken your gratitude by giving you a full and true relation of the novelties of this place, none of which would surprise you more than a sight of my person as I am now in my Turkish habit."[190] Again, the novelty here is not the Turkish custom itself but a female English aristocrat dressed in Turkish style. In this way, Montagu internalizes not just the Turkish gaze but a distant and imaginary English one.

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[189] Bacon, 81-2.

[190] Ibid., 113.

And while she enjoys travelling incognito, her anonymity is yet another form of masquerade because she can never truly go unrecognized. In fact, her disguise marks her difference rather than acculturation. Whenever she chooses to dress in the Turkish fashion or travel incognito, it makes her stand out rather than blend her in. An attempt at cultural assimilation, then, bifurcates the very cultural differences that Montagu attempts to eradicate. Her penchant to pose as a spectacle reorganizes British subjectivity in an entirely new way, as she differs from other spectator or spy figures of the eighteenth century, such as Mr. Spectator or Ned Ward's "The London spy," who chose to remain unnamed and unknown. Montagu for one understands the power of performance; sartorial masquerade is attractive because it does not require religious or cultural commitment. Instead, it allows her to become a participant of aesthetic pleasure. As long as she maintains a fictional and aesthetic distance to the Orient by "masquerading," her performance does not pose a threat to her Englishness.

Yet her English femininity and cultural identity are put at risk when the cultural contact in the Turkish bath makes her see herself as others would. The numerous contemporary responses to the bath scene, such as Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres's erotic painting, suggest that her European audience particularly read with fear and titillation that Montagu might "go native." At this particular moment when she is asked to remove the artificial fabric that shields her femininity, she inscribes a cultural concern for the Englishwoman's propriety in which the violation of the woman's body becomes of national concern. Even when she had carefully demonstrated that the Turkish women's nakedness is not a symptom of immodesty, she herself cannot strip down because of what her English body is supposed to represent. Montagu's body is put under double scrutiny from both Turkish and English gazes— the recipient of her letter, as well as the larger public audience it will later reach, watches with bated breath at whether

Montagu will cross that critical cultural boundary. This "double consciousness" that Montagu displays implies that the imperial subject's agency is potentially split and always in the process of refashioning, despite its supposed privilege in power equity.[191]

Montagu's initial attraction at the Turkish women's bending of female behavior is countered only when she is asked to subscribe to an oriental version of femininity: in this case, an invitation to present her naked body among foreigners. If putting on a Turkish dress displayed oriental femininity as artifice—or any type of femininity, for that matter— then her decision to resist public nudity demonstrates a different type of masquerade in which she performs her national identity in the form of female modesty. Simply put, she refuses to undress because she is an English gentlewoman. Since displaying one's naked self publicly was not part of English decorum, Montagu cannot register such cultural behavior even in the name of aestheticism. Undressing, then, implied a transgression of normative sexual behavior because she is English. By holding onto her clothes, she translates national identity as a gender construct and thus locates the female body as a convincing site of national identity. Montagu is still English when she learns the Turkish language or dresses in oriental clothes, but stripping away of her sexual decorum compromises her nobility, femininity, and Englishness all masquerading in the very sartorial signature that she holds on to differentiate herself from the Turkish women.

To the Turkish ladies, however, Montagu's refusal means something entirely different. Her refusal is construed as an act of involuntary coyness: "I was at last forced to open my skirt and show them my stays, which satisfied them very well, for I saw they believed I was so locked

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[191] The Turkish bath scene mimics Du Bois's "double consciousness," or the "sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity." Although Du Bois' term refers to a culturally and historically specific ethnic group that was subject to centuries of persecution, this concept is useful in understanding how the British subject, even when acting as the agent of colonialism, voluntarily invents a double consciousness to measure and affirm one's own subjectivity. W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Gramercy Books, 1994), 2-3.

up in that machine that it was not in my own power to open it, which contrivance they attributed

to my husband."[192] This is the husband who hardly makes an appearance in her letters. At this

moment, her English clothing becomes a doubly constrained form of captivity in which she is

suspended between two cultures. The Turkish women translate her stays as the symbol of

patriarchal subjugation retained by a jealous husband, just as the veil had culturally charged

connotations for Europeans. In the Turkish bath where everyone is stripped of cultural and

sexual artifices except Montagu, *she* becomes the object of fettered womanhood, the Turkish

women the emblem of liberty. Montagu could either undress and prove that she is in her "own

power to open [her dress]," or choose not to modify a mistaken notion which in fact bears a

conspicuous truth about English woman's sexual license. When the cultural assumption about

womanhood is reversed by Montagu's resistance, she exposes the cultural limitations of British

womanhood— that despite all their disapproval of the Orient's supposed repressing of women,

they cannot escape prescribed sexual behavior. In this sense, she performs two masquerades for

two different audiences by stepping into a sexual traffic filled with contesting gazes. As she

concludes the letter, she notes: " I am sure I have now entertained you with an account of such a

sight as you never saw in your life, and what no book of travels could inform you of."[193] "Such a

sight" could refer to either the naked Turkish women or Montagu looked upon as a stranger to

both the Turkish and English audience. She thus creates a unique space of unresolved

indeterminacy through cultural translation in which the negotiation of self and other is suspended

at the moment of double masquerade.

Further, masquerade lies not only in her performance to hold on to her English dress, but

in an effort to appeal to the English audience on how she resisted such cultural threat through

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[192] Montagu, *Turkish Letters*, 103.

[193] Ibid.

(re)writing. For instance, her letter to an anonymous Lady ____ about her experience at the hammam is reconstructed through years of cautious editing. Although her letters were written during her journey, they were copied into a letter book after her return from Constantinople in 1718-1724 with no intention of immediate publication. Critics agree that most likely her letter book is not an actual transcription of her authentic correspondence, as evidence suggests that Montagu and an unknown copyist had carefully selected and polished her original letters. For instance, while Montagu indeed wrote to her friends, the publication of her letters includes pseudo-letters of fictional and actual recipients: descriptions sent out to one correspondent appear to have been sent out to others according to the copies of her letters. Robert Halsband consequently calls her collection "pseudo-letters, dated and addressed to people of either named or nameless."[194] After its initial publication, another edition appeared in 1767 with five spurious letters. Although the original letters were destroyed by her daughter Lady Bute, possibly as a means to protect the family reputation, the fact that Montagu struggled to edit her letters throughout her lifetime suggests that she wanted to control how, when and where the letters would be published. Montagu's travel writing "moves across" an imaginary literary interaction when the author anticipates the audience's reaction to her cultural trespassing. It is through this translation that she rewrites herself as a national heroine put at the risk of temptation. By translating her experience as a moral about sexual temptation, she confirms a "proper" British womanhood (i.e. she stays "decently" clothed) even if that behavior transforms her into a slave imprisoned by her own cultural limits, locked in a chastity belt by a supposedly jealous husband.

　　　　Montagu thus reconstructs her travel experience to accommodate the sexual normativity of British womanhood by "taming" her shocking cultural encounter. Her letters in this sense are not just a casual compilation of personal correspondences but a carefully polished collection

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[194] Robert Halsband, *The Life of Mary Wortley Montagu* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960).

about public masquerade. While her controversial essay "A Plain Account of the Innoculating of the Small Pox by a Turkey Merchant" (1722) circulated freely, for some reason Montagu refused to immediately publish the *Letters*.[195] It was not that she tried to maintain her aristocratic reputation by delaying the publication, since her life was already full of scandal: she had eloped with Edward Montagu in order to refuse a suitor chosen by her father, inoculated her son for small pox in Turkey which caused quite a medical scandal, and had that son later claim to be a pseudo-convert to Islam. She was also known to be quite a beauty, and later engaged in a love affair with a Venetian scholar 30 years her junior. An invitation to unclothe, therefore, would not go against her character. Yet somehow her letters were considered more salacious, dangerous, and unfit for the public eyes than any of these well-known facts about her life. Montagu, it seems, was acutely aware of how her cross-cultural engagement at the Turkish bath plays with the boundaries of decorum and therefore her national integrity. Because her travel letter serves as a contested site in which self and other, national and foreign, normative and non-normative behavior are pitted against each other, the representation of the *Letters* seems more disturbing, troubling, and equally fascinating than all the scandals of Montagu's life.

Another important struggle to hold on to her nationality is represented through Montagu's use of language and literal translation. Montagu was an active learner of the Turkish language, and showed great interest in oriental poetry. In one of the few instances where Montagu engages

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[195] In 1722, Montagu anonymously published *A Plain Account of the Innoculating of the Small Pox by a Turkey Merchant.* Impressed with the practice of inoculation against small pox in Turkey, she introduced this method to England but was met with criticism when people learned that she had inoculated her son in 1718. Dr. Emanuel Timoni, as well as Dr. Jacob Pylarini, published theories on inoculation which was later introduced to the Royal Society in 1716, but was dismissed as oriental nonsense. See Jennifer Lee Carrell, *The Speckled Monster: A Historical Tale of Battling Smallpox* (New York: Dutton, 2003); Samantha Fenno, "'An Experiment Practiced Only by a Few Ignorant Women': Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, the Smallpox Inoculation, and the Concept of Enlightenment" in *Monstrous Dreams of Reason: Body, Self and Other in the Enlightenment* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2002), 85-109; and Diana Barnes, "The Public Life of a Woman of Wit and Quality: Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and the Vogue for Smallpox Inoculation," *Feminist Studies* 38, no. 2 (2012): 330–62.

in actual translation, she translates Turkish poetry and love-letters about which she claims that "I have taken abundance of pain to get these verses in a literal translation, and if you were acquainted with my interpreters, I might spare myself the trouble of assuring you that they have received no poetical touches of their hands."[196] Such activity teaches her the intricacy of translating sympathy between original and translated texts. As such, she expresses the difficulty of a faithful translation among dissimilar cultures: "I cannot determine upon the whole how well I have succeeded in the translation. Neither do I think our English proper to express such violence of passion, which is very seldom amongst us."[197] Translation brings her closer to the Islam culture, as she recalls that she better understood Fatima, the beautiful lady of the sultan, when she finally learned the Turkish tongue. That is, Montagu learns that linguistic translation always entails a sympathetic transfer and is therefore already a cultural and emotional translation.

And it is because Turkish culture relies on multiple translations, due to its cosmopolitan and heterogeneous demography, that it is more vibrant compared to England. Montagu deplores the monolithic constraints of English aristocratic culture, as shown in a letter written to Pope:

> I live in a more agreeable variety than you do; and that Monday setting of partridges, Tuesday reading English, Wednesday studying in the Turkish language (in which, by the way, I am very learned), Thursday classical authors; Friday spend in writing; Saturday at my needle, and Sunday admitting of visits and hearing music, is a better way of disposing the week, than, Monday at the drawing room, Tuesday Lady Mohun's, Wednesday the opera; Thursday the play; Friday Mrs. Chetwynd's, etc., a perpetual round of hearing the same scandal and seeing the same follies acted over and over.[198]

In other words, Turkish culture throbs because everyone is engaged in linguistic and cultural translation. For instance, she is in awe at the hybridity of language and culture in which people mix Turkish, Arabic, Persian, Hebrew, Greek, Armenian and other languages together. This

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[196] Montagu, *Turkish Letters*, 122.

[197] Ibid., 124.

[198] Ibid., 147.

constant translation serves as a flux yet stable social medium; Turkey is "the Tower of Babel," according to her description, one that chooses otherness over one homegenous cultural authority.[199] She thus registers hybridity as a paradigm for constructing Turkish subjectivity as well as her own that would not have been possible in London where she would repeat "the same scandal and [see] the same follies acted over and over."

Thrust in this cosmopolitan community, Montagu questions English, her native language, and its ability to warrant nationality in a stable way. In a letter to a friend that includes her translation of a Turkish love-letter, she asserts: "I fancy you are now wondering at my profound learning, but alas dear madam, I am almost fallen into the misfortune so common to the ambitious: while they are employed on distant insignificant conquests abroad, a rebellion starts up at home."[200] By bringing up the imagery of domestic ideology, the home, she locates her body and mind as the institution of nationhood that is compromised by the British Empire's imperialistic endeavor. The language of warfare— conquest and rebellion— signals an inner struggle to maintain her Englishness. Being English becomes a performance and not a state of being when her own self-consciousness and insecurity about national identity dictate her to consider the masquerading effects of her manners, behaviors, and use of language in a foreign culture. The qualities that make her English no longer come natural; she must work hard to behave and *speak* like an English lady. Her fear of somehow losing her English virtue witnessed in the bath scene is likened to her fear of compromising her linguistic capacity. She continues, "I am in great danger of losing my English. I find it not half so easy to me to write in it as it was a twelve-month ago. I am forced to study for expressions, and must leave off all other languages

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[199] Ibid., 163.

[200] Ibid.

and try to learn my mother tongue.[201]" Montagu's confusion at her deteriorating linguistic

capacity alienates her from her native culture. This complaint is ultimately corrected by writing

the very letters that keep her occupied every day: "As I prefer English to all the rest, I am

extremely mortified at the daily decay of it in my head, where I'll assure you (with grief of heart)

it is reduced to such a small number of words, I cannot recollect any tolerable phrase to conclude

my letter."[202] And so the practice of writing serves as a reassurance of her nationality.

When Montagu is faced with the loss of her cultural value and English language, she

writes. Mary Rowlandson's captivity narrative, *A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of

Mrs. Mary Rowlandson* (1682), similarly demonstrates the potency of writing as a model for

constructing nationhood. Abducted by Native Americans, Rowlandson vividly describes her

bodily pain as she is forced to move around the wilderness. Armstrong argues that Rowlandson

dreams of returning home unharmed, and by doing so, inherently reconstitute the home as

composed of modern individuals in a Lockean sense.[203] New England captivity narratives

display the captive's desire to return home safely, constructing the home as an ideal and Puritan

haven. The travelogue becomes a testament to Rowlandson's Puritan faith and colonial

American-ness. Montagu's travel writing, likewise, imagines England as a polite, learned,

Christian, and monolingual community. Both Montagu and Rowlandson's refusal to "go native"

is a performance for their imagined audience, integrated in epistolary habit as a confirmation of

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[201] Ibid.

[202] Ibid.

[203] See Nancy Armstrong, "Captivity and Cultural Capital in the English Novel," *NOVEL* 31.3 (1998): 373-93; and Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennehouse, *The Imaginary Puritan: Literature, Intellectual Labor, and the Origins of Personal Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 196-216. Also see Mitchell Robert Breitwieser, *American Puritanism and the Defense of Mourning: Religion, Grief, and Ethnology in Mary Rowlandson's Captivity Narrative* (Madison: Wisconsin University Press, 1990) for a biographical account of Rowlandson's life.

nationhood. Yet Montagu's travelogue is different from Rowlandson's in that it points out

cultural and religious disparity as sources of amusement and curiosity. She constructs the frame

of the oriental aesthetic scene, so to speak; she both sets up the frame for the European readers to

leer at, but also becomes part of that scene with enough room for her to exit the frame at her

wishes. In such a way, she positions herself as a cultural translator bridging nationalism and

metropolitanism— she defends English cultural values but also participates in the aesthetical

experience of transnationalism.

Montagu's letters further demonstrate how travel writing as epistolary form was

composed as social and collective writing that works together to build on national boundaries.

For instance, Montagu encouraged Mary Astell to write a preface for the *Letters* in 1724, who

was one of the few readers who took an early glimpse of the unfinished letter book: "the world

should see, to how much better purpose the LADIES travel than their LORDS . . . . a lady has the

skill to strike out a new path, and to embellish a worn-out subject, with a variety of fresh and

elegant entertainment."[204] Interestingly, one of the responses to the letters— a review in the

Annual Register (1763)— interrogates Montagu's authorship as well as authenticity in

representing the English language. Astell's preface notes how Montagu's sophistication displays

"the purity of the style for which it may justly be accounted the standard of the English tongue,"

echoing Montagu's insistence that the *Letters* championed national pride. *The Annual Register*

argued otherwise:

> In the very second page, and in the very first letter, and very first day's journey out of her
> own country, the lady begins to forget her own language. She says she had *voitures* to
> carry her from Helvoetsluys to the Brill; we cannot help thinking our English word
> *carriages* would have been as pure and as excessive. . . . there is in many places an

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[204] Preface to Montagu, *Turkish Letters*, 221.

affection of using foreign words, not quite consistent with the boasted purity of her language.[205]

The reviewer instead suggests that Montagu's deteriorating linguistic ability and Englishness derive from her penchant to imitate foreign language and customs that may well be affectation. While the reviewer doesn't doubt that the *Letters* are drawn from "actual sources inaccessible to others," it underlines the very masquerading qualities of the letter:

> [It make] us suspect a little, that the writer of these letters has here given some scope to imagination, and is not the lady, who is generally supposed to be the author of them. The observation that, if women were to go naked, the face would be hardly observed, and the idea of the stays, seem to discover something of the wag; and the stile of the prefaces, as well as the editor's advertisement, has so great a resemblance to the letters themselves, that we almost imagine the whole written by the same hand.[206]

Travel writing at this moment blurs the boundary between truth and fiction, as Montagu and Astell are somehow merged as one fictional writer named "our pseudo lady traveller."[207] This suggested pseudo-ness, only partially true since Montagu actually did travel and write the letters, implies that the translatability of travel writing functions as a masquerade that is possibly deceptive. If so, Montagu's imaginary readers participate or "collude" in the recreation of such travel experience to the extent that truth and fiction collapse. She thus challenges the nature of travel writing dictated by the Royal Society, instead focusing on translating national identity in terms of sexual politics that puts her English language, sensibility, and sexual propriety on the stand.

