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# Hospitable Climates: Representations of the West Indies in Eighteenth-Century British Literature

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Hospitable Climates: Representations of the West Indies in Eighteenth-Century British Literature

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
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College of Arts and Sciences  
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## ABSTRACT

British expansion to the West Indies in the eighteenth-century resulted in vast economic growth for the British Empire and a rise in literature set in the region. Examining the literature allows for an in-depth exploration of how the Caribbean has become associated as a place of relaxation and escape though its early history of colonialism is fraught with violence. My study builds on the understanding of the Caribbean region in the eighteenth-century and utilizes hospitality theory to articulate the role that cultural exchange and physical setting play in the texts and in the formation of national identity, both in the West Indies and in England.

Using hospitality theory to explore how power shifts between the guest/host/witness, I explore the influence of literature on eighteenth-century perceptions of this region through an examination of the patterns that develop through prose fiction, drama, and poetry. Section one includes Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* (1696), Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and William Pittis' *The Jamaica Lady* (1720). I argue that Behn's work establishes narrative patterns that uncover what eighteenth-century travelers imagined in the West Indies—the host welcomes the outsider, the land serves as witness, and the arrival of the guest initiates a realignment of the British subjectivity—and show how these patterns reappear in the later works of Defoe and Pittis. In the section two, I show that the theatre creates a shift in these categories as a direct result of space, performance, and shared experience through my readings of Thomas Southerne's *Oroonoko* (1696), Richard Cumberland's *The West Indian* (1771), and John Gay's *Polly* (1728). The final section focuses on the poetry of James Grainger, Nathaniel Weekes, and Francis

Williams, revealing the tropes that emerged and demonstrating how the Caribbean land is visualized as a welcoming space. I argue that these genres work together to generate images of the tropics in the eighteenth-century British mindset and provide a foundation for the way we have come to imagine this region today.

## INTRODUCTION

Historically, many regions of the world have often been inhabited by various cultures simultaneously, for example the United States, but the Caribbean landscape offers a unique vantage point in that each pocket of land is dimensionally small. In Trinidadian writer Earl Lovelace's *Salt*, the protagonist and teacher, Alford George, points out the disparity of land mass between Trinidad and other geographical locations during a classroom lecture:

“This,” he said, his hoarse whispery voice coming from the grave of his belly, pointing with the ruler, “this is the world. The world. These are the Alps. Here are the Himalayas. This is Kilimanjaro. This is London,” all of it done in slow motion. He spoke [...] about mountains, about rivers, about civilizations, about cities. He pointed out New York, he showed [...] the Gulf Stream. Then, with his voice choking and the ruler trembling in his hand, he came down to the archipelago of the Caribbean: “This...this dot. This is your island. (72)

Notwithstanding the protagonist's feelings of insignificance at this point of the novel, the “dots” that make up the Caribbean are indeed worthy of study, unique in that the point of interaction between host and guest takes place in a concentrated area, occupied by the British, Africans, and Creoles as well as the French, Spanish, and Dutch—a mini “pot” that despite the heat of the tropical landscape, struggled to melt together.

British interest in the West Indian region was driven by the promise of increased wealth, and by the early eighteenth-century British investment in the colonial project was robust. During



the interregnum in England, Oliver Cromwell gained possession of Jamaica and Barbados, and by the time Charles II took the throne in 1660, the British occupied several West Indian islands (De Krey 49). In 1667, St. Kitts was in English possession, and though it changed ownership several times, occupied by both the French and Spanish, by the late eighteenth-century the British had full control (49). When James II took the throne in 1685, he clearly understood the region's potential and the monetary value of the British trade in tropical commodities such as sugar and tobacco (231). Prior to his reign, James was already a "major investor in the Royal African Company. . .and was personally involved in the slave trade upon which the prosperity of these colonies rested" (231). In 1713, Spain granted England *asiento* which gave England the sole "right to importing African slaves into Spanish colonies" (291). This condition vastly affected the growth of the region's population and its economic value to the British empire.

In the twenty-first-century, the Caribbean is closely connected to tourism and the hospitality industry; many Americans and Europeans alike chose the region as their vacation destination. As such, I am looking back at eighteenth-century texts in or about the West Indies to show how the literature depicts images of colonization through hospitality. Though hospitality as an industry is different than hospitality as a cultural practice, the two share similarities and, whether in the past or the present, hospitality has a strong presence in the region. I have selected a variety of works to examine the picture of the West Indies during the eighteenth-century and structure my dissertation by genre to illuminate the way each works towards building the image of the Caribbean that exists today. The first section focuses on prose fiction beginning with Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* (1696) in chapter one and followed by Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and William Pittis' *The Jamaica Lady* (1720) in chapter two. In the second section, chapters three and four, my attention moves to the theatre with the works of Thomas Southerne

(1696), Richard Cumberland (1771), and John Gay (1728). Finally, the poetry of James Grainger (1764), Nathaniel Weekes (1752), and Francis Williams (1759) close the study in chapters five and six. In *The Origins of the English Novel 1600-1740*, Michael McKeon states that “[g]enres provide a conceptual framework for mediation (if not the “solution”) of intractable problems, of rendering such problems intelligible” (20). He adds that “[g]enres fill a need in which no adequate alternative method exists (20). Whether to reveal societal ills, educate the public, or entertain its readers, each form serves a specific purpose. I show how genres work together to generate tropes about the tropics in the eighteenth-century British mindset and provide a foundation for the way we have come to imagine this region today.

The tropes about the tropics that appear in these texts are that of the abundant landscape, the erotic female body, the noble savage, and the British explorer. The image of the Caribbean as an Edenic paradise appears consistently across genres and feeds into the idea of the colonial project as driven by God’s will. The plentiful land provides a seemingly endless supply of food for its inhabitants. Fruit hangs heavy on trees, the flora perfumes the air, the vivid colors delight the eyes, and the food’s flavors are incomparable. The copious amounts of provisions offered by the land extends to its sugar crops which produces with little labor, implying that the Caribbean is created by the hand of Providence.

Significant differences appear when examining the three genres against each other, especially when comparing the earlier works to those that appear later in the century. The earliest trends in the literature do little to cover up the violence and immorality associated with expansion into the region. For example, Behn, in 1688, describes the capture of numerous slaves, a failed uprising, and the torturing and severing of slave bodies. Pittis’ *The Jamaica Lady* most directly addresses the trope of the eroticized female body; the tropical region inspires an

increased sexual appetite and corrupted moral codes. This image holds strong throughout much of the literature. In Southerne's play, women husband hunt by any means necessary, and even Gay's famously virtuous Polly is sold as a mistress to sexually pleasure her master. By mid-century, there appears to be an attempt to reconfigure this trope and remove the island's stigma as a place with powers to ruin even the most upstanding woman. Weekes' *Barbados* shows women to be chaste and virtuous. Certainly, the ratio of men to women differed greatly, and the desire to have British women travel to the region to become wives to the male planters inspired a less than subtle revamping of the region's image. Also, as word of the brutality of slavery increased, a counter-image to the barbarity taking place in the tropics needed to emerge to maintain the support of the British public. By the time of Grainger's *The Sugar-Cane*, a seamless ideology of goodness replaces the violence. The model he presents is that of the moral planter who oversees the care of the land and slaves become part of the picturesque portrait of the land.