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[205] *The Annual Register*, 1763, Ibid., 245.

[206] Ibid., 246. A debate stirred at the time about who actually penned the letters. For instance, in 1826, Lady Elizabeth Craven writes that "some [letters] might be [Montagu's], but I was sure most of the Letters were composed by men." Lady Elizabeth Craven, in *Turkish Letters*, 249.

[207] Ibid.

Elizabeth Marsh's *The Female Captive*: Pamela in the Orient

Marsh was the first British woman to publish a captivity narrative centered around Barbary. While oriental captivity narratives were reported to have been published as early as 1587, pseudo-captivity narratives were more common than actual accounts.[208] For instance, William Rufus Chetwood penned *The Voyages, Dangerous Adventures, and Imminent Escapes of Captain R. Falconer* (1724) and *Voyages and Adventures of Captain Robert Boyle* (1726), the latter which remained so popular that its publication continued at least until the mid-nineteenth century. Penelope Aubin was also inspired by the captivity plot, placing her female protagonists at the hands of oriental appropriation in *The Noble Slaves: Or the Lives and Adventures of Two Lords and Two Ladies* (1722). While tales of oriental captivity were part of the public consciousness of the British Empire, Marsh's captivity narrative was unprecedented in that it unraveled a personal trial in a direct, first-person female voice.[209]

Although it was rare for women to travel internationally, Marsh's mobility was not restricted due to her family's involvement in colonial trade. Instead, the changing transnational tide of the British Empire molded Marsh's life in a significant way. Born in Portsmouth in 1735, Marsh moved to Jamaica with her family who were engaged in both legal and illegal transcontinental trade, including profits from the slave trade. Her father Milborn Marsh worked

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[208] Joe Snader, "The Oriental Captivity Narrative and Early English Fiction," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 9, no. 3 (1997): 267-298. Also see Khalid Bekkaoui, *White Women Captives in North Africa: Narratives of Enslavement, 1735-1830* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Gillian Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs: France and Slavery in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011); and Gerald MacLean and Nabil Matar, "Captives," in *Britain and the Islamic World, 1558-1713* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 125-155.

[209] Aphra Behn was one of the few female writers who also had first-hand experience with the empire, colonialisms, and slave trade. In *Oroonoko*(1688), Behn emphasizes that "I was myself an eye-witness to a great part of what you will find here set down," framing the novella as a direct testimony of colonial experience. Although she remains curiously absent from Oroonoko's final execution, her journalistic knowledge of the colony grants her authority and self-possession as an imperial agent. Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko and other Writings*, ed. Paul Salzman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 6.

as a naval dockyard administrator, while some evidence suggests that her mother Elizabeth Bouchier may have been of mixed race.[210] Spending part of her childhood in Minorca and Gibraltar, Marsh was of obscure origin and was socially marginal, not completely fitting privileged class, gender, and possibly racial categories. In 1756, at the age of twenty-one, she embarked on a trip from Jamaica to England by herself, partly to run away from the fear of Jamaican slave unrest and also to join her then fiancé Henry Towry in England. Exposed to hundreds of seamen, her sexual trial began when her ship was attacked by Barbary corsairs. With no proper female chaperon, she was even asked to sleep alongside male captives at one point. Instead, her family had asked a captain James Crisp to accompany her at sea. When she is taken by force to Sidi Muhammad's seraglio, she is asked to become his concubine to whom she refuses by deploying a plot: that she is already married, and the said Captain Crisp is her fake husband. Oddly, she actually ends up marrying Crisp and abandoning her original fiancé, exemplifying a fine example of art/fiction becoming reality. That is, deceit and artifice at the threat of cultural appropriation becomes a powerful tool for Marsh that turns her into a creator and manipulator of her own history.

As a storyteller, Marsh translates her captivity into a seduction plot in which she must defend her body and virtue against an Oriental sultan. To do this, she utilizes the domestic ideology of the proper lady and writes about her trial to fit a sentimental readership. Like Richardson's Pamela whose body is sought after by the hedonistic Mr. B, Marsh envisions herself as Pamela in the Orient, captivated by a foreign prince. While there is no evidence that Marsh had actually read *Pamela*, her letters nonetheless reverberate this successful sentimental novel in both theme and form. Further, Marsh rewrites herself as a sentimental heroine whose

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[210] See Linda Colley, *The Ordeal of Elizabeth Marsh: A Woman in World History* (London: Harper Press, 2007), 1-40.

body should be protected not by one proper suitor but by an entire band of European men. Captain Crisp, Mr. M--, Mr. R--, a French merchant who urges her to write to the Admiral, Mr. Andrews, and Mr. Court are but a few names who assist in Marsh's safe return home. These men are troubled by her ordeal as if it had a personal effect on each one of them as demonstrated in Mr. Court's worried letters. Persisting in using femininity and naiveté as a ploy to defend her body, Marsh demonstrates sentimental femininity as a masquerade that is confirmed by an even more sentimental writing. By "translating" the captivity experience into a seduction plot, Marsh's well being figuratively decides the fate of the British Empire and, to that extent, British masculinity; the band of European men must defend Marsh's honor in order to secure their place in the colonial world.

It is reported from eyewitnesses that she wrote voraciously during her captivity, writing letters inside the ship and also in the Moroccan prison. These letters were addressed to her parents, none of which survive. Like Montagu, Marsh's experience is reinvented as a discovery of self-examination long after the actual incident— a retroactive reimagining to which her neighbor Sir William Musgrave testifies as truth. Musgrave, Marsh's neighbor and compiler of *England, Scotland, Ireland: Musgrave's Obituaries Prior to 1800* (1899)*, owned a copy of *The Female Captive* and had meticulously written annotated notes in the margins to corroborate dates, names, and locations of Marsh's account. For instance, on the title page of *The Female Captive*, he hand-wrote:

> This is a true story. The lady's maiden name was Marsh. She married Mr. Crisp as related in the following narrative. But he, having failed in business, went to India, when she remained with her father then Agent Victualler, at Chatham, during which she wrote & published these little volume. On her husband's success in India, she went thither to him.

The book, having, as it is said, been bought up by the lady's friend, is become very scarce.[211]

Just as Robert Knox's *An Historical Relation of the Island Ceylon* was followed by authoritative figures of the Royal Society to attest its true nature, Musgrave attempts to bring Marsh's travel narrative to the traditionally empirical realms of travel writing that she continually slips away from.

The Female Captive was published anonymously in Aug 1769, fourteen years after Marsh's abduction. As Musgrove confirms, at this point she was married to Crisp with two children but was left to live with her father when her husband sailed for India after a financial debacle. With no money, house, or husband to rely on, her main purpose of publishing was to make a living. Unlike Montagu, Marsh was not of the upper class nor did she receive formal education on classical art or literature. Despite this disadvantage, she writes in the preface that "[t]he subject of these volumes is a story of real distress, unembellished by any Ornaments of Language, or Flights of Fancy," claiming that while she might lack rhetorical skills, her narrative is more accurate and truthful than other travel writings. At the same time, contrary to the Royal Society's guidelines, she attempts to translate sympathy instead of accurate ethnography. For instance, she addresses "the Generous, the Tender, and the Compassionate" readers as her ideal audience, defining her readership as a community of literate and sympathetic capacity who will take her captivity as a serious issue of national security. Marsh then includes a list of eighty-three subscribers, mostly her personal acquaintances, in the following pages.[212] The list included

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[211] This copy of *The Female Captive* belongs to the library of the British Museum. See *Notes and Queries: Number 19, March 9, 1850: A Medium Of Inter-Communication For Literary Men, Artists, Antiquaries, Genealogists, Etc*. Reprint, 2004.

[212] For more on subscription and publication in the eighteenth century, see *Books and Their Readers in Eighteenth-century England: New Essays*, ed. Isabel Rivers (London: Leicester University Press, 1982);

members of the middle and professional class and only a few aristocrats. With this group of

supporters Marsh constructs the middle class readers as participating in the very ideals of the

British Empire regardless of their class. In fact, Marsh's travelogue suggests that the travel

experience of the middle or lower classes was much more fluid and rich than was documented

historically by polite, genteel women like Montagu.

By the 1700s, England's contact with Islamic culture was represented mainly through the

Ottoman Empire, Barbary, and Morocco. Under Islamic law, heathens taken from war could be

enslaved, thus opening up the fear of white slavery. According to Colley, more than 20,000

British men were held captive by Barbary corsairs during the seventeenth and eighteenth century.

The term "Barbary" referred to Berbers, North Africa's indigenous people, although it was also

used as a term for the entire North African region including Arab and the Ottoman Empire.[213]

For instance, Shakespeare's Othello is described as a Moor, but he is also referred by Iago as an

"erring Barbarian."[214] The term "Turk" was also synonymous with Muslim or Ottoman, and was

applied pejoratively to those who display violent and patriarchal characteristics.[215] While

Europeans also practiced corsairing, the British Empire considered Barbary corsairing as

disrupting the prosperity of their maritime power that subjected Britons to potential slavery.

Morocco is reported to have systematized corsairing as a means to secure state finance,

requesting large ransoms in exchange of captives. By 1690, Morocco held at least 500 British

captives not including undocumented laborers who were unable to pay for their own ransom. In

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Hugh Reid, *The Nature and Uses of Eighteenth-Century Book Subscription Lists* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellon Press, 2013).

[213] Colley, *Captives*, 44.

[214] William Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Othello, the Moor of Venice* (New York: Penguin Books, 2001), 1.3: 112.

[215] MacLean, *Looking East*, 8.

fact, Colley points out that before 1730, Britons were exposed to information about white slavery more than any other form of slavery.[216] Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), for instance, begins as a Barbary captivity narrative— on a voyage to Guinea, he is taken captive by Turkish rovers of Sallee and is made a slave to a Moor. And while it was men's captivity that was popularized, instances of European female slaves did exist. Madame de Prade was a victim of white slavery put under the sexual mercy of her captor.[217] She was held captive and sold as a slave to Achmet-Talem, the Algerian sultan in 1678. This abduction was made known by Jean-Francois Regnard, a French playwright, who was on board the same ship that was attacked by Saracen pirates. Unlike Regnard who was released within ten months by paying a twelve-thousand-pound ransom, Madame de Prade never returned home. Thus, most readers would recognize Marsh's captivity as an immediate threat to the nation.

Marsh's captivity narrative, then, was both new and familiar to the English readers. After her abduction, Marsh and Crisp are taken on a long journey to Morocco. Her trials were multifold: she was relegated to physical, religious, and sexual assault as well as linguistic and sartorial acculturation. Like Rowlandson, she details her physical torments while journeying through the desert, traveling both by foot and on a mule amid the sweltering heat. As she is prepared to be presented to the prince, she is asked to change her dress to make herself

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[216] For a rich collection of other Barbary captivities, see *Piracy, Slavery, and Redemption: Barbary Captivity Narratives from Early Modern England*, ed. Daniel J. Vitkus (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001). See *White Slaves, African Masters: An Anthology of American Barabary Captivity Narratives*, ed. Paul Baeplar (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999) for a colonial American collection of such accounts. Also see Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert and Ivette Romero-Cesareo, eds., *Women at Sea: Travel Writing and the Margins of Caribbean Discourse* (New York: Palgrave, 2001) for a collection of essays on non-imperial women travelers. This book treats female pirates, servants, and slaves who contributed to travel accounts of Caribbean culture.

[217] See Diane Long Hoeveler, "The Female Captivity Narrative: Blood, Water, and Orientalism" in *Interrogating Orientalism: Contextual Approaches and Pedagogical Practices*, ed. Diane Long Hoeveler and Jeffrey Cass (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2006), 46-71.

presentable. "I intreated [*sic*] to be excused from so disagreeable a Task, acquainting them, how very inconvenient it would be to unpack my Baggage, and dress in such a Place; but no Intreaties had any Effect, and I found it was their Ambition to carry in, adorned in this Manner, Captives who, by Appearance, seemed above the Vulgar."[218] She is then "ornamented, as they imagined," as an object of novelty to the Moroccan eyes.[219] Marsh finds this transformation into a public spectacle extremely uneasy, unlike Montagu who enjoyed such attention. The same goes when Marsh is asked to meet the prince by herself without the accompaniment of Crisp, or when she is asked to remove her shoes upon entering the seraglio: "I, a long Time, refused to comply; but, finding there could, otherwise, be no Admittance, I threw my Shoes from me— Upon which the Slave informed me, that the Prince was esteemed a Saint, and therefore no Christians, unless he was barefoot, could be admitted to his Palace."[220] Her shoe, just as Montagu's English clothes and all it represents, is thrown away in the presence of an Oriental despot, marking her unwanted acculturation.

If Montagu's refusal to undress confirmed her British femininity, Marsh's womanhood is founded on her scheme to parody her own culture by posing as a married lady. As she comes face to face with the prince, she is surprised that he questions the validity of her pseudo-marriage with Crisp. For instance, he asks why she does not wear a wedding ring when it is customary for English wives to do so. To polish her fabrication, she later procures a fake wedding ring and gets rid of letters written to her parents that might betray her marital status. She even writes a fake letter testifying to her marriage lest spies might search her belongings. Marsh thus masquerades

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[218] Elizabeth Marsh, *The Female Captive. A Narrative of Facts, which Happened in Barbary, in the Year 1756. Written by Herself* (London, 1769) 1: 118.

[219] Ibid.

[220] Ibid., 1:134.

her own cultural values by "performing" her marital status. Like Pamela who faked her suicide to escape Mr. B, Marsh artfully invents and manipulates material evidence that will corroborate her lies. Furthermore, she outsmarts Pamela in that she understands how her letters can be intercepted at any time and thereby produces "fake" letters. Her subjectivity, then, lies in her ability to manipulate and disguise herself as faithfully married; the spurious letters transform Marsh into an artist and a storyteller even when her body is held captive. Marsh's artful guise allows her to perform her original English identity at the proximity of an Oriental monarch so that she may become the centripetal force in this sexual game.[221] In this way, Marsh becomes both a literary forger and a cultural impostor, using the art of deceit as a communicative tool to consolidate her identity as British. Her masquerade thus foregrounds the instability between Turkish and English culture.

This insistence on shielding herself from oriental influence is troubled, however, by the notion that Marsh cannot help but admire what she sees. She is mesmerized by the beautiful palace, imported gems, but most of all, by the prince's masculine sensuality. While her future husband Crisp is continually referred to as a "Friend" throughout the entire narrative with no physical description, she goes into great detail to illustrate the prince's bodily charm:

> [He was] tall, finely shaped, of a good Complexion, and appeared to be about Five-and-twenty. He was dressed in a loose Robe of fine Muslin, with a Train of at least two Yards on the Floor; and under that was a Pink Sattin Vest, buttoned with Diamonds: He had a small Cap of the same sattin as his Vest, with a Diamond button: He wore Bracelets on his Legs and Slippers wrought with Gold: His figure, all together, was rather agreeable, and his Address polite and easy.. . . When we entered the Saloon, where the prince was

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[221] This scene is strikingly in opposition to Daniel Defoe's *Roxana* and the titular protagonist's performance of nationality. In order to gain public fame, Roxana dresses as a Turkish princess and dances exotically in front of the English king, ultimately becoming his lover. Her performance of a Turkish identity at the proximity of an English despot gains her access to power and sexual pleasure, displaying the secret affinity and fascination between an Oriental and domestic identity. In Marsh's case, because such "secret affinity" does not guarantee fictional distance, she refuses to acknowledge her fascination with the East.

waiting to receive me, I was amazed at the elegant figure he made, being seated under a Canopy of Crimson Velvet, richly embellished with Gold. [222]

The prince becomes part of *her* oriental fantasy, coupled with lush objects which highlight his corporeality. Sidi Muhammad, or Mohammed Ben Abdellah al-Khatib (1710-1790) ruled Morocco from 1757 to 1790.[223] The relationship between Britain and Morocco was tense in 1756, when Captain Hyde Parker rejected Morocco's request for necessary materials. Sidi Muhammad in return ordered British ships to be seized and refused British consul in Morocco. At the time of Marsh's abduction, he was actually forty-six years old, not five-and-twenty. Her representation of him, then, is clearly clouded by her enchantment towards the prince as the emblem of oriental sexuality. She later regrets showing interest in a collection of jewelry presented to her, as this act is construed as an acceptance of the prince's favor, a fact that she only acknowledges subconsciously. Likewise, she is afraid that the prince's spies might discern her approbation: "for I was ever in Dread, that his Imperial Highness would again send for me, having heard, from undoubted Authority, that I was not indifferent to him."[224] Here, she insinuates that the spies might fabricate false rumors to assume her inclination towards the sultan, only that such rumor might as well unveil her desires kept even from herself. Indeed, her description of the prince belies the traditional description of a ruthless and lascivious tyrant, as

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[222] Ibid., 2:19; 2:35.

[223] It seems that although Sidi Muhammad had not officially begin his reign in 1756, he was already viceroy in practice and next in line to Sultan Mawlay Abdallah who ruled between 1728-1757. See James A. O. C. Brown, *Crossing the Strait: Morocco, Gibraltar and Great Britain in the 18th and 19th Centuries* (Boston: Brill, 2012), especially 21-54 and Khalid Ben-Srhir, *Britain and Morocco During the Embassy of John Drummond Hay, 1845-1886* (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005), 13-20 that offers a review on eighteenth-century British trade with Morocco. Also see Priscilla H. Roberts and James N. Tull, "Morocan Sultan Sid Muhammad Ibn Abdallah's Diplomatic Initiatives towards the United States, 1777-1786," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 143, no. 2 (1999): 233-65 to read about Sid Muhammad who was the first to recognize the United States as a nation. Morocco went through major diplomatic changes during Sidi Muhammad's reign who, despite his initial stance, became more open to European and American trade.

[224] Marsh, *The Female Captive*, 2: 80.

she invests more time illustrating the prince's manner and charm rather than explaining Crisp's valor. Her true masquerade, then, lies in her effort to keep her fascination towards the prince and his palace a secret, both from the European men surrounding her including her future husband and from those imaginary, sympathetic readers of the future. Put another way, her captivity is actually captivating.

Her biggest trial, however, comes from losing the ability to speak for herself when she is "lost" in translation. Unable to speak the Moriscos language, she is dependent on an interpreter who does not always translate to her will. For instance, when she first meets the prince, she intends to report her mistreatment as a prisoner. The interpreter, however, refuses to translate this in fear of punishment; Marsh never communicates her intentions, as she has no linguistic agency. Marsh further realizes the danger of mimicking Oriental culture when she encounters a black woman who importunes her to learn Morisco. At this particular moment, her description is full of racially charged language: "she was a large Woman, but low in Stature, of a sallow Complexion, thick-lipped, and had a broad flat Face." [225] Not understanding the black woman, Marsh asks a French slave boy to translate, to which he replies "rien de consequence." Marsh then "innocently" repeats the woman's enunciation: "I imprudently repeated some Words after her, but found, when too late, that I had renounced (though innocently) the Christian religion, by saying, *There is but one God, and* Mahomet *is his prophet.*"[226] This proclamation refers to the "Shahadah," or the "Tawhid," the declaration of the Muslim faith. This testimony delights the Muslim court, prompting the prince to invite her to his private apartment as his concubine. Learning that death is the punishment to renouncing the Muslim religion when she had already publicly rejected the Christian faith, she attributes the error to mistranslation: "I assured the Prince, that, if I was an

[225] Ibid., 2: 24.

[226] Ibid., 2: 27.

Apostate, it intirely [*sic*] proceeded from the fallacy of the *French* Boy, and not from my own Inclination."[227] Unwarranted translation leads her to lose both her linguistic, religious, as well as sexual authority, demonstrating the convoluted cultural work performed by translation.

Specifically, the lack of rhetorical power results in losing command over her body. Learning that Marsh is held captive at the court after this mishap, Crisp comes to demand her, but "the inhuman Guards beat him down for striving to get in, and the *black* Women, holding me and halloing out, — *No* Christian, *but a* Moor, — tore all the Plaits out of my Cloaths, and my Hair hung down about my Ears."[228] Marsh's own propriety is put under scrutiny, the reference to a woman's disheveled hair implicating moral fall. This is the only incident in which a direct physical attack on Marsh's body is described; it reads almost as a near-rape scene performed by a group of Muslims, stood out by one strikingly othered black Moor in contrast to her fragile English body. She becomes the maid in distress whose body represents a national integrity held against the religiously and racially conspicuous other.

And so to make up for her lost authority, she writes. She employs writing as a testament to her survived virtue; her letter becomes a public statement to some of her most intimate acquaintances as well as the general reading public, testifying how she chose to remain British even after a personal invitation from the sultan. It is this testament that utterly transfigures Marsh as Pamela in the Orient; for it is only after Mr. B reads Pamela's letters that he realizes her innate goodness. The content of the letters are not new to him, as he has been an active participant in her seduction plot. Yet when he reads "the light [she] represents things in," he begins to see

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[227] Ibid., 2:45.

[228] Ibid, 2: 44.

things differently.[229] To read the letters, Mr. B takes Pamela to the pond where she staged her suicide, as if to see how her rehearsed self-representation comes to life through writing: "[he] seemed so moved, that he turned away his face from me; and I blessed this good sign, and began not so much to repent his seeing this mournful part of my story."[230] Her letters are then circulated among Mr. B's relatives and friends as an appraisal to her value. In such a way, Pamela's virtue is transferred from body to text, while her interiority gains respect due to the letter's dissemination. Likewise, *because* Marsh writes and publicizes her captivity, she gains moral victory. Through this transference and translation, Marsh taps into the power of written testimony, betraying the performativity of travel writing that serve as an avenue in which English cultural values such as chastity, honor, and modesty are substantiated. At the risk of her reputation, Marsh reveals her past and reconstructs, fictionalizes, and crystalizes her tested morality. Set in a transcultural surrounding in which her body is under immediate scrutiny, Marsh's masquerade as a married Englishwoman transcends linguistic and religious alterity, presented as a universally held value supposedly recognized even by a Muslim sultan despite a mistranslation that leads her to momentarily deny her cultural values.

Put another way, her letters as sentimental narrative "perform" nationality by appealing to sympathy as constructing British mores. Marsh thus employs sentimentality and sympathy as tools to protect her propriety and Englishness, deliberately rewriting her ordeal to express sympathy as universal language. For instance, at the prince's temptation, she resists in such manner: "I, therefore, on my knees, implored his Compassion, and besought him, as a Proof of that Esteem he had given me to leave him for ever. My Tears, which flowed incessantly, extremely affected him; and, raising me up, and putting his Hand before his Face, he ordered,

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[229] Samuel Richardson, *Pamela; Or, Virtue Rewarded* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980), 275.

[230] Ibid., 276.

that I should be instantly taken away."[231] Like Pamela, Marsh uses the same rhetoric of suffering that serves as a proof of moral worth; as one can imagine, her tears need no translation from an interpreter and transcend linguistic boundaries. Sympathy is such a powerful tool that it frees her from bondage; it represents her will of self-governance that will not "consent" to giving away her body to a Muslim prince. What she ultimately "translates," then, is sympathy and virtue emanated through her body as text. Where linguistic translation fails, the body succeeds in translating sympathetic virtue. In particular, Marsh's use of sentimental bodily language as well as her insistence on monogamy serves as a universal code that overwrites Islamic law. It is curious that the sultan needs to check her married status or seek her consent before he can hold her sexually captive, as if the rules of self-governance and English domesticity prevail the Islam court's religious authority. In this way, Marsh universalizes the English woman's sexual chastity as a token of cosmopolitan currency available anywhere in the world.

Contrary to Diane Hoeveler who argues that Marsh's text is more about religious conflict than sexual threat, I am suggesting that sexual advances towards English women is synonymous with religious, cultural, and political assault that puts Englishness at risk. Hoeveler reads Marsh's captivity narrative as a "Christian Orientalist text" in which Marsh as a middle-class woman counters Montagu's assessment of the harem and Muslim womanhood.[232] According to Hoeveler, Marsh's text is not about sexual temptation but religious tension. Hoeveler suggests that because Marsh's text is ideologically intent on enforcing British expansionism as a religious right and duty, her description of Islam women is much more critical compared to Montagu's. Admittedly, Marsh differs from Montagu in that she reads social oppression instead of liberty in Muslim women. Unlike Montagu who celebrated the power of the veil, Marsh sees the limitations of

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[231] Marsh, *The Female Captive*, 2: 43.

[232] Hoeveler, 46-71.

female behavior enforced by the same veil. For instance, on witnessing a Moorish wedding, she notes that "the Bride was invisible, it being the Fashion of the Country to conceal such Persons from public View."[233] Anonymity, instead than granting liberty, constrains the bride who had never seen the groom until the wedding day. The inferior treatment of Muslim women enrages Marsh due to the possibility that she might become one of them; in this sense, she identifies herself as a potential Muslim bride who must devise guises to maintain her "English" independence.

Yet while Marsh certainly expresses more anxiety towards Muslim culture, Hoeveler's reading overlooks the pivotal role of Marsh's self-fashioning as an author of her own history. For Marsh strives to prove her British identity by mimicking, replicating, and translating her own culture— the ring and the fake letters serving as signifiers of the English courtship plot translated into a Muslim context. Most significantly, Marsh's mode of resisting sexual and religious temptation is not an appeal to Christian fidelity but an imposture that she is a properly married English lady. Put another way, Marsh translates religious anxiety into sexual politics. Sexual threat overrides religious conflict; Marsh's story is devastating not because she is a Christian captured in a Muslim world but because she is an English woman whose body must only be handed over to one English man. In fact, even before her inadvertent renouncement of the Christian faith, the prince had already invited her to reside in the palace, offering exotic rarities as a bribe. Marsh refuses, claiming that "I was very happy in a Husband, who was my Equal in Rank and Fortune, I did not wish to change my Situation in that Respect."[234] This statement is not entirely true, as English women in fact did not have the right to own property until the Married Women's Property Act in 1870. Married women of Marsh's time were therefore

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[233] Marsh, *The Female Captive*, 2: 88.

[234] Ibid., 2: 23.

certainly not equal to their husbands, both socially and economically. This scene poignantly

echoes Montagu's reference to the Turkish bath as the equivalent of the English coffee house

when English women were actually restricted from such public sphere. Marsh exaggerates what

is available to English women to use England as a counter point to Muslim wives, rectifying the

English household as an imaginative modern institution. Marsh's cultural masquerade, then, is a

plagiarism of her own culture in which she bends the truth to emphasize her cultural identity.

That cultural norm is further solidified by the insertion of Mr. Court's four letters in the

final pages of the narrative that is decidedly more conservative compared to Marsh's. Court's

letters are the only epistolary other than Marsh's own to be presented as a first-person voice.

Court, a merchant who offers his lodging to Marsh and Crisp in Morocco, represents the voice of

morality, reminding her of British civic duties as well as domestic ones. In one of the letters, he

sums up her ordeal in the gothic language of horror:

> The fatal day at *Morocco* never occurs to my Mind but with Horror, and, when I think
> how near you were being lost for ever, when the Tyrant, to use *Phocya*'s Expression in
> the *Siege of* Damascus, *would have sunk you down to Infamy and Perdition here and
> hereafter*, it fixes a Melancholy on me, that I am not capable of shaking off, for some
> time.[235]

Contrary to Marsh who curiously does not detail her psychological turmoil in great depth, his

tone is much graver. Like Bacon, Court also shows disdain for any kind of cultural assimilation:

when he finds Marsh dressed for the prince with her hair done "in the Spanish fashion," he

"seemed to be surprised at [her] Appearance, and walked very pensively about the Room,

without speaking a Word; which [she] could not then account for."[236] After Marsh's release from

the court, he sends her words of caution and moral gravity: "Let me intreat you never, at any

Rate, to repeat a Word in the Language of the Country, not even the most trifling; and always

[235] Ibid., 2: 103.

[236] Ibid., 2: 16.

avoid the Room, when the Governors, or principal Moors, enter . . . Trust in Providence, and be assured Virtue and Innocence will ever be the peculiar Care of that supreme Disposer of all Events."[237] That is, she must not dress, speak, or mimic the fashions of the Orient in order to keep her English "Virtue and innocence" untainted.

And so she arrives in Bristol a married woman, this time legitimately and genuinely so. Since her father decides to break off her engagement with Captain Towry, who had been curiously absent from the entire ordeal, and because due to "[Court's] general good Character, the Gratitude [she] owed him, and [because her] Father's Desire over-balanced every other Consideration," she and Crisp decide to wed. The entire travelogue finally comes to an end with Mr. Court's letter of blessing:

> Permit me to congratulate you, most unfeignedly, on so important an Event, as the entering into a State, in which I am persuaded you will find the utmost Height of Felicity. I heartily applaud your Choice, which gives me an additional Proof of your good Sense and Judgment, in bestowing your Hand and Heart on a Man every Way so deserving of you.[238]

By borrowing Court's voice as a public approval, her trial is finally vindicated. Marsh's choice to end *The Female Captive* with Court's letter is a peculiar one that removes her own voice, just when she had finally redeemed linguistic authority. If the first preface and list of subscribers functioned as a reminder of Marsh's engagement in Britain's civic society, Court's letters serve as the authoritative imperial voice that celebrates her role as a producer of a middle class bourgeois family.

Yet Marsh includes Court's letters not necessarily to underline civic duties but to validate her body's worth. While it is never directly discussed, it is highly probable that Marsh assumes Court's affection for her, emphasizing his investment in her ordeal. If so, then with

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[237] Ibid., 2: 104-106.

[238] Ibid., 2: 156-7.

Court's letters, the captivity narrative turns into a saga of courtship to which Marsh becomes the sole protagonist. Perhaps to underscore her sexual modesty, Marsh further flatters herself as a fair bachelorette at a point in life when she was already married, or possibly widowed, as she did not know if her husband was alive when she wrote *The Female Captive*. In essence, she portrays herself as an attractive romantic heroine who becomes the object of three Englishmen's desire (i.e. Mr. Court, her original fiancé Towry, and Crisp) and one Oriental sultan who is so moved by her tears that he simply cannot violate her body. And so, like Pamela, Marsh establishes a household with one English man and returns safely to her homeland. There is no way of verifying whether Marsh indeed had entered Sidi Muhammad's court in 1756. Yet even if this sexual plot is a fictional one, her successful escape from Barbary by manipulating and devising her own history as a married women translates sympathy that merits value in her English body. With that translation of sympathy, then, her virtue is rewarded.

What Montagu and Marsh both achieve, despite their differences in style and perspective, is to translate national identity as gender construct at the contact zone of the Orient. Travel writing reconfigures the women's body as a cosmopolitan currency, universalizing the English women's sexual virtue as an index of modern British subjectivity. To an extent, the English domestic novel borrows the tradition of travel writing and vice versa in which the female body and cultural mores are put under assault. Domestic novels eroticize such captivity plot into a domestic context in which an English woman is attacked by a debauched English aristocrat instead of an Oriental despot, held captive in English cottages instead of the seraglio. In fact, it is quite plausible to conclude that the English domestic novel borrowed and recreated the female oriental experience as a novelistic endeavor to establish modern subjectivity, just as Armstrong

argues that Richardson borrowed from American captivity narratives such as Rowlandson's. In Marsh's case, she borrows from domestic novels just as much as they imitate captivity narratives, suggesting the interconnection between novel and travel writing. Particularly, she marries Crisp because she reinvents herself as Pamela in the Orient; the Oriental sultan, ironically, helps her establish that English household.

This chapter expanded the scope of translation to cultural and sentimental translation, one which travelers decode social differences in sympathetic terms. Montagu and Marsh's travel writings allow one not to actually translate but instead to imagine a supposedly transnational and cosmopolitan relation of self and other that underlines the role of sympathy. This relationship is governed by a specific gender dynamic in which English femininity prevails as the universal norm. Travel writing as translation puts English femininity on a pedestal by "moving across" national border. When English virtue successfully endures the test of oriental despotism, its translatability becomes universal. Female writers as cultural translators play a pivotal role in the development of self-representation of the British Empire, in which the woman's sexual plight becomes of national *and* cosmopolitan interest. With this in mind, the next chapter turns to how reading such cultural translation transforms England into an imaginary contact zone that requires the English readers to serve as intercultural translators.

Chapter 3. Translating Novel and Novel Objects in

Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* and *Mansfield Park*

If historians elevated the novel to a central position in the history of nationalism, Jane

Austen is regarded as one of the pioneers who established domestic realism or the novel of

manners as *the* prototypical English national literature. F. R. Leavis' *The Great Tradition*, for

one, points to Austen as providing the moral foundation for the modern English novel.[239] As the

story goes, if Sir Walter Scott made the novel a respectable and masculine form at a time when

novel reading (and writing) was considered "feminine," Austen perfected domestic realism and

is consequently responsible for what Henry James notoriously terms "loose-baggy monsters," or

the bulky nineteenth-century realist novels.[240] Or as Clifford Siskin puts it, Austen rejected "epic

and tragic models for the novel in favor of a turn to the probable."[241] Austen's pioneering role in

championing the domestic novel over other genres of prose fiction came with a price, however.

For she has long been the victim of what Edward Said calls "the rhetoric of blame," employed by

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[239] F. R. Leavis claims that by mastering the novelistic modes of Fieldingesque plot and Richardsonian psychology, "Jane Austen, in fact, is the inaugurator of the great tradition of the English novel." F. R. Leavis, *The Great Tradition* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1962), 7.

[240] John Halperin observes that "realism" as a critical term was first employed to describe fidelity of representation in the 1850s. See John Halperin, "Jane Austen's Nineteenth-Century Critics: Walter Scott to Henry James," in *Jane Austen: Bicentenary Essays*, ed. John Halperin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 11. Although Halperin suggests that the term was first imported from France in the 1840s, the earliest example in *OED* is from 1856 quoted by John Ruskin. "realism, n.". OED Online. March 2016. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/158931?redirectedFrom=realism (accessed March 17, 2016).