It is important to know that though I speak of the West Indies and Caribbean as a whole, the works in this study represent a variety of locations in the region. Behn and Southerne set their stories in Surinam, Defoe near Trinidad, Pittis, Gay, Williams, and Cumberland in Jamaica, Weekes in Barbados, and Grainger in St. Kitts. Each of these West Indian locations played an important role in the history of the British Empire; however, Jamaica, perhaps in part because of its size in comparison to the other areas in the region, is most often represented in British writing of the period. In *The Island Race: Englishness, Empire, and Gender in the Eighteenth-Century*, Kathleen Wilson notes that by mid-century, Jamaica "was dominated by a sugar-planting elite whose combined land-owning, banking and mercantile functions had made them some of the wealthiest subjects of the king, and Jamaica a linchpin in Britain's world-wide commercial and

maritime network” (146). As one of the most successful sugar colonies, it was also one of numerous and varied inhabitants. Wilson writes:

The various other ethnic, class, caste, racial and political divisions on the island—between English, Scots, Irish and Jews; white traders and indentured servants, mulattos or ‘coloureds,’ free blacks and Maroons; highly mobile populations of soldiers and sailors; merchants and planters; small and large land-owners; and local and metropolitan officials—produced great squabbling and factions among colonists, endless lawsuits and explosive quarrels between planter-mercantile elites and the imperial government. (147)

The mixed population in a region of 4,240 square miles resulted in a rich and complicated history that bares out in the literature. As one of the earliest British colonies, Barbados, vastly smaller than Jamaica, was also a leading sugar exporter. In “Changing Identity in the British Caribbean: Barbados as a Case Study,” Jack Greene states that “[b]y the 1660s, Barbados was probably the most densely populated and intensely cultivated agricultural area in the English-speaking world” (216); however, by the late eighteenth-century, Jamaica took over as the “highest sugar-producing colony” (216).

Governor of Barbados in 1647, Lord Willoughby “aimed at founding a new colony in Surinam,” and he sent “a party of about 300” to begin the process (Todd xxi). By the 1660s “the colony’s purpose was largely to produce sugar for the English market” (xxi), but the British no longer had control of this area by 1667 (87). Robinson Crusoe’s island, per Defoe’s navigational clues, is in the “estuary of the Orinoco, within sight of Trinidad; and the Amerindians that feature in the book. . . are all referred to as Caribs” (Hulme 176). In the early part of the eighteenth-century, Trinidad a region of less than 2000 square miles, did not belong to Britain,

but by the end of the century, “the British took over the island” which reported “about 18,000 inhabitants” (Roberts 356).

Historically a part of many religious doctrines (e.g. Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism, and Muslim), hospitality entered philosophical conversations as early as 399 B.C.E. in Plato’s works. Plato’s interest in hospitality concerned the questions of the foreigner and the political, an aspect of hospitality that along with ethics, maintains primary importance through the works of such prominent figures as Immanuel Kant, Emmanuel Levinas, and Jacques Derrida. Hospitality theory examines several variations of the host and guest relationship—statesman and foreigner, citizen and immigrant, colonizer and the colonized—exploring the role of power within these pairings and frequently opposing forces. Theoretical discourse on hospitality appears as a sub-topic of many critical schools, most prominently Post-structuralism, Phenomenology, and Post-Colonialism. What I have come to understand of this theoretical perspective is its inability to divorce itself from ethical and moral questioning, and for this reason, it is relevant to the human experience—in Plato’s time and still today.

In line with his ideas of a “categorical imperative,” a non-negotiable moral law deriving morality from rationality, Immanuel Kant speaks of a “universal hospitality” in *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch* (1795). According to Kant, “hospitality means the right of a stranger not to be treated in a hostile manner by another upon the arrival on another’s territory” (82). Kant sees all people as having the right to visit another region—no matter the location—as a right “by virtue of the right of common possession of the surface of the earth” (82). Coinciding with his perspective that one should never lie, no matter the circumstance, Kant makes no room for exceptions with hospitality, progressively arguing that “the inhospitable actions of the civilized states in our part of the world, and especially of the commercial ones” are unjustifiable, going

further to specifically condemn the inhospitable actions that occur in “the Sugar Islands” or what he deems “that seat of the cruelest and most premeditated form of slavery” (82-84). Kant’s focus on ethics acts as a foundation for the discussion of hospitality, which cannot be addressed—especially in the Caribbean—without attention to moral action.

Taking a deconstructive approach, Jacque Derrida’s *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas* and *A Word of Welcome* address and develop concepts on “welcoming,” a term he takes from Levinas and uses interchangeably with hospitality. Derrida refers to Levinas’ *Totality and Infinity* as “an immense treatise of hospitality,” noting that though the word “hospitality” appears infrequently in the text, it “becomes the very name of what opens itself to the face, or, more precisely, of what ‘welcomes’ it” (*A Word of Welcome* 21). Influenced also by Kant, Derrida distinguishes between an “ethics of hospitality” and a “politics of hospitality” (19). The ethics of hospitality is infinite, without limitations; while a politics of hospitality is finite, or with limitations. Derrida, like Levinas, sees a third factor in the hospitable equation—a witness (29). He writes that “the third comes to affect the experience of the face in the face to face” (29). This third part—whether a person, the state, or the space itself—lessens the likelihood that violence will occur, a topic that Levinas discusses in his title-telling chapter, “Justice” (29).

In *Of Hospitality*, Derrida notes the presence of power and control in the exchange between guest and host. A foreigner (guest) is important as a point of comparison to the citizen (host). Using Plato’s *The Apology of Socrates* to establish his position, Derrida suggests that the host participates in the exchange as a way to establish self-identity (45). He states that there is no hospitality “without finitude, without sovereignty of oneself over one’s home” (55). Being hospitable allows the host to maintain control over the guest. “Unconditional” hospitality would require that the host release power/control to the guest, but this would render hospitality

impossible because it removes a condition of hospitality (power) from the equation (25). Despite the good intention that the term hospitality implies, the act, Derrida argues, further establishes the divide between subject and stranger, or host and guest. He suggests an element of danger in the exchange between host and guest; the simple act of opening the door to the Other, is an act of risk-taking, potentially endangering the host as well as the host's family (*Adieu 3*). In my own study, I investigate what the texts tell about the convergence of guest, host, and witness, and consider the elements of power and risk within the relationship. Just like the labels of guest and host, the role of witness fluctuates. At times the witness is human and at others it is the Caribbean landscape. This witnessing landscape—like the omniscient narrator, so present that it is often forgotten or ignored—mirrors the hidden labor that helps to define the Caribbean as paradise.

My study is driven by the following ideas: What role do the host and guest play in the tropical “paradise” with the implication that there is little labor in this environment? In other words, a traveler begins his/her journey with the idea that the Caribbean is a place of peace and relaxation, ignorant of the truth that there is much labor. How does this belief become part of the landscape? I am interested in British consumption of nature in the region, with a focus on how language (i.e. metaphors of the land) influence the way it is treated, asking how the concept of the West Indies changed and sustained itself over time. My study expands the understanding of the Caribbean region in the eighteenth-century and utilizes hospitality theory to articulate the role that the cultural exchange and physical setting play in the texts and in the formation of national identity, both in the West Indies and in England.

## SECTION ONE:

### PROSE FICTION

#### Chapter 1: Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*

An emergence of literature set in the West Indies coincided with British expansion in the region in the late seventeenth- and first half of the eighteenth-century. By the time Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* was published in 1726, the public was accustomed to reading about foreign lands, clashing cultures, and the effects of traveling. Though taking place in imaginary locations, with a quick nod to the West Indies in the opening pages, Swift's text illustrates the centrality of hospitality and the vulnerability of both guest and host in hyperbolic proportions. Gulliver collapses from exhaustion upon his arrival in Lilliput and awakens to find himself securely fastened to the ground, unable to move his head from left to right. Hundreds of six-inch tall Lilliputians armed with weapons climb his body, a first response to the arrival of a foreigner of titanic proportions on their homeland. This well-recognized image of Gulliver pinned down by the tiny Lilliputians, one of many examples showing the struggle for power that inevitably transpires between guest and host, demonstrates one kind of guest-host relationship that appears in the literature of the period—one in which the guest is mistrusted rather than protected. The Lilliputians fear their uninvited foreign guest and must minimize chances of risk before offering hospitality. The importance of hospitality in British culture during this period bears a direct relationship to issues of class and ethical standing. It is a Lilliputian who “seemed to be a Person of Quality” (18) that in a grand act of magnanimity gives the decree to free Gulliver from his



binds. Felicity Heal points to the emphasis on generosity in both religious circles and prescriptive literature in Early Modern England, calling hospitality “one of the foundations of the moral economy” (2), and hospitality continued to act as a moral compass throughout the eighteenth-century. Swift’s satire magnifies British concepts of hospitality as Gulliver represents his culture in his follies as guest. Gulliver, like many travelers, seeks to find another world, and ultimately that world becomes a reflection of himself and Britain in the 18<sup>th</sup>-century.

Examining early examples of literature set in this region allows for an in-depth exploration of how the Caribbean has become associated as a place of relaxation and escape to the many tourists who travel each year. I begin with prose fiction, the most widely read form of literature today, and argue that these works act as invitational texts, creating a new category of Caribbean literature that can be read as inviting tourists or migrants to the region. My study uncovers how our current perceptions of the Caribbean developed in spite of the brutality and labor so deeply embedded in its history. Fiction allows for an in-depth exploration of the guest and host encounter, communicating the internal thoughts and external actions of characters in an intimate interaction between reader(s) and story. Fiction also provides clues to the collective British perspective through the author’s imagination as the ideas that are at the forefront of the author’s text speak to the age in which the work is published. Just as rumors reveal much about the teller and the listeners, the fictive tale tells much about the author and the readers.

This chapter examines hospitality in a work that is a precursor to *Gulliver’s Travels*: Aphra Behn’s *Oroonoko* (1688). Like Gulliver, the pursuits of the travelers in all of the works in this study are propelled by the West Indian landscape. Additionally, *Oroonoko* shows that tensions between guests and hosts work to establish each participant’s identity and to shape stereotypes that remain to this day. The hospitable environment not only alters the traveler’s

perspectives but also strengthens his or her belief systems. Using hospitality theory to explore how power shifts between the guest/host/witness and to discover how these relationships work to define each of the players, I argue that *Oroonoko* establishes three narrative patterns that reveal what eighteenth-century travelers imagined in the West Indies: the host welcomes the outsider, the land serves as witness, and the arrival of the guest initiates a realignment of the British subjectivity.

In the dedicatory letter to Richard Maitland, 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Lauderdale that prefaces *Oroonoko: or the Royal Slave*, Behn describes the landscape as a place “produc[ing] unconceivable wonders” (5).<sup>1</sup> This letter not only venerates the Earl, but works to establish the environment, or place, as significant in *Oroonoko* and demonstrates that advertisement for travel to the West Indies began far earlier than previously believed. Lavish descriptions of an environment that clearly attracted the narrator’s sense of awe appear throughout the narrative, and in turn, the descriptions provide a romanticized view of the location, of a place whose trees are “all like nosegays adorned with flowers of different kind; some are all white, some purple, some scarlet, some blue, some yellow; bearing at the same time ripe fruit and blooming young, or producing everyday new” (47). Behn’s description appeals to the senses; readers can smell the flowers, see their colors, feel the ripe fruit, and taste the flavors. She advertises the region and lures potential travelers, diverting the readers’ attention to a reimagined beauty of the West Indies even in the context of violent injustice on display in the text. Though many British subjects may have been leery of traveling to this area, Behn’s in-depth description of exquisite

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<sup>1</sup> Though included in Behn’s original text, the dedicatory letter to Lord Maitland was frequently omitted from later editions. For a detailed history see Mary Ann O’Donnell’s *Aphra Behn: An Annotated Bibliography of Primary and Secondary Sources* (Garland Publishing, 1986).

natural beauty highlights the ecological wonder and invites those forming their identity as global travelers to explore this region.

A fictional travel narrative, Behn's *Oroonoko* chronicles a British woman's encounter with an African prince turned slave. The narrative follows Oroonoko's path from his home in Coramantien, on the Gold Coast of Africa, to the sugar colony of Surinam, on the Northeast of South America. The grandson of the king and an esteemed warrior, Oroonoko who falls in love with the beautiful Imoinda, falls out of favor when his grandfather attempts to add her to his collection of wives and discovers that she is committed to Oroonoko. As a result, the king misleads Oroonoko and convinces him that Imoinda has been put to death, but he instead sells her into slavery. At this point in the narrative, the problems of the guest/host relationship arise.