[241] Clifford Siskin, *The Historicity of Romantic Discourse* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 143.

subalterns and underrepresented groups that attack her "retrospectively for being white, privileged, insensitive, [and] complicit" in her treatment of the British Empire's postcolonial issues.[242] Or put another way, critics suggest that Austen wrote strictly for an English audience about English domestic life set in small English neighborhoods without regard to the complex political and social conditions of the time— after all, Austen insisted that "3 or 4 Families in a Country Village is the very thing to work on."[243] Said thus reads Austen as an imperialist who was complicit in condoning, if not promoting, the British Empire's colonial regime. He assumes that Austen established the moral foundation of the English novel by limiting her subject to domestic courtship and the minute details of everyday life.

This chapter argues the opposite: that the description of those everyday relationships is precisely how Austen engages in the politics of the British Empire, shown through translations of imported novel and novel objects that infiltrate domestic space. By "novel objects," I first refer to exotic and imported "things" that her characters encounter on a surprisingly daily basis, such as old pseudo-castles, japanned chests, modern china, Rumford chimney, and of course, the new publication in style— novels. The multiple texts that Catherine Morland and Fanny Price read, such as gothic fiction, romantic novels, and travel writing are consumed as highly commercialized and culturally charged "objects" during this period. The ability to tease out the transcultural connotation of those objects figures as an important barometer in measuring one's self-governance. That ability lies, I argue, in "reading as translation," or reading that transfers cultural, moral, and sentimental values of cosmopolitanism to reflect on her/his relationship with others. In Austen's world, the mass consumption of foreign objects and novel reading occur simultaneously as a daily activity. What one reads weighs just as much as what one consumes;

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[242] Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage books, 1994), 96.

[243] Austen to Ann Austen, 9 September 1814, in *Jane Austen's Letters*,401.

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Mr. Collins is who he is because he reads Fordyce's sermons, while John Thorpe's fetish on horses and carriages proves to be a painful overcompensation of his unstable masculinity. At the same time, *how* one translates things and objects becomes an integral part of "growing up," making reading a translational tool to reflect on one's interiority. By "translate," I mean being aware of the cultural and fictional distance of what one reads and channeling imperial awareness to define one's place in society.

By paying attention to the power of reading, interpretation, and translation presented in *Northanger Abbey* (1817) and *Mansfield Park* (1814), this chapter investigates how Austen establishes her domestic novels as national literature by fostering transnational awareness in her protagonists, and to that extent, her English readers. Austen encourages novel readers to become translators of transnational literary, cultural, and geo-political crises transposed by novel and objects that crowd the English home. By doing so, she demonstrates how the foreignness of that reading— imported tales, objects, and relationship between Britain and its colonies— constitutes and sustains the very reality of English common life and normative heterosexual relationships. Instead of leisurely pastime, "reading as translation" serves as a political act of cultural crossing that consolidates the boundaries of the seemingly homogenous community of English readers. "Translation" is a useful term to zoom in on Austen's treatment of reading as a means to disseminate, adapt, and negotiate original and exterior cultures. By underlining the multitudinous aspect of reading as translation, this chapter turns attention to Austen's nationalization of the English novel through extranational reading. Specifically, it focuses on how Austen trains her protagonists as cosmopolitan readers and translators as opposed to mere consumers of novel and things. Imported objects and fiction therefore serve as instruments to foreground her heroines' education; Austen promotes (imaginary) literary interaction, cultural crossing, and translation as

vehicles to probe into one's interior self. Ultimately, Austen both stamps nationality upon the English domestic novel and bends the boundaries of domestic realism at the same time to bring nationalism and transnationalism as reflections of each other.

Catherine and Fanny demonstrate how the English novel settles its boundaries of domestic realism by engaging and disenchanting itself from objects that are oriental, gothic, and exotic, only for them to realize that such novelty and extranationality become part of their social fabric. The very attempt to assert the novel's English dominance by disengaging Catherine from gothic fiction shows the English novel's dependency on those foreign sentiments. Austen shows that novel readers have the power to perform as transnational connoisseurs, translating foreignness into terms that will govern and promote an ordinary Englishness that can masquerade as universal, just as Walpole, Montagu, and Marsh have attempted to do so as imaginary translators. In this way, Austen refines the English novel as national literature but at the same time defines national character and readership as essentially transcultural. Coinciding with the novel's emphasis on how one retains Englishness among exotic objects and imaginary transnational experience, then, lies an implicit desire to realize the British subject as a foreign, female, and textual one. Such realization suggests the pliable connection between selfhood and other shaped through acts of reading as translation. Through Catherine and Fanny who spend most of their time reading books, observing people, and looking at things, Austen demonstrates how different readings construct the very selfhood that the novel posits as fictional. Reading as national habit constructs the modern self as essentially textual, or put another way, the self as mediated through fictional bodies of transnational imagination.

Austen's Ivory: Novel and Novel Objects

In a letter to her nephew James Edward Austen-Leigh in 1816, Austen famously writes: "What should I do with your strong, manly, spirited sketches, full of variety and glow? How could I possibly join them on to the little bit (two inches wide) of ivory on which I work with so fine a brush, as produces little effect after much labour?"[244] Many critics, such as Claudia Johnson, have discussed the role of this letter in creating the myth of Austen as a shy retiring authoress, modest of her writing and its subsequent limitations.[245] Austen's brother Henry Austen also contributed in creating this myth, providing biographical details of her life that highlight her modesty. Her nephew also published *A Memoir of Jane Austen* (1869) that described Austen's life as reserved, isolated, and uneventful. These biographies painted Austen as a parochial writer who lived in her small-shielded world without contact with the larger social circle of England. Yet such romanticized reading of Austen as an isolated writer cannot be taken at face value; her insistence on feminine modesty in lieu of her nephew's "manly" letters resonates the same kind of irony portrayed in her own fictional works.

Moreover, Austen's metaphor of comparing novel writing to the production of miniature painting, a popular activity among the gentry and middle class that relied on foreign imports like ivory, demonstrates how Austen was deeply interested in the transnational and cosmopolitan qualities of imported objects and novel writing. By bringing the two activities together, Austen intertwines domestic (as in household) and imaginary production based on cultural crossing. On the one hand, the meticulous finesse of miniature painting symbolized domestic life and intimacy

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[244] Austen to James Edward Austen-Leigh, 16 December 1816, in *Jane Austen: Selected Letters*, ed. Vivien Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 198.

[245] Claudia Johnson, *Jane Austen: Women, Politics, and the Novel* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

as a "reduced medium for a keepsake market" as Lance Bertelsen puts it.[246] On the other hand,

such activity was charged with transcultural exchange as a result of the British Empire's

expansion to seize colonial raw materials such as ivory from Africa and Asia. Put together,

miniature painting and ivory carried political implications about the global market. According to

Jon Mee, since the late seventeenth century, ivory was one of the many luxury items made

available in English households due to the increased British trade with the Royal African

Company. Ivory, along with slaves and gold, was considered the staple of West African trade.[247]

By Austen's time, ivory had become so domesticated and familiar that it is difficult to

determine whether Austen had its exotic origins specifically in mind.[248] Yet given the letter's

wry irony on her disguised feminine modesty, one might also suggest that ivory functions more

than a mere *tabula rasa* to her narrative creativity. The fact that she collapses novel writing and

the exotic imports of ivory as organic metaphor signifies two things: that Austen was aware of

the novel's potential as transcultural commodity, and that she considered the novel's status in the

very consumer culture that prospered with the ebb and flow of British trade. Objects imported by

colonial economy tell stories of imperial history, just as the novel was a product of a specific

material culture that cannot be separated from political ideologies. In this sense, Austen's novel

serves as a fetishized commodity translating human sentiments in the domestic space, but also

the very canvas that the British Empire projected its imported goods on. In such a way, she taps

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[246] Lance Bertelsen, "Jane Austen's Miniatures: Painting, Drawing, and the Novels," *Modern Language Quarterly* 45 (1984): 362.

[247] Jon Mee, "Austen's Trecherous Ivory: Female Patriotism, Domestic Ideology, and Empire," in *The Postcolonial Jane Austen*, ed. You-me Park and Rajeswari Sunder Rajan (New York: Routledge, 2000), 74.

[248] Nancy Armstrong talks about the European insistence that subjects dominate objects and how that relationship was inverted in the latter half of the nineteenth century when objects of the Empire poured into department stores and Victorian households. See Nancy Armstrong, "The Occidental Alice," *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 2, no. 2 (1990): 3-40.

into the discourse of novel consumption and Empire that demands the readers to develop from cosmopolitan consumers to cultural and social translators. As suggested in Austen's letter to her nephew, such transcultural awareness originated from her consciousness to pit novels and novel objects against each other.

It is against this backdrop that *Northanger Abbey* and *Mansfield Park* can be read together, two seemingly different novels written at different time periods and with dissimilar attitudes towards English aristocracy and British mercantilism. Unlike *Northanger Abbey* which I, like others, read as a delightful satire on the reading practice of the English audience, *Mansfield Park* has solicited a drastically different response from both literary critics and the reading public. In a review of Austen's *Emma* (1815) in the *Quarterly Review*, Scott includes a brief overview of Austen's publications, including *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) and *Sense and Sensibility* (1811). Yet he remains curiously silent on *Mansfield Park*, published just a year before *Emma*. Austen expresses her disappointment about his silence in a letter to John Murray, a successful upper crust London publisher who catered to the gentry. As she returns a copy of Scott's review that Murray had lent her, she writes: "The Authoress of 'Emma' has no reason, I think, to complain of her treatment in it, except in the total omission of 'Mansfield Park.' I cannot but be sorry that so clever a man as the Reviewer of 'Emma' should consider it as unworthy of being noticed."[249] In fact, nobody noticed *Mansfield Park*. It did not receive notices in any other review journals and its second edition sold rather poorly. Five years after its initial publication, only 252 copies had been sold and the remaining copies had to be remaindered at a low cost.[250]

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[249] Austen to John Murray, 1 April 1816, in *Jane Austen's Letters*, 453.

[250] David Gilson, *A Bibliography of Jane Austen* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 60.

It wasn't just contemporary readers and critics who found *Mansfield Park* less enticing than Austen's other works; some modern critics still do. Nina Auerbach, for instance, likens the protagonist Fanny's unattractiveness to Romantic monstrosity.[251] Indeed, *Mansfield Park* has often been perceived as exceptional— a "problem" novel— among Austen's oeuvre due to Fanny's passivity and the novel's austere treatment of Mary Crawford. Yet at the same time, and perhaps responsible for this hostility to the novel, it is also one of the few works of Austen that, aside from *Persuasion* (1817), invites vigorous political interpretations. The novel's reference to Sir Thomas' slave trade and plantation in Antigua particularly stirs up political conversation. Said's seminal reading of *Mansfield Park* in *Culture and Imperialism* invited a plethora of postcolonial readings that either blame or vindicate Austen for her casual treatment of the Empire's sinful past. *Mansfield Park* is considered blatantly political and lacking the delightful humor that some of her other works present.

My reading, however, focuses on how *Mansfield Park* is also like *Northanger Abbey*—a text that reflects on reading as national habit that is always political. *Mansfield Park* is just as concerned as *Northanger Abbey* with Fanny's reading habits and her development as a reader, consumer, and translator. As a bystander who seldom participates in the activities at Mansfield, Fanny learns to harbor an imperial awareness—a consciousness of Britain's place in the world— that consolidates *her* place at Mansfield. Like *Northanger Abbey*, the novel is preoccupied with reading the British Empire's complex relationship with its colonies; the haunting echoes of the slave trade, very much like the gothic romances in *Northanger Abbey*, function as a distant and exotic narrative myth. The English household, country houses, pseudo-castles, and even fashionable societies such as London or Bath operate as the "contact zone" in which two

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[251] Nina Auerbach, *Romantic Imprisonment: Women and Other Glorified Outcasts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 22-37.

different cultures — in *Northanger Abbey*, the gothic and fashionable Bath, and in *Mansfield Park*, Antigua and English aristocracy— meet to create a new type of Englishness based on reading as translation. In this contact zone, Catherine and Fanny translate objects, gothic and oriental romance, as well as accounts of English colonies. The exotic nature of those objects helped demarcate what is English and non-English, or perhaps muddle the two as in Austen's two-inches of ivory. Both novels display how this demarcation constructs an Englishness through proper reading even when that Englishness is threatened by gothic imagination and colonial anxiety. Catherine and Fanny's Englishness is no longer located solely in their female body as seen in Montagu or Marsh's travel narratives, but in their ability to properly translate such exoticness to govern the English household.

In order to examine what it meant to read imported ideas and novels like a proper Englishwoman, we must first consider how novel reading and popular consumption were perceived in the early nineteenth century. Scott's review of *Emma*, released a year after the novel's publication in *The Quarterly Review*, provides insight on reading as national habit. To begin with, he shaped how Austen's novels should be read. The editor of *Quarterly*, William Gifford, oversaw the editing of *Emma* and Scott's review, although the commission was made by John Murray, Austen's publisher. In a letter to Scott, Murray enquires: "Have you any fancy to dash off an article on 'Emma'? It wants incident and romance, does it not? None of the author's other novels have been noticed [in the *Quarterly*], and surely 'Pride and Prejudice' merits high commendation."[252] Peter Sabor points out that the tone of Murray's letter to Scott is quite frivolous, partly because novel reading in the early nineteenth century was still considered a light

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[252] Samuel Smiles, *A Publisher and his Friends: Memoir and Correspondence of the Late John Murray*, ed. Thomas Mackay (London: 1891), 282; 288-9.

entertainment.[253] One might also add that Austen was essentially an unknown writer until the publication of her nephew's memoir. At any rate, both Murray and Scott were acknowledging the fact that a rave review of *Emma*, or any other novel written by an obscure female novelist, would invite attention. The task was of significance to Scott especially because it allowed him to propose a defense of fiction writing in general. There was still an uncertainty as to the status of the novel in Austen's time, and therefore both writers and publishers of the book market worked to present the novel as a more desirable product.

Scott's review on *Emma* therefore opens with a general reflection on novels and novel reading at the time:

> There are some vices in civilized society so common that they are hardly acknowledged as stains upon the moral character, the propensity to which is nevertheless carefully concealed, even by those who most frequently give way to them; since no man of pleasure would willingly assume the gross epithet of a debauchee or a drunkard. One would almost think that novel-reading fell under this class of frailties, since among the crowds who read little else, it is not common to find an individual of hardihood sufficient to avow his taste for these frivolous studies. A novel, therefore, is frequently "bread eaten in secret."[254]

There is a strikingly similar protestation in *Northanger Abbey*, in which the narrator laments that novel reading is associated with social stigma: "'And what are you reading, Miss—?' 'Oh! It is only a novel!' replies the young lady; while she lays down her book with affected indifference, or momentary shame."[255] Though more than a decade had passed since Austen presumably finished drafting *Northanger Abbey* in 1803, Scott still feels the need to defend novel reading as a respectable social habit. He specifically points out the hypocrisy that leads readers to publicly

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[253] Peter Sabor, "'Finished Up to Nature': Walter Scott's Review of *Emma*," *Persuasions* 13 (1991): 88-99.

[254] Walter Scott, "Review of *Emma*," in *Jane Austen: The Critical Heritage*, ed. B.C. Southam (London: Routledge, 1968), 1: 63.

[255] Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 24.

disown novels but enjoy them in their privacy. The reader's response, then, was a source of anxiety that novelists and publishers wanted to modify.

Scott's review brings light to the English novel's stance as commodity in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Equally of significance to the novel's promotion was the question of how polite readers as consumers react to the novel. In order to distinguish between reading and reading as social act that involves cultural translation, a discussion on the history of readership will be useful. Literary critics of the English novel hardly reached a consensus on who read what kind of novels at what period and why. William St. Claire is one of those critics who points out the lack of research on the English readership: "Although there has always been much interest in the meaning of certain texts, how they came to be written, and in the lives of their authors, little attention has been paid to the process by which the texts reached the hands, and therefore potentially the minds, of different constituencies of readers."[256] St. Claire argues that by the end of the eighteenth century, the reading practice of Great Britain has transformed from the traditional "intensive reading" to "extensive reading," as more and more books became available as a popular medium.[257] Between 1700-10, 45 new novels were produced in Britain; by 1790-99, there were 710.[258] This was due to the expanding book market at the time and the rise of a popular reading audience. T. C. W. Blanning, for instance, claims that "[f]or the first time, in the eighteenth century, a reading public developed."[259]

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[256] William St. Claire, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 1.

[257] Ibid., 11.

[258] For statistics of novel production in Britain from 1700-99, see Nicholas Seager, *The Rise of the Novel* (Hampshire, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 140-54.