Throughout the account of Oroonoko's romance with Imoinda and their lives as slaves, Behn pays much attention to the physical landscape; the abundant beauty of the tropical surroundings becomes stronger as it contrasts with the violence towards those who are captured. Because of my focus on the West Indies, I will limit my discussion to Surinam which lies near the mouth of the Orinoco River, an outlier of the main Caribbean incursions. Though they are on West Indian soil, British subjects—a ship's captain, a plantation's overseer, and the narrator—take the predominant roles as hosts. Oroonoko's royal roots give him a similar sense of entitlement in a foreign land; yet, he cannot step wholeheartedly into the role of host or guest because of his imprisonment. I am interested in the contradictions that this region brings into view and see evidence that Behn saw these as well, as she calls attention to the beauty and brutality of both the landscape and its inhabitants. I argue that *Oroonoko* establishes patterns of hospitality that are repeated in later texts and result in a prototypical representation of the West Indies.

With its female, European writer/narrator and male, African slave, critics have recognized the interplay of race and gender in the text. Moira Ferguson credits Behn's text with beginning a pattern of colonial discourse on slavery,<sup>2</sup> while Margaret Ferguson pays careful attention to issues of race, class, and gender, through an examination of what she views as a competition between the narrator as "white English female author" and Imoinda as "the black, African slave-wife-mother-to-be" over "Oroonoko's body and its power to engender something for the future" (170), a fight she argues Behn wins.<sup>3</sup> Basuli Deb's work, instead of exploring difference, looks at the question of women's solidarity across political and cultural boundaries at work in the text.<sup>4</sup> My study adds to the conversation to include how hospitality intersects with race and gender, representing this region in ways that anticipate our twenty-first century cultural perceptions of tourism and paradise. I argue that *Oroonoko* repeatedly displays complex and complicated guest/host interactions, informing our understanding for later paradoxes of tourism that would develop out of Enlightenment discourses.

In his discussion of the torrid zones, Srinivas Aravamudan examines the fictional character of the tropicopolitan Other as it shifts from "colonialist representation to postcolonial revision" (17). He appropriates the term "tropicopolitan" (a word typically used to describe botanical species dominant in the tropics) as "a name for the colonized subject who exists both as a fictive construct of colonial tropology *and* actual resident of tropical space, object of representation *and* agent of resistance" (4). He assigns the term "virtualization" to describe a faction of tropicopolization in which "colonialist representations...acquire malleability because of a

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<sup>2</sup> See Moira Ferguson, "Oroonoko: Birth of a Paradigm" in *Subject to Others: British Women Writers and Colonial Slavery, 1670-1834* (Routledge, 1992).

<sup>3</sup> See Margaret Ferguson's "Juggling the Categories of Race, Class, and Gender: Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* in *Women's Studies* vol. 19, 1991, pp. 159-181.

<sup>4</sup> See Basuli Deb's "Transnational Complications: Reimagining *Oroonoko* and Women's Collective Politics in the Empire" in *Frontiers: A Journal of Women's Studies* vol. 36, 2015, pp. 33-56.

certain loss of detail” (17). Readers thereby fill in the gaps through “identification and manipulation” (17) which in turn allow the trope of the tropicopolitan to continue to take on new meanings. Aravamudan demonstrates that the period’s fascination with pet-keeping moved beyond furry creatures to include young, black slaves. He traces Oroonoko’s passage from that of a pet who “increases the narrator’s prestige and establishes her social superiority through his metonymic proximity to her” (41), to that of slave revolt leader claiming agency, an act further virtualized by the interpretations of readers and scholars. In Aravamudan’s reading, Oroonoko travels a spectrum from an owned slave-pet to that of rebel leader, and though he fails in leading the other slaves to safety, he succeeds in voicing anti-colonial rhetoric.

Aravamudan also implicates the modern reader in his argument, suggesting that the eighteenth-century’s fascination with pets compares to what he views as the overenthusiastic way current scholars treat Behn’s story. As a result, *Oroonoko* scholars enact the same fetishization that took place so long ago (32), and his astute observation of this repetitive pattern works to highlight a crucial aspect of my argument: today’s tourist shares in the perpetuation of the perceptions created in the Caribbean’s complicated past. As such, I will look at three scenarios that demonstrate another act of virtualization, one that refashions the narrative as a guest/host exchange that further solidifies the narrator’s identity as a global British subject and Oroonoko as tropicopolitan with shifting identifications. From this perspective, the text moves beyond its distinction as fictional travel narrative and transforms into a proto-advertisement for the adventurer, vacationer, intellectual, and escapist.

### *The Guest becomes Captive*

In the first significant guest/host scenario, an English ship run by a captain familiar to Oroonoko, docks in Coramantien, Oroonoko’s homeland. Prior to this visit, Oroonoko and the

captain of this ship engaged in the business of slave trafficking with Oroonoko selling him an “abundance of his slaves” (101). The two men also spent time getting to know each other on a social level. Because the captain appeared more refined than the typical seaman, Oroonoko often invited him to be his guest at court, “ma[king] him many presents, and oblig[ing] him to stay at court as long as possibly he could” (101). Oroonoko, fulfilling his host duties, welcomes the captain who fulfills his responsibilities as guest, “entertaining the prince every day with globes and maps and mathematical discourses and instruments, eating, drinking, hunting, and living with him with [...] much familiarity” (101-102). There is a give and take in this relationship, each satisfying his social obligations.

As the exchange requires, the captain invites Oroonoko, comrades Jamoan and Aboan, and Oroonoko’s soldiers to a lavish dinner aboard his vessel:

And the day being come, the captain in his boat, richly adorned with carpets and velvet cushions, rowed to the shore to receive the prince, with another long boat, where was placed all his music and trumpets, with which Oroonoko was extremely delighted, who met him on the shore, attended by his French governor, Jamoan, Aboan, and about an hundred of the noblest youths of the court. And after they had first carried the prince on board, the boats fetched the rest off, where they found a very splendid treat, with all sorts of fine wines, and were as well entertained as ‘twas possible in such place to be. (102)

Expectations of guest and host, ruled by an unwritten social contract, can be deduced in the narrative of the above scenario. The host is obliged to welcome the guest into his/her home, offering food, drink, and lodging when necessary. The guest in turn shows gratitude, often reciprocating the host’s invitation. The heart of the social contract establishes that neither the guest nor the host can injure the other; however, in the act of opening the door to another, the

host risks the possibility of harm in the exchange with the guest.<sup>5</sup> In *Oroonoko*, a reversal of this scenario reveals that the guest also risks danger in entering the host's home. The captain "who had well laid his design before, gave the word and seized on all his guests" (102). When the captain captures Oroonoko and his men, the relationship shifts from host and guests to that of master and slaves.

Oroonoko and his men are captured through false hospitality that leads to their arrival in Surinam, and the encounter solidifies by contrast the rules of hospitality and the cultural expectations that will repeat throughout the narrative. This guest and host interaction reinforces the possibility of violence in the expected benevolence of the hospitable exchange. At its most fundamental level, the customs of hospitality require that the host welcome the guest/stranger into his or her home. Though culturally there are variations in hospitable codes, the very foundation requires benevolence towards the guest, a motiveless spirit. Derrida complicates this premise, finding that power, an inevitable condition of hospitality, makes a sense of true or "absolute hospitality" impossible (*Of Hospitality* 25). This required condition of hospitality, according to Derrida, also renders its impossibility. In other words, pure motives of hospitality—pure altruism—does not exist because the host always expects something in return. For Derrida, this something is an affirmation of the self, a way to build the host's identity

Within these acts of generosity also lies an inevitable show of power and vulnerability. The host holds the right to welcome or reject the stranger, thereby affirming his/her position of authority. Reinforcement of identity through the gaze of the stranger acts as motivator to open one's door; at the same time, doing so exposes the host to possible dangers. Accepting this

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<sup>5</sup> According to Derrida, the simple act of opening the door to the Other, is an act of risk-taking, potentially endangering the host as well as the host's family (*Adieu* 3).

condition of power within the binary relationship, I suggest that there are varying degrees of hospitable motives. For example, a host may invite a guest into his/her home expecting conversation or a return invitation. These conditions, though not altruism in its purist form, in fact could be mutually beneficial and are natural reciprocations in the hospitable contract.

The ship's enclosures not only leave the Captain virtually ungoverned, but within the boundaries of the ship, Oroonoko and his men lack the protection of their homeland. Docked in foreign waters, the British ship's confinement removes eyewitnesses who are not complicit in or victims of the capture. As a result, the exchange—between the captain, Oroonoko, and his men—lacks a witness.<sup>6</sup> This third party of the hospitable encounter can be a person, the state, or the space itself and lessens the likelihood that violence will occur. Without a witness, the Captain's promise is revealed to have ulterior motives: financial gain masked under the veneer of the good host. The captain's home, the ship, creates a structure of sovereignty, awarding him the win he desires.

The Captain believes in his superiority as a British subject, which he uses to justify his treacherous act. The racial divide between Oroonoko and the captain raises the question of whether the hospitable contract applies only to those who share the same skin color and points to the racial dynamic that will appear throughout the transnational literature of the period. The captain's abrogation of his hosting obligations reveals more than a social faux pas; it is an act of racism that shows black men on social level so low that they are not only denied hospitality, but also chained and enslaved. Though the narrator avoids overtly judging the captain's treacherous act, her purposeful omission reveals her disapproval: "Some have commended this act, as brave

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<sup>6</sup> Derrida views the witness as a necessary factor in the guest and host equation, writing that "the third comes to affect the experience of the face in the face to face" (29).



in the captain; but I will spare my sense of it, and leave it to my reader to judge as he pleases” (102). With respect to the social laws of hospitality, the Captain’s white, European entitlement breaks what should be at the core of hospitality and the rights of the guest, defined by Immanuel Kant as “the right of a stranger not to be treated in a hostile manner by another upon the arrival on another’s territory” (82). Kant’s focus on ethics acts as a foundation for the discussion of hospitality which because of the Caribbean’s violent history cannot be addressed in this region without attention to moral action.

In line with his ideas of a “categorical imperative,” a non-negotiable moral law deriving morality from rationality, Kant speaks of a “universal hospitality” in *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch* (1795), written when the slave trade had reached its height. Kant sees all people as having the right to visit another region—no matter the location—as a privilege “by virtue of the right of common possession of the surface of the earth” (82). Kant makes no room for exceptions with hospitality, progressively arguing that “the inhospitable actions of the civilized states in our part of the world, and especially of the commercial ones” are unjustifiable, going further to specifically condemn the inhospitable actions that occur in “the Sugar Islands” or what he deems “that seat of the cruelest and most premeditated form of slavery” (82-84). Moral action breaks down in this region due to racial prejudice and desire for profit.<sup>7</sup>

The interaction between the captain and Oroonoko acts as a parable for the traveler in a foreign landscape, a cautionary tale of entering the home of the unknown host. Lured by

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<sup>7</sup> Signs of this disparity can be seen as early as 1657 in Richard Ligon’s *A True Exact History of Barbados* in which he first tells of Inkle and Yarico, a story that becomes further popularized in 1711 in Richard Steele’s *The Spectator*. Ligon describes the tale of a young British man who after being protected by an “Indian maid, who upon the first sight fell in love with him” soon after landing in Barbados “sold her for a slave, who was as free born as he” (107). Just as in this story, desire for financial gain and a belief in racial superiority cloud ethical action in *Oroonoko* and continue to play an important part in many works of this period.

curiosity and pleasure of new surroundings, the tourist's guard is dropped, exposing him to danger. The guest/host struggle illustrates the balder power dynamic at play between Oroonoko and the captain. There is an unwritten code of hospitality, and the breaking of that code comes with consequences: Oroonoko and his men attempt to end their lives by hunger strike. The rejection of food, the host's disingenuous offering, acts as a silent protest of the false hospitality.

To avoid losing his potential slave profits to starvation, the captain, too cowardly to go himself, sends one of his men "to assure [Oroonoko] he was afflicted for having rashly done so unhospitable a deed" (103). The captain falsely vows to free Oroonoko and his men at the next landing in order to gain their loyalty so that they will eat. Just as the host's position is reinforced by inviting the guest into his/her home, the captain's imperial position is solidified by wielding power over Oroonoko. This scenario could work to further ostracize the Other, emphasizing difference; however, Behn's narration influences readers and potential travelers to sympathize with the foreigner rather than the British captain, working to humanize the Other. British readers of the period are led to side with Oroonoko and his men instead of the captain, their own countryman, gradually working to abate the potential anxieties of encountering foreigners in travels. The encounter between Oroonoko and the Captain reveals the three conventions of reciprocity that repeat in the narrative: the host welcoming the outsider (the Captain welcomes Oroonoko), the land serving as witness (the land is denied its position as witness), and the guest initiating a realignment of British identity (Oroonoko's role as guest realigns the Captain's empowered British subjectivity).

#### *Trefry Befriends his Royal Guest*

A second guest and host relationship in the text further demonstrates patterns of British hospitality on foreign soil. Once Oroonoko arrives on the shores of Surinam to be sold as a slave,

he is purchased by Trefry, the manager of the governor's affairs and overseer of Parham Plantation. Trefry, recognizing Oroonoko's quality, "entertained [him] so agreeably with his art and discourse, that [Oroonoko] was no less pleased with Trefry than he was with the prince" (107). Trusting him, Oroonoko exchanges his tale for sympathetic understanding; Trefry "promised him on his word and honour he would find the means to reconduct him to his own country again, assuring him he had perfect abhorrence of so dishonourable an action, and that he would sooner have died, than have been the author of such perfidy" (107). The narrator carefully points out that Trefry could see Oroonoko's worth as a person of quality. Status alters Oroonoko's course as he moves from being identified as slave to that of royal guest.