[259] T. C. W. Blanning, *The Culture of Power and the Power of Culture: Old Regime Europe 1660–1789* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 9. He explains that one sign of this, among many others, was

The critical attention to readership developed with the reader-response theories of the 1970-80s suggested by critics such as Wayne Booth, John Preston, and Wolfgang Iser.[260] Booth discusses how the author protects himself against disbelief by inducing the readers to read in certain ways and in certain points of view. Preston, inspired by Booth, further considers the reader's active role in making meaning of eighteenth-century novels. That is, he argues that the text presumes both a writer and a reader: the novel functions as "a process, not a product, and as a situation for the reader, not a received text."[261] The novel "must be addressed to no one in particular, for otherwise the reader will not feel that it is meant in particular for him."[262] Iser similarly develops Booth's idea of the "implied reader," a term used to indicate a presumed addressee and ideal recipient, claiming that the novel is "a genre in which reader involvement

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the replacement of aristocratic patrons as commissioning agents, although evidence points that by the early seventeenth century, printers and publishers were already investing their own money in publishing texts for sale. Also see Q. D. Leavis, *Fiction and the Reading Public* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1965) who popularized the term "growth of the reading public."

[260] John Preston, *The Created Self: The Reader's Role in Eighteenth-Century Fiction* (London: Heinemannn, 1970); Wayne Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961); Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978). These reader-response theories did not flourish as other novel theories did, partly because literary criticism tended to focus more on the novel's ontology (i.e. When and how did the novel originate?) and performance (i.e. What cultural works do novels perform?) as an independent text. It is also because the definition of the reader from the addressee of the work and the addressee of the narration was left unresolved. Instead, more attention was given to the empirical readers of the novel and the historical and cultural conditions that made the novel's "rise" possible. For instance, Terry Lovell and John Richetti focus on the middle-class readership and the so-called "popular" novels, examining the novel's consumption rather than its production and thus underlining the role of book publishers and readers. The novel as commodity, they argue, thrived with the transforming structure of the literary market and eighteenth-century consumer culture. See Terry Lovell, *Consuming Fiction* (London: Verson, 1987), who takes a Marxist and feminist view on the novel's consumption, and John Richetti, *Popular Fiction before Richardson: Narrative Patterns, 1700-1739* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992).

[261] Preston, 7.

[262] Ibid., 196.

coincides with meaning production."[263] For Iser, the term "implied reader" incorporates "both

the prestructuring of the potential meaning by the text, and the reader's actualization of this

potential through the reading process. It refers to the active nature of this process – which will

vary historically from one age to another – and not to a typology of possible readers."[264] Such

reading highlights the reader's role, as readers participate in the production of meaning by filling

the text's "vacancies." This active participation is critical to my discussion of Austen because it

challenges reading as a passive entertainment. Instead, active reading was a process of making

meaning that engages in social, cultural, and political translation about British subjectivity and

politics of the Empire.

Critical to this chapter's focus on reading as translation, that subjectivity is reliant on how

one consumes imported objects as a means to display one's interiority. Eugenia Zuroski, for

instance, argues that "figures of China . . . are fundamental to English literature's ability to

represent and reflect on itself as a cosmopolitan culture at all."[265] She claims that the relationship

between people and property changed drastically when material possession as aristocratic

inheritance was challenged through imported objects of the British trade. Specifically, she

contends that Chinese objects represented Britain's place in the global market place, while the

accumulation of such luxury goods became the modern avenue of self-fashioning. Julie Park

further aligns novel consumption with popular materialist culture that prevailed England during

the eighteenth century. According to Park, imported objects and goods created a rich vocabulary

on the idiom of selfhood during this period. The novel, usually represented as a factual form of a

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[263] Iser, xi. For more discussion on the "ideal reader," also see Umberto Eco, *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979).

[264] Preston, xii.

[265] Zuroski Jenkins, *A Taste for China,* 7.

subject's true history, "masqueraded subjectivity as an objective construct."[266] The novel as a new form of literature collaborated with consumer society's fictional lure of a new selfhood based on materiality. Specifically, her treatment of the novel as one of the many fetishized commodities of the time may help us understand Austen's own treatment of novel reading that went hand in hand with another popular social habit of the early nineteenth century— consuming foreign objects. Austen thus puts novel and novel objects as a lens to examine how English readership is constructed.

"Remember that We Are English": How to Read like an Englishwoman

As many critics agree, *Northanger Abbey* is a novel about reading novels, and I might add, imported things. For Austen, understanding extranational relations and affairs in books and things ironically confirms one's ability to establish meaningful relationships in his/her daily interaction. At first glance, reading is recommended as a suitable pastime, or to teach girls moral lessons. For instance, when Catherine comes back home banished from the Abbey, her mother realizes Catherine's sullen reverie and goes to fetch a book that will help her return to reality: "There is a very clever Essay in one of the books up stairs upon much such a subject, about young girls that have been spoilt for home by great acquaintance— 'The Mirror,' I think. I will look it out for you some day or other, because I am sure it will do you good."[267] Very much like Walpole's pseudo-translations, or Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* (1759), such self-

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[266] Julie Park, *The Self and It: Novel Objects in Eighteenth-Century England* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 18. For more readings on "thing studies," also see ed. Bill Brown, *Things* (University of Chicago Press, 2004). See Robert Markley, *The Far East and the English Imagination, 1600-1730* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) for a reading of oriental objects and the British Empire, and Bill Brown, *A Sense of Things: The Object Matter of American Literatur*e (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003) that reads objects and consumerism as defining American culture.

[267] Austen, *Northanger Abbey*,178.

referentiality to reading indicates how the novel points to its own way of thinking about its ontology.

For Austen, this self-referential tool had developed to encompass discussions of fictional genres in specific ways. She puts the novel of manners and gothic romance in conjunction with each other when, at least while Austen was composing *Northanger Abbey*, the two genres were competing to establish a tradition of national literature. Of course, by the time she finished writing *Northanger Abbey* and definitely by the time it was actually published in 1817, gothic romance's initial charm was quickly fading. For this reason, Austen apologizes for the novel not being on time: "The public are entreated to bear in mind that thirteen years have passed since it was finished, many more since it was begun, and that during that period, places, manners, books, and opinions have undergone considerable changes."[268] In other words, literary value, as well as material ones, was in such flux that a naïve reader like Catherine can hardly comprehend how English society operates according to English manners and customs. Austen was critically aware of gothic literature's intervention in English culture, and as such, Catherine's obsession with reading Ann Radcliffe's novels paints her as one of the most unsophisticated (albeit delightfully clumsy) characters of Austen's heroines.

Because Catherine confuses gothic fancy with English reality, she does not know how to command self-ownership, nor does she understand what it means to belong to a community of citizens that supposedly share the same interests. Not possessing the natural talent and gift fit for a protagonist, her "training for a heroine" must begin with reading as a way to teach her what those same interests are. So she begins to read Pope, Gray, Thompson, and Shakespeare, or "all

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[268] Advertisement to Austen, *Northanger Abbey*.

such works as heroines must read."[269] Her true passion, however, lies in novels, particularly

gothic fiction, rather than the carefully selected English canon. She is thus governed by "gothic"

rules and sentiments instead of English ones, or those that defy the rules of domestic realism.

While *Northanger Abbey* pokes fun at Catherine's naivety in trying to read hints of gothic traces

in Bath, it defends Catherine's reading habit at the same time. The narrator states that

"[a]lthough our productions have afforded more extensive and unaffected pleasure than those of

any other literary corporation in the world, no species of composition has been so much descried.

From pride, ignorance, or fashion, our foes are almost as many as our readers."[270] The "our" is

quite nebulous, as the narrator assumes a coherent national literature while also asking if gothic

fiction is in fact as exclusive as is made out to be. The narrator also questions the validity of

English canonicity, asking why readers of Milton, Pope, Prior, Sterne, and "The Spectator" are

proud to discuss their reading while readers of novels, such as *Cecilia*, *Camilla*, or *Belinda*, will

want to hide their books. Clearly, Austen suggests that there is a hierarchical distinction between

"higher" and "lower" literature, and a national consensus on what genteel women should and

should not read. Reading, then, is not a neutral activity according to personal taste but a gendered

and political one that is prescribed by arbitrary standards of civil society.

Furthermore, that civil society not only dictates what to read but *how* to read— i.e. how

to read in a way that sets up boundaries of Englishness. *Northanger Abbey* thus presents different

reading responses to novels. Catherine and Isabella's penchant for gothic novels is meant to be

treated as superficial as their friendship, while John Thorpe's disdain for novel reading is equally

meant to be laughed at. When asked if he had read *Udolpho*, Thorpe gives the same answer that

Austen had derailed moments earlier: "Oh, Lord! Not I; I never read novels; I have something

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[269] Ibid., 7.

[270] Ibid., 23.

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else to do."[271] He goes on to call Burney's *Camilla* (1796) a "stupid book" about "unnatural stuff" because he "heard [the authoress] had married an emigrant."[272] The idea that a proper novel must not deal with "unnatural stuff" possibly echoes Samuel Johnson's essay "On Fiction" in which he states:

> [Fiction's] province is to bring about natural events by easy means, and to keep up curiosity without the help of wonder: it is therefore precluded from the machines and expedients of the heroic romance, and can neither employ giants to snatch away a lady from the nuptial rites, nor knights to bring her back from captivity; it can neither bewilder its personages in desarts [*sic*], nor lodge them in imaginary castles.[273]

Johnson argues against the vogue of gothic and romance, describing some of their key characteristics as the "help of wonder" and therefore incongruent with the manners of English life.

Of course, while Thorpe uses the same language of critique, his complaint about *Camellia*'s unnaturalness isn't that it relies on supernatural events and wonders, but that an old man is represented as playing at see-saw. He picks one of the most mundane details of ordinary social interaction to align Burney's novel with other genres of prose fiction that were attacked for their moral depravity and unnaturalness. Thorpe thus mimics the rhetoric of literary critics without understanding what is "natural" and "unnatural." By doing so, he opts for an imagined community of readers with no consideration of what actually constitutes such standards, sensibility, or rationale. Instead, he demonstrates a parochial sense of nationalism, or jingoism if you will, displaying his aversion for cultural miscegenation if not a racial one when he points out Burney's intercultural marriage as grounds to dismiss her novel. It is curious that *Camilla* is neither a gothic nor a romance in a strict sense. In fact, it can be categorized as a novel of

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[271] Ibid., 32.

[272] Ibid., 33.

[273] Samuel Johnson, *The Rambler*, no. 4, 31 March 1750.

manners that deals with the courtship and romantic encounter of an English subject. That Austen

uses Thorpe, an odious buffoon who Catherine despises, to criticize the novel in general form is

meant to be read ironically. Thorpe, put simply, is a bad reader of the novel. Not only does he

dismiss *Camellia* for unrefined reasons, he is also an inconsistent critique, nonsensically

juxtaposing two radically different novels, *Tom Jones* and *The Monk*, as the only two novels

worth reading. Catherine may be a bit into horrid stories, but Thorpe cannot distinguish what he

reads, merely imitating the voice of a literary connoisseur without the proper acumen to translate

different social contexts.

Yet even though Thorpe is a pretentious literary critic with no profound understanding of

the written words, he implicitly links the novel with the nation at large, a reading that Henry

Tilney explicitly offers. Tilney, unlike Thorpe, demonstrates the ability to pass sound judgment

not only on the novel but also on England's political and global market, dictating Catherine's

taste as part of her "growing up." Rebuking the popular belief that *Northanger Abbey* makes fun

of gothic fiction, one must note that to Catherine's astonishment, Tilney is a fond reader of

gothic novels. He notes: "The person, be it gentleman or lady, who has not pleasure in a good

novel, must be intolerably stupid."[274] Yet his difference from Catherine is that he does not

confuse gothic fiction with English reality, and that he is well-read in history, politics, art, and

aesthetics as well— that is, institutionalized knowledge of the Empire that women like Catherine

were seemingly left out of. Catherine listens with shame when she cannot participate in Tilney's

discussion on the picturesque, a painful torment which the novel associates with female

education.[275] If gothic fiction put the women's body under assault, as did the captivity narrative

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[274] Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, 77.

[275] On the relationship between female education and shame, see Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's "Jane Austen and the Masturbating Girl," *Critical Inquiry* 17 (1991): 818-37. Catherine is made to feel "shame" at her

of Marsh, Austen's domestic novels displace bodily torment to moments of shame. Yet there is nothing shameful in reading gothic, romance, or novels, Austen suggests, as long as one understands how to read like an Englishwoman.

The female protagonist of Charlotte Lennox's *The Female Quixote* (1752), reverberating the trope of translation in *Don Quixote*, might elucidate how reading as translation changes from literal transposition to a cultural one. [276] As a social novice with no actual correspondence and experience with society, Arabella has been educated by the books she reads. Like Catherine, Arabella finds great pleasure in reading romances, regarding them as faithful pictures of real life. With no mother to guide her education, she indulges in her father's library which, "unfortunately for her, were great Store of Romances, and what was still more unfortunate, not in the original French, but *very bad Translations*."[277] That is, she reads French pseudo-translations of oriental romance that have again been translated to English by hack translators. Specifically, Arabella reads French Romances of Eastern princesses, among many others: Cleopatra, Cassandra, Clelia, and Cyrus, or romance from Egypt, Persia, Ethiopia, and Scythia. Yet the problem is not that she reads romance, but that she consumes "bad Translations"— that is, low-quality commodity as imports of a messy literary exchange, or cheap imitations of the original text. Something is lost

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idle search when Miss Tilney walks in on her observing the chest, and blushes deeply when she accidently runs into Tilney near his mother's old room. When moments of shame function as teachable moments for Catherine, Austen uses the language of torment and physical pain, two key components of gothic fiction, to describe how Catherine matures as an English woman.

[276] There are a few critical works that read *The Female Quixote* and *Northanger Abbey* together. See Debra Malina, "Rereading the Patriarchal Text: *The Female Quixote*, *Northanger Abbey*, and the 'Trace of the Absent Mother,'" *Eighteenth Century Fiction* 8 (1996): 271-92; and Eugenia Zuroski, "Disenchanting China: Orientalism and the Aesthetics of Reason in the English Novel," *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 38 (2005): 254-71.

[277] Charlotte Lennox, *The Female Quixote, or, The Adventures of Arabella* (Digireads Publishing, 2011), 10 (emphasis mine).

with bad translation, suggesting that it is perhaps not romances but the misrepresentation and

mistranslation of them that lead to Arabella's quixotic fancy.

Furthermore, romance is depicted as archaic and irrational *because* it is imported. For

example, Arabella continually expresses disappointment that her English reality cannot quite

catch up with quasi-oriental fantasy. When Arabella brings up the rules of romance and the fair

Cleonice, a beauty from Sardis, Lydia, her friend Miss Glanville replies: "Oh! Then it is not in

our Kingdom. What signifies what Foreigners do? I shall never form my Conduct, upon the

Example of Outlandish People; what is common enough in their Countries, would be very

particular here."[278] It is only in London that Arabella first realizes her penchant for Romance as

anachronistic. Believing herself to be a romantic heroine, she dresses in medieval style that

draws the attention of others: "The Singularity of her Dress, for she was cover'd with her Veil,

drew a Number of Gazers after her, who prest round her with so little Respect, that she was

greatly embarrass'd."[279] Through shame, Arabella learns to navigate the archaic and modern

world by training to become a critical reader with a judgment that is curiously grounded on

nationality. As Johnson points out, being English is determined by one's ability to disavow the

works of wonder that operate under the name of the foreign. Likewise, because textual reading

shapes the way characters interact in Austen's novels, the type of books that they read shows a

great deal about their place in society.

Significantly, it is not just books but also objects that demand cultural reading in

Northanger Abbey. The things that Austen's characters consume on a daily basis— imported

muslins, fireplace, china, and japanned furniture— mirror one's relationship with the outer world,

and demand a particular type of reading because they are imported. The desire for modern

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[278] Ibid., 118.

[279] Ibid., 212.

individualism is manifested through the architecture of these newly imported objects that tell stories of Britain's present relationship with cross-cultural currents. So when Catherine arrives at Northanger, she is caught between her imaginary gothic world and the realities of domestic life ruled by a tyrannical father. Her ability to read and translate gothic terms is put to a test as well as her eligibility as a desirable bride: after all, General Tilney invited her only because he mistakes her for an heiress suitable for his son.

Catherine finds herself dismayed when Northanger Abbey does not meet her gothic expectation, not least because gothic objects have been replaced with the latest foreign imports from Britain's global trade.

> The furniture was in all the profusion and elegance of modern taste. The fire-place, where she had expected the ample width and ponderous carving of former times, was contracted to a Rumford, with slabs of plain though handsome marble, and ornaments over it of the prettiest English china. . . . To an imagination which had hoped for the smallest divisions, and the heaviest stone-work, for painted glass, dirt and cobwebs, the difference was very distressing.[280]

To Catherine's surprise, the abbey is updated in contemporary style; what should have been occupied by ancient edifice has been replaced by the most fashionable global imports like marble and china. Specifically, "Rumford" referred to a modern fireplace designed by Benjamin Thompson, Count von Rumford, that supplied efficient heating over traditional fireplaces.[281] Count Rumford was an American born British physicist and a self-made aristocrat and loyalist. His innovative Rumford chimney, an "imported" technology of colonial America, first appeared

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[280] Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, 118.