Though Oroonoko and Trefry are both foreigners in Surinam, a sense of British ownership pervades the conquered land, placing Trefry in the role of host and guide to the newcomer. The West Indian landscape aids in Trefry's welcoming of his guest. Trefry shows Oroonoko his new surroundings by touring the river and stopping "at several houses for refreshment" (107). In this journey, the river escorts Trefry and Oroonoko to the hospitable homes and acts as witness to the guest/host exchange. Unlike the enclosure of the Captain's ship, the river's open space provides the sensation of freedom and works to support Trefry's promise to release his new friend. Oroonoko, renamed Caesar, is treated as a regal visitor rather than a prisoner. By inviting Oroonoko into their homes, these hosts reinforce his illusory position as guest: "if the King himself (God bless him) had come ashore, there could not have been greater expectations by all the whole plantation, and those neighboring ones, than was on ours at that time, and he was received more like a governor than a slave" (108). Emphasis in the narrative is placed on the welcoming of the stranger rather than his position as prisoner, and the welcoming elevates the hosts who safely invite the exotic Oroonoko into their home. Through these visits,

Oroonoko begins to learn his role; he finds his new identity as tourist attraction take shape as a means of adapting to the new surroundings.

As host, Trefry models respectable British values; he is educated, honorable, sensible, and witty, and his interactions with Oroonoko demonstrate these qualities. Yet, as Beccie Puneet Randhawa suggests, British subjects living across the Atlantic were often perceived as outsiders, often uncouth and ill-mannered (69).<sup>8</sup> Behn, instead, portrays Trefry as a gentleman who exemplifies polite British society. He tells Oroonoko of his longing for a slave woman who he lusts after, and before Oroonoko realizes that this woman is his beloved Imoinda, he wonders “why, being [Trefry’s] slave, [he] do[es] not oblige her to yield” (110). Additionally, when he discovers that Imoinda is Oroonoko’s mistress, Trefry shows no signs of jealousy, but rather is pleased “that heaven was so kind to the prince as to sweeten his misfortunes” (112).

In Oroonoko’s interaction with the Captain, the narrator points to Oroonoko’s innocence, his blind trust in another’s word, as a factor of his enslavement. Similarly, Trefry’s civility also leads to trouble for Oroonoko. Byam, the deputy governor of Surinam, acts as Trefry’s foil. According to the narrator, Byam is “the most fawning, fair-tongued fellow in the world” and one “whose character is not fit to be mentioned with the worst of the slaves” (128). When Oroonoko attempts to escape his position and leads other slaves in a revolt, Byam asks him to stand down and promises freedom. Believing Byam’s word, Trefry helps convince Oroonoko to accept Byam’s offer and “put himself in Caesar’s hands, and took him aside, and persuaded him, even with tears to live by surrendering himself” (131). When Oroonoko agrees, Byam betrays his

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<sup>8</sup> For further discussion, see Randhawa’s “The Inhospitable Muse: Locating Creole Identity in James Grainger’s *The Sugar Cane*” in *Eighteenth-Century Theory and Interpretation*. Vol. 49, no. 1, 2008, pp. 67-85.

word and punishes Oroonoko severely, violently whipping him and “rendering flesh from [his] bones” (131).

The wrongful treatment of his guest pushes Trefry into action, and he uses his authority to speak against Byam, denying him hospitality. In his show of power, Trefry speaks in the name of his lord, claiming his position of host by aligning himself with the king of England. He tells Byam:

...his command did not extend to the lord’s plantation, and that Parham was as much exempt from the law as Whitehall; and that [he] ought no more to touch the servants of the Lord – (who there represented the king’s person) than [he] could those about the king himself; and that Parham was a sanctuary, and though his lord were absent in person, his power was still in being there which he had entrusted with him, as far as the dominions of his particular plantations reached, and all that belonged to it; the rest of the country, as Byam was lieutenant to his lord, he might exercise his tyranny upon. (134)

Trefry prohibits Byam access to his land and those who reside there by invoking the king and comparing Parham to the Palace of Whitehall, home to the King of England. The plantation acts as Trefry’s home and the people who live there are representative of his family, and as host and head of household he must offer safety.

#### *Behn and Oroonoko Bond in the Tropics*

The narrator’s position as the governor’s daughter and her extraordinary lodgings place her in the role of host in yet another guest/host encounter that establishes the standards of British hospitality in the Caribbean. To solidify her status as a generous and honorable British subject, the narrator must demonstrate that she is a generous host. Behn details the ways in which she

introduces her guest to the pleasures of the place and describes St. John's Hill, her home, in possession of all the beauties and comforts possible:

It stood on a vast rock of white marble, at the foot of which the river ran a vast depth down, and not to be descended on that side; the little waves, still dashing and washing the foot of this rock, made the softest murmurs and purlings in the world, and the opposite bank was adorned with vast quantities of different flowers eternally blowing, and every day and hour new, fenced behind 'em with lofty trees of a thousand rare forms and colours, that the prospect was the most raving<sup>9</sup> that sands can create. On the edge of this white rock, towards the river, was a rock or grove of orange and lemon trees, about half the length of the Marl<sup>10</sup> here, whose flowery and fruity bare branches meet at the top, and hindered the sun, whose rays are very fierce there, from entering a beam into the grove; and the cool air that came from the river made it not only fit to entertain people in at all the hottest hours of the day, but refreshed the sweet blossoms and made it always sweet and charming; and sure the whole globe of the world cannot show so delightful a place as this grove was. Not all the gardens in Italy can produce a shade to outvie this, which nature has joined with art to render so exceeding fine, and 'tis a marvel to see how such vast trees, as big as English oaks, could take footing on so solid a rock, and in so little earth as covered that rock, but all things by nature there are rare, delightful and wonderful. (116-117)

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<sup>9</sup> The 1698 edition of *Oroonoko* included in *All the Histories and Novels by the Late Ingenious Mrs. Behn, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition* (O'Donnell A40.3a) changes "raving" to "ravishing" (Runge 14). For full discussion of emendations relevant to readings of Behn's text, see Laura Runge's "Tracing a Genealogy of *Oroonoko* Editions" in *British Literature and Print Culture* (D.S. Brewer 2013).

<sup>10</sup> Replaced with "Mall" in the 1698 edition (Runge 14).