[281] See Sanborn Brown, ed., *The Collected Works of Count Rumford*, 2 vols (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1969) for Rumford's two essays on the Rumford chimney fireplace. For biographical details on Rumford's life, see Sanborn C. Brown, *Benjamin Thompson, Count Rumford* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1979) and G. I. Brown, *Scientist, Soldier, Statesman, Spy: Count Rumford: The Extraordinary Life of a Scientific Genius* (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Sutton, 1999).

in London in the mid-1790s. It was an immediate success in London and thus would have been recognized as the latest modern technology when Austen was writing *Northanger Abbey*.
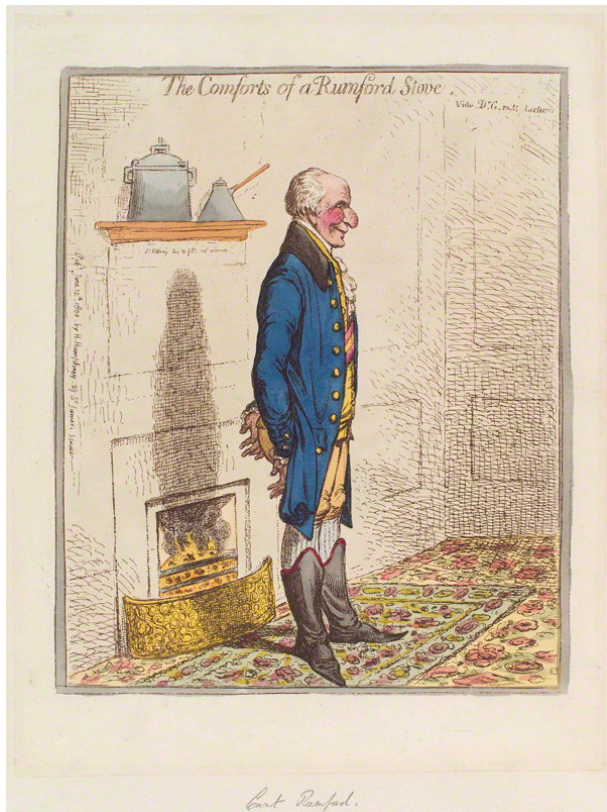
Figures 2 and 3: James Gillray, "Sir Benjamin Thompson, Count von Rumford ('The comforts of a Rumford stove')" (1800) © National Portrait Gallery, London, and Charles Williams, "Luxury, or The Comforts of a Rum P Ford" (1801) © The British Museum, London

The above two figures further detail the Rumford chimney's relation to novel reading in early nineteenth-century consumer market. The first, a portrait of Count Rumford with his back to the fire, shows the Rumford fireplace as an update on traditional household contrasted by the obtuse coffee and cooking pot above the mantle. The Count is grinning with satisfaction in his fashionable attire and boots, signaling his celebrated status as a successful scientist who changed the way British homes were structured. The Rumford chimney thus signified innovation, style, and refurbishing of the English domestic space. The second picture, a caricature of Gillray's

portrait, strikingly associates this new machine to the precariousness of women who pleasure themselves with novels. In this 1801 engraving entitled "Luxury, or the Comforts of a Rum P Ford" by Charles Williams, a young woman, possibly a prostitute, shows her naked posterior with a copy of none other than Matthew Lewis' *The Monk*, one of the gothic novels discussed in *Northanger Abbey*. As the lady's right hand is concealed under her dress, alluding to female masturbation, on the floor is laid open John Armstrong's poetic essay "The Oeconomy of Love," often referred to as an eighteenth-century sex guide for its erotic content. This caricature aligns Rumford as modern technology with gothic fiction and erotic poems as new commodities that are promiscuously consumed by women who cannot control their reading, consumption, and sexuality. Austen's reference to Rumford, then, indicates the very moral dilemma of those who feared the effect of consuming novel and novel objects in women consumers like Catherine. Modern technology is translated into a new sexual appetite for women whose domestic interior is fueled with the modern novel's eroticism.

Furthermore, instead of gothic apparitions and dead bodies, the abbey is substituted with quasi-Asian and colonial goods of the British Empire that serve as a medium of commercial and cultural exchange that threaten inexperienced women. Like Rumford, the ancient features of the abbey are replaced by "English china," the latest vogue that ironically symbolized modernity, progress, and elegant taste.[282] Unlike Otranto castle where ancient statues behaved like subjects with autonomy of their own, or the castle of Udolpho which Emily thinks is under supernatural spell, this ancient/modern abbey is filled with objects that turn humans into consumers. For instance, Catherine is surprised to discover an old chest lurking in her bedroom, only to be disappointed that it holds white cotton counterpanes instead of old gothic mysteries. Likewise, she later finds an old-fashioned cabinet similar to the one Tilney had depicted in his mock-gothic

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[282] Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, 118.

tale: "It was not absolutely ebony and gold [as Tilney described]; but it was Japan, black and yellow Japan of the handsomest kind."[283] Japan, or the material practice of Japanese lacquer, began with James I and was a part of an English craze on Asiatic goods or chinoiserie, such as Chinese-style gardens, furniture, and architecture. Japanning allowed for more durability, permanence, and exceptional hardness that were sought after in varnishing, making the body of the furniture timeless. The popularity of lacquer panels spurred an English japanning trade in the Restoration period that strove to emulate the artisanship of China.[284] Like imported china, such artisanship betrayed the superiority of the Eastern art practice and was considered both fashionable and modern. Like ivory painting, it became a popular leisure-time activity, especially for English ladies in the early eighteenth century.[285]

The gothic novel's penchant for objects to displace human agency confuses Catherine because she does not realize that the abbey has been taken over by capital enterprise dictated by the British Empire. As Catherine fumbles for some dark family secret tucked away in the japanned cabinet, all she finds is a roll of paper with an inventory of linens— another shopping list consisted of common household merchandise. Catherine misreads the abbey, the English china, and the japanned chest as signs of gothic mystery, when instead of oozing out horrid secrets of the Tilney family's distant past, these luxury goods characterize English domestic economy shaped by global trade. That Catherine finds these objects in the very room that haunts

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[283] Ibid., 123.

[284] For more information and chinoiserie and japanning, see Hugh Honour, *Chinoiserie: The Vision of Cathay* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973); Madeleine Jarry, *Chinoiserie: Chinese Influence on European Decorative Art, 17th and 18th Centuries*, trans. Gail Mangold-Vine (New York: Vendome Press, 1981), 62-64. On chinoiserie and the influence of Chinese objects in England in general, see David Porter, *Ideographia: The Chinese Cipher in Early Modern Europe* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001).

[285] For instance, many publications on japanning targeted a female audience in particular. Examples are The *Family Jewel; or The Woman's Councellor* (1704); *The Art of Japanning, Pollishing, Varnishing, and Gilding* (1730); and *The Ladies Amusement; Or, Whole Art of Japanning Made Easy* (1758–62).

her gothic imagination pokes fun at her misreading that must be corrected by an awareness of transcultural transition. Such objects transform the English household into an accomplice to imperial enterprise, modeled through the female subject positioned as cultural reader and consumer. In order to break Northanger's "spell," Catherine needs to become a global translator.

Northanger Abbey incessantly shows Catherine's gothic reading as out of place because it is not English. Her eerie expectation of finding hints to prove that Mrs Tilney was murdered by her husband, although figuratively true, utterly fails when she later learns that the mother passed away from illness. Catherine's gothic imagination is disillusioned by the mundane realities of life, and the novel finds humor in pointing out her folly. Yet it is not until Catherine realizes that her misreading is based on imagining the wrong type of national community that she can truly grow as a subject who commands her own feelings: "The vision of romance were over. Catherine was completely awakened. . . . She saw that the infatuation had been created, the mischief settled long before her quitting Bath, and it seemed as if the whole might be traced to the influence of *that sort of reading* which she had there indulged."[286] Only when she understands that her cognition was ruled by textual imagination out of place can she dismiss the confusion between objects and subjects: the disillusionment from gothic readings marks her subjectivity as a modern heroine who finds solace in a rational world order. The novel relies on the materiality of chinoiserie and imperialism to correct Catherine's fancy. It reinstates a proper way of reading the world without the "help of wonder," indicating that Austen fosters a transnational and transcultural awareness in Catherine as an agent in British consumer culture.

Furthermore, reading is suggested as a national habit that requires a particular type of political translation founded on nationality and rationality. When Catherine shares the latest gossip sent to her through a letter indicating that "something very shocking indeed, will soon

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[286] Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, 146 (emphasis mine).

come out in London," Miss Tilney interprets the news as an indication of a political uproar ready to strike.[287] Henry chastises his sister for her unwarranted fancy and points out that the rumor merely refers to a new publication coming out:

> Instead of instantly conceiving, as any *rational creature* would have done, that such words could relate only to a circulating library, she immediately pictured to herself a mob of three thousand men assembling in St. George's Fields; the Bank attacked, the Tower threatened, the streets of London flowing with blood, a detachment of the 12th Light Dragoons, (the hopes of the nation), called up from Northampton to quell the insurgents.[288]

If Catherine's indulgence in gothic romance prompts her to imagine tyrannical fathers who murder their wives and suffocate their daughters, Miss Tilney's concerns are embedded in the uneasy political anxiety of the aftermath of the French Revolution— namely, whether the same kind of insurgence will rise in England. Yet Tilney treats both fears as improbable and an antithesis to rational thinking, aligning political concerns with gothic terror. By contending that any "rational creature" will dismiss the idea of a political instigation in London, Tilney sets up the boundaries of rationality by defining political uneasiness as improbable at a time when social upheaval in response to the French Terror was not entirely without grounds. By doing so, he suggests a way of novel reading that imagines England's political geography as stable and reflective of a national character founded in rational debate.

In other words, while Tilney enjoys novel reading just as much as Catherine, they read the novel differently. Catherine thinks the rules of gothic romance apply to England, whereas Tilney uses those novels to define national character as operated by rational regulation. After he finds Catherine lurking about his dead mother's room looking for evidence of alleged murder, he famously reprimands Catherine in these words:

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[287] Ibid., 81.

[288] Ibid., 82 (emphasis mine).

> Remember the country and the age in which we live. Remember that we are English, that we are Christians. . . Does our education prepare us for such atrocities? Do our laws connive at them? Could they be perpetrated without being known, in a country like this, where social and literary intercourse is on such a footing; where every man is surrounded by a neighbourhood of voluntary spies, and where roads and newspapers lay ever thing open?[289]

Like Miss Granville in *The Female Quixote*, Tilney calls forth the integrity of a national community to respond to gothic imagination as out of place. England, as he describes, operates under a different mechanism that does not rely on the works of wonder rejected by Johnson: instead, religious affiliation, education, law, and modern ideological apparatuses as different forms of surveillance make it impossible for gothic novels to serve as models of English domestic life. It is the same mechanism that will not permit social and political unrest because it threatens England's political tranquility. By arguing so, Tilney utilizes novel reading as a tool to stabilize England's national identity.

Thus, the novel treats Catherine's disillusionment as a particularly national and political one instead of a mere fancy of a teenage girl. Her realization at mistranslating gothic fiction not only leads her to face the truth about Mrs. Tilney, but also prompts her to define what England and its sentiments are made of:

> Charming as were all Mrs. Radcliffe's works, and charming even as were the works of all her imitators, it was not in them perhaps that human nature, at least in the midland counties of England, was to be looked for. . . . [I]n the central part of England there was surely some security for the existence even of a wife not beloved, in the laws of the land, and the manners of the age.[290]

Her shameful error teaches her how to read a novel like a proper Englishwoman with rational faculty, showing how a literal translation of gothic romance to English national character can be misleading. Instead, gothic novels, as foils, inform Catherine of what constitutes domestic

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[289] Ibid., 145.

[290] Ibid., 147.

realism, rather than define what gothic imagination is. In other words, Austen uses gothic

romance to correct and define English national characteristics. How to read and translate

extranational fiction into "anxieties of common life" defines what constitutes those anxieties.[291]

Like the imported goods that fill up Northanger Abbey, England is crowded by new ideas —

imperial voices that haunt England's consciousness— rather than supernatural objects.

    Yet the reality depicted in *Northanger Abbey* does not merely repudiate gothic

imagination as ludicrous but incorporates it into Englishness, hence suggesting a "gothic" reality

of England— namely, that the gothic imagination, whether as a distant medieval past or a vogue

overridden by imported objects, infiltrates English spaces and minds. For the fact of the matter is,

General Tilney *is* an abusive tyrant, not because he allegedly murdered his wife but because he is

the type of parent who barters his children to claim the highest prize in the marriage market. A

bad English father can perform just as much violence on the family as Radcliffe's Montoni does,

capable of banishing those like Catherine who do not subscribe to his rule. An English home

without dead bodies can still be a bit gothic, Austen suggests, and a bad father, though not

injurious, still needs to be avoided: "The marriage of Eleanor Tilney, her removal from all the

evils of such a home as Northanger had been made by Henry's banishment, to the home of her

choice and the man of her choice."[292]

    As General Tilney orders Catherine to abruptly return home after learning that she is not

an heiress, Austen parodies the language of gothic sentiment to describe Catherine's agitation:

> That room, in which her disturbed imagination had tormented her on her first arrival, was
> again the scene of agitated spirits and unquiet slumbers. Yet how different now the
> source of her inquietude from what it had been then — how mournfully superior in
> reality and substance! Her anxiety had foundation in fact, her fear in probability; and with
> a mind so occupied in the contemplation of actual and natural evil, the solitude of her

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[291] Ibid., 148.

[292] Ibid., 185.

situation, the darkness of the chamber, the antiquity of the building were felt and considered without the smallest emotion.[293]

Austen translates gothic in the name of the domestic that is intertwined in the delicacies of the British Empire's political realty; she uses the language of bodily harm, torment, and shame without having to present actual bodies in English homes or the streets of Bath. The passage suggests the same kind of fear that Catherine felt when first visiting the Abbey, but this time her imagination is guided by "reality," "fact," and "probability," key words that define realism and domestic fiction as purported by Johnson or Scott. It is this naturalization of domestic reality that prompts Siskin to see Austen as participating in "the historical transformation of the two-tier market [for fiction] into a hierarchical system of what we now know as high versus low culture."[294] He views Austen as positing and prescribing what early nineteenth century saw as "real behavior," making a particular type of reality "real." Yet Austen does so only by first problematizing the very assumptions that describe England as governed by the rules of probability, using gothic imagination and imperial objects as tools to fashion the notion of English selfhood. Austen parodies and domesticates a formulaic gothic romance overstepped by quasi-oriental objects such as china and japanned chests because the objectification of novels and objects in the English households pushes Catherine to read like "any rational creature," or the new self: English readers as cultural translators.

Mansfield Park: Reading at Sotherton Court

Although the novel paints Mansfield as a self-enclosed household distanced from the rest of the community, Fanny's unconscious yet perceptive reading of what happens outside of England (i.e. her thoughts about Sir Thomas' West Indies plantation) is linked with her unique

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[293] Ibid., 167.

[294] Siskin, 200.

ability to read as translation without ever stepping beyond her home or country. She is able to

grow as a poised translator of the familiar and the foreign through reading, or *imaginative* travel.

The tendency of textual practice to shape one's sense of belonging found in *Northanger Abbey*

applies to Fanny as a reader. Fanny is often described as one of the most dull protagonists of

Austen's heroines, most notably for not expressing her feelings with the vivacity found in

characters like Elizabeth Bennett or Emma Woodhouse. Instead, she observes other people for

the most part, often passing judgment afterward in a private conversation with Edmund. Just as

Tilney modified Catherine's reading strategy, Fanny's judgment is also influenced by Edmund:

"he recommended the books which charmed her leisure hours, he encouraged her taste, and

corrected her judgment; he made reading useful by talking to her of what she read, and

heightened its attraction by judicious praise."[295] Yet she also discerns what he cannot predict,

sharpening her judgment as a reader of texts and emotions.

Reading makes up for Fanny's lack of education, or to put it more precisely, her inability

to locate Britain and the rest of the world in accordance to each other. Upon her first arrival at

Mansfield, her cousins are appalled at her ignorance in geography.

> Dear Mamma, only think, my cousin cannot put the map of Europe together — or my
> cousin cannot tell the principal rivers in Russia — or she never heard of Asia Minor . . .
> Do you know, we asked her last night, which way she would go to get to Ireland; and she
> said, she should cross to the Isle of Wight. She thinks of nothing but the Isle of Wight,
> and calls it *the Island*, as if there were no other island in the world.[296]

In other words, Fanny has little comprehension of England's transnational relations, considering

it an isolated state— perhaps a reflection on her own status who had been taken away from her

Portsmouth home and equally isolated at Mansfield. Fanny's inability to understand Britain's

geography and colonial history is something she needs to overcome in order to mature as a true

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[295] Austen, *Mansfield Park*, 18.

[296] Ibid., 15.

heroine. Her lack of cosmopolitan awareness is thus compensated with self-education: on the one hand, she teaches herself to learn about the British Empire by reading about travel, exotic places, and her brother William's letters who serves on the British navy. On the other hand, she navigates goods that emerge from those international transactions. The Bertram sisters, who think they know all this information about England's geo-political state, turn out to be thoughtless readers and predatory consumers compared to a critical translator that Fanny grows into.

Fanny's first sign as a cultural translator is demonstrated in her ability to transfer textual images to real landscape at Sotherton court, Mr. Rushworth's old estate ground built in Queen Elizabeth's time. Years after her failed geography test, Fanny is by now well-read enough to be influenced by her proto-Romantic readings in the same way that Radcliffe's gothic tales heightened Catherine's expectation of the abbey. Before the Bertram and Crawford party venture out to Sotherton, Mr. Rushworth brings up the issue of improving the landscape at Sotherton. Landscaping and improvement in country houses, like the popularity of Chinese gardens and ivory painting, were a fashionable aesthetic practice in England. Country houses marked a distinctively English identity, while Chinese gardens and ivory panting promoted a global one that furtively worked to embellish England's domestic setting. There ensued considerable public debate on different landscape schools and styles, and whether natural beauty should be prioritized to "artificial" arrangements, which was also a cipher for "foreign." As Mr. Rushworth discusses his plan to cut down some old trees that grow too near the house, Fanny expresses her surprise to Edmund: "Cut down an avenue! What a pity! Does not it make you think of Cowper? 'Ye fallen avenues, once more I mourn your fate unmerited.'"[297] These lines come from

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[297] Ibid., 44

Cowper's *The Task* (1785), the avenue symbolizing the English national state and patriotism.[298]

In *The Task*, the narrator takes a walk in the countryside, taking in the rural sights and sounds as

he meditates on nature's beauty and wholesomeness. The invisible landscape of Fanny's mind is

piqued by texts, not nature, which cannot quite catch up with her visual experience.

As someone who has seldom left the grounds of Mansfield, Fanny's ideal improvement

of space and landscape is shaped through the texts she reads. Like Catherine, she realizes that her

expectations of what Sotherton should represent is drastically different from reality. As Fanny

enters the family chapel at Sotherton, she is surprised by the discrepancy between her

imagination and the actual representation. Edmund is the only recipient of Fanny's private

critique: "This is not my idea of a chapel. There is nothing awful here, nothing melancholy,

nothing grand. Here are no aisles, no arches, no inscriptions, no banners. No banners, cousin, to

be 'blown by the night wind of Heaven.' No sign that a 'Scottish monarch sleeps below.'"[299]

Here, Fanny quotes Scott's *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805) who, as discussed in chapter 1,

had used Scotland as a romantic antithesis to modern day England. Unlike her childhood when

she could not draw a transnational map of England's location, Fanny is by this time learned,

obviously aware of where Ireland and Scotland are, and has formed her opinion about what is to

be expected of an ancient chapel that represents old English aristocracy. Perhaps for this reason,

Critics like Mee argue that Fanny's preference for English traditional landscaping affirms her

Englishness. Indeed, both Fanny and Edmund, the two protagonist representing moral virtue, are

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[298] *The Task*, written four years before the outbreak of the French Revolution, starts as a whimsical meditation on a sofa's genesis to natural beauty and religious and political issues concerning slavery and French despotism. Austen was quite fond of Cowper and quotes *The Task* again in *Emma*. As Mr. Knightley suspects a secret liaison between Frank Churchill and Jane Fairfax, he wonders if such suspicion is mere imagination as Cowper sings: "myself creating what I saw." Jane Austen, *Emma* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 270.

[299] Austen, *Mansfield Park*, 68.

for such natural revision in landscaping, a style that Austen herself preferred: Henry Austen writes that Austen was very much enamored of Gilpin's theory on the picturesque, an aesthetics that celebrated natural beauty in irregularity and roughness rather than artificial intervention. At this stage, Fanny's understanding of what an ideal English landscape should look like— or her idea of Englishness—does not incorporate a more cosmopolitan perspective.

Unlike Elizabeth Bennett's tour of the Pemberley estate, the Sotherton excursion leaves a sour taste in Fanny not only because she is dissatisfied with how the estate is managed, but also because the grounds become the site of love games that she is not prepared to participate in. As Mary Crawford and Edmund willfully take on a physical expedition to measure the dimension of the woods, Fanny, like her helpless status at Mansfield, is left to imagine what happens outside her restrained boundaries because of her weak physique: "She began to be surprised at being left so long, and to listen with an anxious desire of hearing their steps and their voices again."[300] Instead of exploring the grounds herself, she again must reconstruct the scene using her imagination as psychological landscape. Yet when imagination displaces cognitive experience, Fanny finds herself drenched in the power of her interior voice, examining her own mind as well as others. Fanny seldom speaks up in reality, but it is only because her readings of her environment, people, and books have the power to channel her desires. As such, one might even argue that she is the *most* vocal, because the novel's narrative presents her mind as painted with a complex web of jealousy and resentment found in no other Austen characters. When she learns to translate her feelings by inventing psychological space, she speaks her mind, even if there is no recipient but herself.

Curiously, while both Catherine and Fanny's minds are shaped by the texts they have read, Austen treats such failed expectations differently. Fanny's understanding of the world is

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[300] Ibid., 77.

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constructed textually as she attempts to imitate the proto-Romantic approaches to thinking about

natural landscape. Yet she is on to something when she discerns the discrepancy between text

and reality; she is able to read the cultural footprints of Britain's imperialism by translating the

meaning of global objects as instruments to contemplate on the moral condition of Mansfield.

For this reason, unlike Catherine's disenchantment of the abbey, Fanny's disappointment at

Sotherton is treated with a sincere sense of loss and nostalgia for old aristocratic order. Mr.

Rushworth explains that the chapel which Fanny found so disappointing was built lately in James

the Second's time, where all family members and domestics used to gather for morning and

evening prayers. Fanny finds the discontinuation of such tradition deplorable: "It was a valuable

part of former times. There is something in a chapel and chaplain so much in character with a

great house, with one's ideas of what such a household should be! A whole family assembling

regularly for the purpose of prayer, is fine!"[301] Miss Crawford derides this idea, exclaiming that

it is absurd for the housemaids and footmen to gather for prayer when the masters are likely to be

physically absent. Setting aside how this demonstrates Miss Crawford's free-spirited character,

her suggestion that masters and mistresses often fail to attend to such family housekeeping

implies the detrimental effects of absenteeism, a controversial subject regarding plantation

owners of the time. The absenteeism of planters and slave owners was considered injurious

because such negligence resulted in the ill management of its slaves and property.[302] Fanny's

imagination of old aristocratic order, however, is one that does not resort to absenteeism. For

Edmund points out to Mary Crawford, "*That* is hardly Fanny's idea of a family assembling. If

[301] Ibid., 68.

[302] For readings on slavery and absenteeism in Austen's time, see Gabrielle D. V. White, *Jane Austen in the Context of Abolition: A Fling at the Slave Trade* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006) and S. D. Smith, *Slavery, Family, and Gentry Capitalism in the British Atlantic: The World of the Lascelles, 1648-1834* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

the master and mistress do *not* attend themselves, there must be more harm than good in the

custom."[303] Like Mr. Knightley's involvement with his estate and tenants in *Emma*, or Mr.

Darcy's well-run estate at Pemberley in *Pride and Prejudice*, proper management as landowner

implies a moral superiority. Fanny takes such aristocratic duty seriously, both at Sotherton and

later when she takes interest in the management of Sir Thomas' plantation in Antigua. If colonial

materiality resonates with moral exhaustion and spiritual bankruptcy in Austen's female

consumers as well as absentee male slave owners, Fanny's participation as an active reader and

translator checks the moral compass of Mansfield's moral blight and to that extent Britain's

colonial practice. Unlike Said's sense that Austen asserts conservative privilege by ignoring

slavery as its foundation, Austen directly offers a political critique of such international

relations—albeit a reserved one—in which she insists that slave owners must be involved

caretakers. Fanny's disappointment at Sotherton, then, checks in with Britain's moral grounds

regarding overseers and ownership, making her a critical translator of the current conditions of

British imperialism at the site of the English country house.

"The East Room": Reading as Translation in Fanny's British Museum

Fanny's imaginative journey continues in the East room, the only room occupied by her

at Mansfield, and its material collections of Britain's expanding market power. The room is

introduced to the readers immediately after Tom Bertram and Mrs. Norris condemn Fanny for

refusing to take part in acting *The Lovers Vows*, a German play translated into English by

Elizabeth Inchbald.[304] "The East room" is an old school room no longer in use where Fanny "had

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[303] Austen, *Mansfield Park*, 68.

[304] *The Lovers Vow* was written in 1780 by August von Kotzebue and translated in English by Elizabeth Inchbald in 1798. Many critics have pointed out that by featuring *The Lovers Vows*, Austen intentionally rewrites both *The Lover's Vows* as Inchbald's adaptation and also *A Simple Story* (1791) in which Elmwood leaves his wife to take care of his West Indies plantation while his wife's virtue is

so naturally and so artlessly worked herself [into,] that it was now generally admitted to be her's [*sic*]."[305] Whenever she feels distressed, she finds comfort in this little room that had been set up as a museum displaying her few properties: "Her plants, her books — of which she had been a collector, from the first hour of her commanding a shilling – her writing desk, and her works of charity and ingenuity, were all within her reach . . . she could scarcely see an object in that room which had not an interesting remembrance connected with it."[306] Yet this interestingly general and ordinary collection is placed among global objects, turning the East room into a British museum where both domestic and transnational objects are displayed. There are three pieces of Julia Bertram's art works: a portrait of Tintern Abbey between a cave in Italy and a moonlight lake in Cumberland, a Bertram family profile, and a "small sketch of a ship sent four years ago from the Mediterranean by William, with H. M. S. Antwerp at the bottom, in letters as tall as the main-mast."[307] The novel uses Fanny's brother William as a focal point for Fanny's worldview on the British Empire. William as a naval shipman participates in the Empire's enterprise and is a constant reminder to Fanny of what goes on outside of England. His letters bring tears to her eyes as he translates colonial regime into sentimental anecdotes, and allow the geographically bound Fanny to learn the services of Empire-building. Her collection also includes an amber cross that William brought for her from Sicily, which Mary Crawford accessorizes with a gold chain— gold also signifying colonial transaction, an imported capital from Brazil since the early

compromised. For readings on how Austen rewrites the plot of *A Simple Story*, see Paula Byrne, "A Simple Story: From Inchbald to Austen," *Romanticism* 5, no. 2 (1999): 161-71; and Joseph Lew, "'That Abominable Traffic': *Mansfield Park* and the Dynamics of Slavery," in *History, Gender and Eighteenth-Century Literature*, ed. Beth Fowkes Tobin (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1994), 271-300.

[305] Austen, *Mansfield Park*, 119.

[306] Ibid.

[307] Ibid., 120.

eighteenth century as well as from Africa and Asia.[308] Finally, her collection ends with work-

boxes and netting-boxes given to her as gifts by Tom who also travels internationally with Sir

Bertram. This secluded space becomes a mini-theater of the British Empire, where domestic

objects are pregnant with colonial enterprise.

And so it is in this room that Edmund and Fanny discuss the fate of Mansfield and the

moral effects of staging *The Lovers Vows*. Edmund gently teases Fanny for being exempt from

such moral complexity, not realizing that her reading choice transforms the East room to a

contact zone in which different cultures meet through texts:

> *You* in the meanwhile will be taking a trip to China, I suppose. How does Lord Macartney
> go on? — (opening a volume on the table and then taking up some others.) And here are
> Crabbe's Tales, and the Idler, at hand to relieve you, if you tire of your great book. I
> admire your little establishment exceedingly; and as soon as I am gone, you will empty
> your head of all this nonsense of acting, and sit comfortably down to your table.[309]

Many critics have pointed out that Fanny's "great book" most likely refers to Lord Macartney's

Journal of the Embassy to China (1792), a section of *Some Account of the Public Life and a*

Selection from the Unpublished Writings, of the Earl of Macartney that John Barrow put together

to commemorate the Earl in 1807.[310] Macartney had visited China on a mission to extend British

commercial privileges and had documented Chinese customs such as the treatment of women

and the bureaucracy of the palace. As a cultured observer and picturesque traveler, he is critical

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[308] For a history of the usage of gold in the eighteenth century, see Mauricio E. Martinez, "From Peruvian Gold to British Guinea: Tropicopolitanism and Myths of Origin in Charles Johnstone's *Chrysal*," in *Eighteenth-century Thing Theory in a Global Context*, ed. Ileana Baird and Christina Ionescu (Burlington: Ashgate, 2013), 171- 90.

[309] Austen, *Mansfield Park*, 123.

[310] For more information on *Mansfield Park* and Lord Macartney's essay, see Susan Allen Ford, "Fanny's 'great book': Macartney's *Embassy to China* and *Mansfield Park*," *Persuasions On-Line* 28, no. 2 (2008). Also see Maaja A. Stewart, *Domestic Realities and Imperial Fictions : Jane Austen's Novels in Eighteenth-century Contexts* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1993) and Peter Knox-Shaw, "Fanny Price Refuses to Kowtow," *The Review of English Studies* 47, no. 186 (1996): 212-17.

of the Chinese Empire and its political and social conventions at a time when China was heralded

as a model for the British Empire due to its utopian despotism and ancient philosophy.[311]

Specifically famous is Macartney's refusal to kow-tow to the emperor, a custom that requires

bowing and kneeling in front of the mighty despot as a sign of reverence and self-prostration. For

this reason, many critics have interpreted Fanny's reading choice as emblematic of her own

resistance to patriarchal order. When Sir Thomas and Henry Crawford try to coerce her into

unwanted matrimony, she refuses with "independence of spirit," as Sir Thomas calls it.[312]

Austen's use of global objects and travel books to endorse national prejudice is based on

this peculiar reading choice which allows Fanny to engage in an ongoing discourse about

Britain's dynamic relationship with its colonies and competing empires. Reading, like travel,

serves as a means of dislocation, in which the domestic and the imperial meet in the theatricality

of Fanny's own mind. Critics like Said who see Austen as promoting the British colonial regime

argue that Antigua and the slave trade are presented off-stage and to a minimal effect when the

British economy in fact relied on such trade. While this may be true, Austen nonetheless puts the

British Empire on the forefront by certifying that Fanny participates in and is consequently

molded by the ideas of imperialism and the global market through foreign objects. The ubiquity

of imported things, which Said ignores, actually puts to test Fanny's ability to translate global

relations into domestic space. Reading Scottish romance, poetry, and travel writing as "novel

objects" fosters a transnational and imperial consciousness in Fanny, and by extension Austen's

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[311] For instance, Arthur O. Lovejoy argues that China in the late sixteenth and seventeenth century was regarded as a realization of Plato's dream, hailed as a nation state run by philosophers. While eighteenth-century Jesuits reacted against Simonania, praise of the Chinese government was still popular in eighteenth-century literature as featured in Goldsmith's *Citizen of the World* o. See Arthur O. Lovejoy, "The Chinese Origin of a Romanticism," in *Essays in the History of Ideas*, (New York: George Braziller, 1955), 99-135.

[312] Austen, *Mansfield Park*, 249.

novel readers, that proves to be an integral part of her growing up. Her reading of Macartney's trip to China enables her to "travel," transforming her secluded East room into a global theater and museum of imperial interchange, or a contact zone within the familiar space. Put another way, reading the relationship between things as cultural translation allows Fanny's domestic and private space to expand into a world of politics, economics, and colonial struggle while at the same time shield her from that actual world. This doubleness allows Austen to talk about the Empire but only in a way that circumvents direct discourse about the nation state's moral adversity.

Edmund for one sees only one side of this doubleness, patronizing Fanny and her reading as a light entertainment divorced from reality. To him, she is nothing but a trivial reader who uses her little British Museum to escape from real life. Compared to the dire moral dilemma Edmund is faced with regarding *The Lovers Vows*, he thinks Fanny is free to daydream and travel into her books, although Austen makes clear that "there was no reading, no China, no composure for Fanny" when she is left alone to mull over Edmund's decision— a decision so important not just because of the play's amorous plot line that pushes the boundary of sexual propriety, but because the idea of a home theater threatens Mansfield's moral integrity.[313] Edmund notes that the private theatrical would "show great want of feeling on my father's account, absent as he is, and in some degree of constant danger," while Fanny "looked on and listened, not unamused to observe the selfishness which, more or less disguised, seemed to govern them all."[314] That is, Fanny is already watching a social performance by Tom, the Crawford brother and sister, Maria, Julia, and Mr. Yates in which they disguise their sexual desires. Moreover, the idea that Mansfield be open to strangers— strangers like Mr. yates who

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[313] Ibid., 123.

[314] Ibid., 99, 104.

perform in the play, and strangers who come to see it— unsettles Fanny because it puts the home in connection to a mass consumer culture that she is critical of. When Edmund assumes the empire's work to be reduced to books of leisurely commodity and entertainment, he reduces Fanny's role to a mere consumer of the luxury goods imported by the British trade and not a conscious agent with the powerful tools of interpretation.