Behn's words formulate a paradisiacal image of the West Indies that would have sparked the imagination of her contemporaries and potentially lure travelers to this part of the world. She emphasizes the unparalleled beauty and lushness of the landscape, reminiscent of places readers may live in or have travelled to, such as Italy, but more exotic and rare. Showing her aptitude for persuasion and for recognizing her audiences' desires, Behn entices readers with a global vision, tying the tropical beauty to that of the world. She makes reference to entertaining guests and addresses the climate. By calling notice to the "cool air" (117), she distracts attention away from the heat that could have prevented travelers from visiting. Like a skilled advertising agent, Behn offers the West Indies as an alternative to Italy, a prominent vacationing destination site of the period, and as in her dedicatory letter, she appeals to the senses. As a woman, she becomes a means to control Oroonoko/Caesar through her skills as host. She writes that she is "obliged by some persons who feared a mutiny...to discourse with Caesar, and to give him all the satisfaction [she] possibly could" (113). This hospitable interaction begins with a less than altruistic motive; yet, she performs her role of host committedly, inadvertently beginning to shape a new sense of identity as ambassador for intercultural relationships, influenced by the interaction and her environment.

As a hotbed of colonial encounters, the Caribbean landscape forces its inhabitants to create new selves that require malleability as a means of survival. Theorizing on cultural identity, Homi Bhabha examines the relationship between the two subject positions of the colonizer and the colonized/the hegemony and the Other. He argues that at the point of encounter and through the act of enunciation or utterance a third space, an in-between space, develops through a process

of hybridity.<sup>11</sup> This “third space” can act as a point of resistance where the Other can oppose, confront, or provoke the hegemony; through hybridity the colonized might challenge the colonizer or the guest might challenge the host’s power. This new space acts as a cultural mixing spot, a place of transformation, and a place that calls established categories into question.

In Behn’s narrative, the guests and hosts enact the process of hybridity that Bhabha describes through a veneer of hospitality based on cultural codes of politeness. This process is exemplified as the narrator extends her hospitality towards Oroonoko and his wife Imoinda, renamed Clemene:

[Oroonoko] and Clemene were scarce an hour in a day from my lodgings, that they eat with me, and that I obliged ‘em in all things I was capable of. I entertained him with the lives of the Romans and great men, which charmed him to my company; and her, with teaching all the pretty works that I was mistress of, and telling her stories of nuns, and endeavoring to bring her to the knowledge of the true God. (113)

The narrator recounts tales of warriors, intrigue, and religion, but considering the meeting more closely, the host’s stories impart the values of British society, those that she selects as representative of her culture. Here her responsibilities move beyond food and lodging and into the realm of performance, entertaining her guests with her knowledge and aptitude for knowing what might interest each of them. As such, the narrator reinforces correct codes for hospitality and demonstrates what one can gain by being a host: friendship, entertainment, a story, and a strengthening of her own cultural identification. And while the narrator acts as a “good” host

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<sup>11</sup> Bhabha defines hybridity as “the sign of the productivity of colonial power, its shifting forces and fixities; it is the name for the strategic reversal of the process of domination through disavowal” (112). For Bhabha, hybridity “unsettles the mimetic or narcissistic demands of colonial power but reimplicates its identifications in strategies of subversion that turn the gaze of the discriminated back upon the eye of power” (112).



based on British customs, she cannot ultimately offer safety, and this is what her enslaved guests most need in the tropical surroundings.

This encounter creates a unique playing field through which the communication between the subject positions are “mobilized” (36), the Third Space to which Bhabha refers. It is a space that not only offers the possibility for the Other to challenge oppression, but also one that opens the door to an exchange. The narrator enters the hybrid space through her storytelling and begins to question her own values. Her role begins as a tool of manipulation and control and ends as a mouthpiece of contention and dissent by exposing and judging the cruel behaviors of her countrymen in her narrative. This sharing, or the utterance, also places these British customs and stories within Oroonoko’s reach for him to refashion and make anew.<sup>12</sup> From one perspective, doing so solidifies his position as a model guest, pleasing his host with sport and entertainment. He hunts tigers and fishes for eel, and both events preoccupy the narrator and her friends perhaps even more than Oroonoko himself. From a second perspective, the utterance plants the seeds of Oroonoko’s future acts of resistance. This hospitable encounter not only reinforces the narrator’s position through her power to welcome him and wield her knowledge, it also ultimately alters her.

As Oroonoko’s interactions with the narrator show, the guest and host relationship is a give and take. Oroonoko knows that despite the hospitable veneer, the narrator fears him, which shows a distrust of the stranger of another race. They make an unspoken pact made available to them through conventional patterns of hospitality. Each must participate in the prescribed roles of guest and host for this social contract to work. The host welcomes and entertains the guest,

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<sup>12</sup> According to Bhabha, once the enunciation, or utterance between the two subject positions takes place, the process of hybridity occurs (36).

and the guest treats the host respectfully. As the prior interaction between Oroonoko and the captain shows, the host can gain the guest's loyalties. Oroonoko is aware that the narrator fears him; the narrator is aware that Oroonoko wants to go home. The narrator speaks to the bonds created: "So that obliging him to love us very well, we had all the liberty of speech with him, I took it ill he should suspect we would break our words with him, and not permit both him and Clemene to return to his own kingdom" (114). The narrator worries about Oroonoko losing his calm; Oroonoko, in turn, fears being restrained as a consequence of that fear. The laws of hospitality prevent these fears from being realized or temporarily holds them at bay. Oroonoko makes a verbal contract with his hostess: "He assured me that whatsoever resolutions he should take, he would act nothing upon the white people, and as for myself, and those upon the plantation where he was, he should sooner forfeit his eternal liberty, and life itself, then lift his hand against his greatest enemy on that place" (114). Showing his awareness, Oroonoko "besought [the narrator] to suffer no fears upon his account" (114). Oroonoko's pledge appears to be inconsistent with his character; he is a war hero and expected to fight for his honor. His restraint acts as proof of his altered behavior and shows strength in the reliance of guest and host.

Oroonoko's passivity changes when he learns of Imoinda's pregnancy. Imoinda's lament for her family's future inspires him to take action, and he recruits the other slaves to leave the plantations with him and strive towards freedom. In his call to action, Oroonoko rejects the hybrid space created from the guest/host contact and challenges the dominant power: "[w]e are bought and sold like apes, or monkeys, to be the sport of women, fools, and cowards, and the support of rogues, runagades, that have abandoned their own countries, for raping, murders, thefts, and villainies" (126). He understands that it is necessary to adapt in order to survive in

this environment, but he decides that he cannot. Hospitality breaks down when Oroonoko refuses to assimilate; he declines identification as Caesar and refuses to abide by the host's rules.