The association of women as consumers of global trade was a popular belief that somehow blamed Englishwomen's voracious appetite for consumption as the source of Britain's moral hazard. For instance, upon hearing that William had been made and promoted to lieutenant, Lady Bertram responses: "Fanny, William must not forget my shawl if he goes to the East Indies; and I shall give him a commission for anything else that is worth having. I wish he may go to the East Indies, that I may have my shawl. I think I will have two shawls, Fanny."[315] By equating colonization with imported goods and luxury items, Lady Bertram exemplifies the supposedly limited role that women represented at the time. Likewise, the Sotherton excursion ends with Fanny sitting uncomfortably in a crowded chaise with her nieces and aunt Norris who had taken a parcel of cream cheese, pheasant's eggs, and plants, symbolizing her aunt's insatiable appetite for luxury goods. The demonization of female consumers of the eighteenth century is also echoed in *Northanger Abbey*, where Mrs. Allen cannot stop talking about muslin, gowns, and the latest fashion. "True Indian muslin" becomes the subject of discussion, a foreign product that had infiltrated domestic economy to the extent that by the nineteenth century, muslin was considered British, not Indian.[316] Mrs. Allen is presented as a frivolous chaperon with no beauty, genius, or

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[315] Ibid., 239.

[316] For an interesting discussion on the history of British appropriation of muslins and Henry Tilney's exceptional mastery over textile, see Lauren Miskin, "'True Indian Muslin' and the Politics of Consumption in Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey*," *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 15, no. 2 (2005): 5-26.

manners, Aunt Norris as a selfish and ill-advised guardian. Lady Bertram is the quintessential

indolent mother practically paralyzed from ennui, dozing off when Edmund and Tom argue over

the moral consequences of putting on *The Lovers Vows*. That these three women are described as

predatory shoppers and consumers suggests that Austen was critical of the cultured society's

consumption of Britain's global economy. Even the ballroom at Bath shows the leisured class as

commodified props, as Catherine and Mrs. Allen is described to "squeeze in" and "squeeze out"

of the Bath assembly as "captives," turning into automatons whose agency is lost under the

power of capital.[317] When one loses the power to look beyond the surface meaning of objects, or

the ability to translate the power dynamics of what they consume, those like Mrs. Allen or Lady

Bertram become dehumanized, unable to critically assess and translate the cultural meaning of

their behavior.

That Fanny, the silent observer with limited mobility in the Bertram household, should

take a "trip to China" in her East room symbolizes how the domestic and foreign meet in

Fanny's museum of mind because she is a cultural translator. Unlike Lady Bertram, aunt Norris,

or Mrs. Allen, Fanny's appropriation of novel and novel objects is textual and imaginative rather

than strictly material. Her role as a critical reader rather than consumer therefore extends beyond

the process of trade and production. Some critics have suggested that Fanny's symbolic virtue

and Englishness lie in her ignorance of the wider world — that is, her inability to locate Ireland

or the Isle of Wight signals her endocultural, domestically limited sense of Englishness.[318] Yet

on the contrary, Fanny's Englishness is manifested in precisely the opposite cognitive process:

she learns to read maps, travel writings from China, foreign objects, and German plays in a way

that turns her into one of the most culturally sensitive translator. Whereas other characters stop

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[317] Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, 11-12.

[318] Mee, 86.

short being a reader and consumer of such material culture, Fanny stands out because she serves

as a cultural translator whose cognition is shaped by the dynamic practice of reading as

translation. Even if inadvertently and subconsciously, Fanny acknowledges that the passive

consumption of text and objects debilitate Mansfield's moral authority, and the nation state at

large. Growing from a reader to a keen translator, Fanny's critical role allows us to see these

books as participating in global relations, not simply ignoring them.

In fact, she is the only one who inquires into further detail about Antigua and the slave

trade. When the bustle at Mansfield regarding a home theater comes to an abrupt end with Sir

Thomas' arrival from Antigua, gloominess and quietness pervade the halls. Fanny finds this

change not unwelcome and responds most enthusiastically to Sir Thomas' journey: "I love to

hear my uncle talk of the West Indies. I could listen to him for an hour together. It entertains *me*

more than many other things have done — but then I am unlike other people I dare say."[319] In a

conversation with Edmund in the East room, Fanny insists that she has been the most vocal in Sir

Thomas' narrative:

> Did not you hear me ask him about the slave trade last night? . . . And I longed to [inquire
> farther] – but there was such a dead silence! And while my cousins were sitting by
> without speaking a word, or seeming at all interested in the subject, I did not like — I
> thought it would appear as if I wanted to set myself off at their expense, by shewing a
> curiosity and pleasure in his information which he must wish his own daughters to feel.[320]

The "dead silence" that Fanny alludes to has invited a controversy among postcolonial critics

regarding the way Austen represents slavery. Said was one of the many who critiqued Austen for

complying with Britain's imperial agenda. He equates the "dead silence" as a political

negligence on Austen's part who simply could not, or would not, verbalize the moral

delinquency of the slave trade. Such critics are partially correct, as this scene is reenacted only

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[319] Austen, *Mansfield Park*, 154.

[320] Ibid., 155

through Fanny and Edmund's conversation and therefore the readers never hear what Sir Thomas actually had to say about Antigua. Nor does Austen attempt to describe the slave trade or plantation life in particular depth. Moreover, Fanny finds such stories "entertaining," similar to the way that Edmund suggests her imaginary trip to China would be.

And yet the scene is more complex, because the "dead silence" is coming from other members of the Bertram family who Austen criticizes for their moral paralysis. Fanny stands out precisely because she has the potential to break this dead silence. Although the details of the slave trade are not spelled out, the context of Sir Thomas' conversation, as recent critics like George Boulukos suggest, is in fact a pleasant one. Boulukos argues that critics have flattened out the cultural moment of slavery in Britain, confusing imperialism, the specifics of slavery, and colonialism by assuming that the topic of slavery must have been avoided in the Romantic era. Instead, he argues that discussions on the West Indies and slavery were considered educational and even fashionable.[321] Indeed, Edmund mentions that he hoped Fanny's question on slave trade would be followed up by others, and that "it would have pleased [her] uncle to be inquired of farther."[322] In other words, Fanny's curiosity to inquire about the slave trade is curbed not because of the topic's sensitivity but because she did not wish to overstep her boundary when the Bertram sisters were listening with boredom. The sisters, while they might know more about

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[321] George Boulukos, "The Politics of Silence: *Mansfield Park* and the Amelioration of Slavery," *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 39, no. 3 (2006): 361-83. Boulukos differentiates slave trade and slavery, focusing on the fact that Fanny asks about the slave trade, not slavery, which indicates that Austen intended Fanny to touch on ameliorationist reformation. That is, Boulukos focuses on Sir Thomas as an absentee slave owner who cares about his plantation and how Fanny regards such landowners as laudable and responsible. For more detailed historical context on *Mansfield Park* and slavery, see Brian Southam's "The Silence of the Bertrams: Slavery and Chronology of *Mansfield Park*," *Times Literary Supplement* 17 (1995): 13-14 and J. A. Downie, "The Chronology of Mansfield Park," *Modern Philology* 112, no. 2 (2014): 427-34. Downie, by locating Mansfield Park in 1812-13 instead of 1808-09, suggests that Sir Thomas' return coincides with the passing of the Abolition Act.

[322] Austen, *Mansfield Park*, 155.

cosmopolitan geography and fashion, seem uninterested in the Antigua plantation that actually sustains the Mansfield economy. Their silence is also characteristic of Lady Bertram who "spent her days in sitting, nicely dressed, on a sofa, doing some long piece of needlework, of little use and no beauty, thinking more of her pug than her children."[323] That Fanny seems more invested in slave trade and Sir Thomas' estate than any other members of the Bertram family suggests that her early ignorance of maps and Ireland has been modified. She has fostered an imperial and transnational awareness that pleases Sir Thomas as a plantation owner, whereas the other female Bertrams are reduced to mere consumers. The material culture indulged in luxury, idleness, and quasi-oriental corruption is countered by Fanny's notions of self-discipline, moral well-being, and the power of reading as translation. Her internal virtue is championed precisely through this recognition when she learns to interpret books and objects that mirror the currents of the British Empire. Fanny's reading, then, betrays her political acumen and emotional insight that isn't available to others.

In addition, Fanny's development as cross-cultural translator helps her understand the relationship between Britain and the "rest of the world," herself and others. In other words, her ability to read objects and people go hand in hand. So when Sir Thomas tells Fanny that "you do not quite know your own feelings" regarding Crawford's proposal, Fanny can argue otherwise.[324] Like a chorus of a play, Fanny does not act but observes, evaluates, and commands her own interpretation of what she sees. While such qualities might make her morally grave and a "by-stander," "quite auditor" and silent listener, it also turns her into one of the most insightful characters of Austen's novels. She poignantly reads others' emotional and sexual cues, discerning the sexual rivalry between Julia and Maria as *The Lovers Vow* is rehearsed. She is

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[323] Ibid., 16.

[324] Ibid., 247.

also pained at Mary Crawford's forwardness towards Edward and Henry's sexual freedom with the Bertram sisters. As opposed to a passive reader, Fanny becomes a translator of emotions and sentiments, disentangling the love maze without having to step into one. Catherine, on the other hand, could not see through Isabella's flirtation with Captain Tilney. Elizabeth Bennett misjudges Darcy and also misconstrues Jane and Bingley's relationship, while Emma Woodhouse completely misreads Mr. Elton's favors towards Harriet nor can she fathom the secret liaison between Frank Churchill and Jane Fairfax. But Fanny is no ordinary wallflower, as she harnesses her translation skills of Britain's cosmopolitan relationships as tools to mirror emotional encounters of domestic life.

Because of Fanny's insight and intuition, she becomes an advisor to the Bertram family despite her obscure status: "'where is Fanny?' became no uncommon question, even without her being wanted for any one's convenience," and her "value" increases at Mansfield and the Parsonage.[325] When Edmund explains the senseless choice of acting in *The Lovers Vows* to his father, he argues that "Fanny is the only one who has judged rightly throughout.[326]" Henry Crawford also seeks her advice on whether to go back to Norfolk: "When you give me your opinion, I always know what is right. Your judgment is my rule of right."[327] She makes herself useful to the Bertram family not just through her services but also as a morally sound judge who has the capacity to participate in political discussions about the slave trade and absenteeism.

In that sense, Julia and Maria's indifference to their family business in Antigua indicates a moral failing of Britain. They represent the attitude that Said thinks Austen holds, but it is through them that Austen problematizes the very symptoms of Britain's imperial anxiety. The

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[325] Ibid., 160.

[326] Ibid., 147.

[327] Ibid., 324.

Bertram sisters' refusal to understand transnational currents of the empire cannot be separated from their moral bankruptcy, just as Mrs. Bertram's laziness, indulgence, and appetite for quasi-oriental taste correlates with her utter disinterest in Sir Thomas's expedition. Maria's unhappy choice leads to the moral fall of the Bertram sisters, as she elopes with Crawford soon after her wedding followed by Julia's elopement with Mr. Yates. Echoing Tilney's observation of England, such trespassing of English moral boundaries is monitored by rational discourse produced by voluntary spies, newspapers, and gossips: Sir Bertram receives a letter from an old friend in London who has heard rumors about Maria, while Maria's maid servant gossips about her mistress' liaison only to have Maria's elopement published in the newspaper delivered to Fanny's home in Portsmouth. Unable to translate their father's story as a pending concern on their moral and economic livelihood, they prove their reading ability as superficial and fail to map the British Empire as connected with their Mansfield home and its moral integrity. The Bertrams are merely readers, and bad ones at that. Fanny's distinction is that she is a translator, which means the striking noises at Portsmouth, indicative of her family's direct and indirect involvement with the Empire's mercantile trade, unsettles her for all it implies. Moral virtue and cultural politics are drawn together in *Mansfield Park*, suggesting the new potential of women as cultural translators that moves beyond their traditional role of consuming luxury goods. Put another way, Fanny, with no inherited land or status to claim, becomes a quasi self-made woman capable of consolidating a new sense of subjectivity and sentimentality into the British home through the power of reading as translation.

For Austen, English common life is entrenched with imported novel and objects of colonial trade that tap into the discourse of cosmopolitan enterprise. Novels depend on romances

as much as England depends on its colonies to perform acts of repudiation. Reading novels and novel objects teach Austen's protagonists how reading as translation informs the rise of a nation governed by rules of rationality, a reality that is part fiction because Tilney's version of England as imagined community cannot fully crystalize England's complex relationship with its colonies and the anxiety that derives from such transaction. Imported objects tell a story of their own, a colonial history with an echo of gothic past that dislocates the English home to a stage of extranational impulses. Exotic novels and foreign objects may not serve as models of English domestic life, but they help produce the rules of probability that mark the boundary of English realism. Austen considers how Radcliffe's transcultural exotic stories constitute and sustain English civil society by demarcating what is available in England, taming Catherine into a good reader. Fanny uses her acumen as cultural translator to harness the grounds for the moral and ethical decorum of Mansfield that is also closely intertwined with Britain's engagement with its colonies. The activity of reading and translation produces imaginary "contact zones" of cultural exchange by which a textual and translatable English subjectivity is established. Austen uses her two inches of ivory to refine the English domestic novel as national literature but at the same time define that national character and readership as cosmopolitan. Reading is suggested as a political act in Austen's novels that celebrates the ordinary over the supernatural, the local over the foreign only to betray that such domestic reality is founded on a "little bit of ivory." Presenting that dependence is what distinguishes Fanny's translation from the others' reading, while recognizing that dependence constitutes Austen's readers as cultural translators of their own. The muddy and inconsistent transnational relationship of the Empire is mediated in Austen's novels through reading that highlights the reader's role as translator. By shaping moral

virtue by way of reading texts, objects, and interiority, Austen anticipates the role of the British

Empire as a machine for the production of a new form of subjectivity founded in translation.

CODA: Looking Out, Looking In

The protagonist of Daniel Defoe's last novel *The Fortunate Mistress*, or *Roxana* (1724) configures and conceals her identity through a series of performance, guise, and masquerade. Roxana is a wife, widow, mother, "Whore," pimp, (royal) mistress, Turkish gem, Quaker, cunning actress, Countess, "man-woman," entrepreneur, and businesswoman. Significantly, even her nationality is blurred, as she is at times French, English, Dutch, and Turkish. Translation, both literal and figurative, lies at the heart of her multiple identity shift. While artifice and affectation were socially disapproved, they were at the same time curiously encouraged as demonstrated through the vibrant culture of literary forgers and liberal translations of the long eighteenth century. The performative nature of sympathy, forgery, and reading paradoxically implied that performance and disguise were the only viable means to consolidate and display identities of gender, race, and nationality. And so to "fake" her identity, Roxana translates. For instance, after adopting the Quaker's identity, she "talk'd like a Quaker too, as readily and naturally as if [she] had been born among them" in order to "completely conceal" herself.[328] In a latter scene, in order to convince Susan that she is not the famous Roxana, an English woman masquerading as Turkish, she pretends to be a Dutch lady and "to make it go off the better, when a little Dutch Boy came into the Cabbin [*sic*], who belong'd to the Captain and who [she] easily

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[328] Defoe, *Roxana*, 256.

perceiv'd to be Dutch, [she] jested, and talk'd Dutch to him."[329] Yet while her artifice only

works when entailed by the mastery of a foreign language, both literal translation and costuming

ultimately fail as stable signifiers of national idiosyncrasy. Instead, translation serves as a way to

understand what makes Roxana English, or decidedly non-English despite all her endeavor. After

all, Roxana fails as an English subject because she is a bad mother, the only identity that she

must flee from. The discursive nature of translation demonstrates that the boundaries of gender,

race, and nationality were malleable and often elusive in eighteenth-century England. Translation

was a symptom of, as well as a method to probe into, the complex vortex of England's nation

building expressed through fiction.

As recent critics point out, the novel as a form of literature was never really a national

product despite being written in a single, national language. Not only was the eighteenth-century

literary market widely transnational as McMurran had pointed out, but the literary climate of

English readership demanded that one look beyond the limitations of a national literary frame.

This dissertation has attempted to show that translators were the figure on whom the negotiation

between imaginary narrative interchange was recognized. As such, Walpole imagined the

boundaries of the "modern romance" through a series of pseudo-translations and pseudo-oriental

tales. Those fictional and transnational imaginations were supplemented by actual transnational

experiences by female travelers like Montagu and Marsh who tested the boundaries of female

decorum as an expression of national identity. Finally, by rethinking the role of the reader in

Austen's novels as crystallizing how foreign texts and objects occupy the "daily lives of ordinary

people," to use Watt's catchphrase that sums up domestic realism, this dissertation reconsidered

the English novel as a product of literary interaction, influence, and translation that refined the

English readership as cosmopolitan translators. The novel's consumption as a cultural product

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[329] Ibid., 325.

and the complex relationship it posits with the English readers suggest that the English novel's national framework masquerades as both domestic and universal. The gap between the fictional reality and the actual encounters of everyday life, or at times the uncanny proximity of the two, calls for the readers to read in translation: translating gothic, romantic, oriental, and colonial imagination into ordinary social interactions. Specifically, looking outward was another way of looking inwards; "translation" was a tool to draw boundaries of English and non-English morals, narratives, and imagination that could not have been perceived without first looking beyond national sameness. As translators, the English writers and readers of novels participate in setting up the ever-shifting boundaries of "the" English novel.

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