After a violent battle, the revolt fails when the women and children witnessing the horror convince the men to “yield and leave Caesar to their Revenge” (129), leaving only Imoinda and one other to fight. Byam, the acting governor of the island, negotiates with Caesar and makes false promises that eventually end the combat. Instead of the peaceful resolution promised to him, Oroonoko is whipped “in a most deplorable and inhumane manner, rendering the very flesh from [his] bones” (131) and feeding his thirst for revenge. The torture is carried to the extreme for Oroonoko who “almost fainting, with loss of blood, from a thousand wounds all over his body” is bound with iron shackles and rubbed with Indian pepper to aggravate his wounds (132). The narrator aids in nursing him to health, and Oroonoko is relocated to Parham where she “fail[s] not to visit him every day” (133). Byam, who had been brought to Parham to heal from his own battle wound, is denied hospitality. Trefry “use[s] his authority” and “turn[s] [Byam] and his wise council, out of doors” (134). Refused welcoming signals disapproval and exerts the host's power.

In this scenario, the hospitable encounter illustrates opposition between politics and ethics. Commenting on Derrida's definitions between ethics of (infinite) hospitality and a politics of (finite) hospitality, Mirielle Rosello writes that “the apparently incompatible pair are doomed to cohabit, unhappily, chaotically, because that tension is what hospitality is precisely all about. It is neither possible to give up on one of the elements of the equation nor to pretend that they are not incompatible” (11). Byam is Trefry's ally, but Trefry's inability to overlook the cruelty overrides his political bond with Byam and reaffirms the impossibility of absolute hospitality.

Oroonoko can no longer return to his position as compliant guest, and so he devises a plan to eradicate his subordinate position. He determines that if he were to die before Imoinda, “she may be ravished by every brute, exposed first to their nasty lusts, and then a shameful death” (135). Deciding that it would be more honorable to die by his hand, Oroonoko shares with Imoinda “his design of first killing her, and then his enemies, and next himself, and the impossibility of escaping, and therefore he told her the necessity of dying” (135). Furthermore, Oroonoko recognizes that the slave owners would take possession of his child, and this gift would be too large for him to give. Imoinda complies readily with Oroonoko’s request, and he kills her and his unborn child, a would-be manifestation of the Third Space.

Caesar is Oroonoko’s hybrid identity, a new self that he declines. The historical Julius Caesar is murdered by his people; Oroonoko invites death. He declares: “Oroonoko scorns to live with the indignity that was put on Caesar” (133). Refusing to adapt to his new role, he rejects his position as slave/guest and returns to his former identity as warrior. Neither Oroonoko nor the narrator can uphold their agreements. Defiant until the last breath, Oroonoko, the guest and racial Other, dies by dismemberment with his ears, nose, and arms cut off and burned (140). He becomes a physical manifestation of the transplanted Other who cannot assimilate.

As prisoner, Oroonoko is unable to embody wholeheartedly the role as guest. An equal exchange between the guest and host is unattainable because of the discriminatory space he enters and the horrors of slavery that surround him. Behn shows the contradictions inherent to the colonized space. Rather than glossing over the brutality, she details the gruesomeness. I suggest that the beauty of the landscape shines brighter when juxtaposed to the violence, and the bloody gore becomes more vivid by contrast. Behind the romanticized account of an African

prince, Behn's choice to present the brutality of expansion into the West Indies offers the true history of English intervention in this part of the world that she promises from the start.

*Oroonoko* establishes important patterns of hospitality as sets of cultural hybridity and exchange between England and the Caribbean that will repeat in later works of the period. The act of welcoming typically elicits feelings of generosity, charity, and kindness; however, this work illustrates that hospitality can also be used for transaction, manipulation, and negotiation. As a result of colonial domination, the patterns that appear in the literature of this region and period are double-sided and contradictory.

One pattern that emerges is the welcoming of the outsider. Behn uses an encounter with the natives as a model of hospitality. The natives welcome both Oroonoko who "sold most of them to these parts" (109) and Trefry, a buyer of slaves. Both are known risks to them, but they receive them with fanfare:

[The slaves] prepared all their barbarous music, and everyone killed and dressed something of his own stock (for every family had their land apart, on which, at their leisure-times, they breed all eatable things) and clubbing it together, made a most magnificent supper, inviting their grandee captain, their prince, to honor it with his presence, which he did, and several English with him, where they all waited on him, some playing, others dancing before him all the time, according to the manners of their several nations, and with unwearied industry, endeavoring to please and delight him.

(109)

Oroonoko's royal rank grants him reverence despite his involvement in selling his hosts into slavery and traveling with Trefry. In this example, status inverts the guest/host relationship, shifting power into the guests' hands.

As in England, social rank affects the guest/host dynamic in the West Indies. Hence, Behn's trope of the royal slave is in line with the British social order along bloodlines and aristocracy. A common slave, much like a British servant, would not be a welcomed guest of affluent British subjects. Oroonoko is repeatedly distinguished from his people throughout the text based on his "quality" and "native beauty" (Behn 79). Furthermore, his royal distinction combined with the Edenic quality of the tropical landscape elevate him in the narrator's eyes. From her perspective, Oroonoko embodies innocence, an inability to lie and deceive, heightened by contradistinction with her deceptive countrymen. Still, this innocence, or purity, might indicate a lack of worldliness that reciprocally shows the British characters to be further evolved.

The narrator's descriptions of the Amerindians adhere to the stereotype of virtuousness and inexperience. The natives are "modest," "bashful" and "shy" (76), and "so like our parents before the Fall" (76). She emphasizes the importance of the West Indian environment to their character: "[a]nd these people represented to me an absolute idea of the first state of innocence, before Man knew how to sin, and 'tis most evident and plain that simple Nature is the most harmless, inoffensive, and virtuous mistress. 'Tis she alone, if she were permitted, that better instructs the world than all the inventions of man" (77). Behn's personification of the land as teacher is a powerful indication that the land has the ability to act as a moral guide, a theme Defoe will later develop in *Robinson Crusoe*. The Amerindians demonstrate exemplary hospitable behaviors. The narrator complains about her inability to visit Indian villages and laments her inability to visit and to satisfy her curiosity. With Oroonoko and a local fisherman to guide them, the narrator, her brother, and her attendant enter the "Indian town" (120) without fear of harm and rejection, and after performing the role of proper guest, Caesar makes it so the Amerindians and British can trade freely.

In contrast to the Captain's treatment towards Oroonoko and his men, the Amerindians treat the visitors warmly, without ulterior motives. Upon their arrival, the natives exclaim a welcome, referring to the guests to what translates as "friend" (122) and ask questions that reflect an awareness of both English and Amerindian values. They inquire "[i]f [the English] have sense and wit? If [they] could talk of affairs of life, and war, as they could do? If [they] could hunt, swim, and do a thousand things they use?" (122). Then, the natives "invited [them] into their houses, and dressed venison and buffalo for [them]" taking care to laboriously set a table to dine (122). These details do not go unnoticed in the narrative. Behn describes how the hosts "gathered a leaf of a tree, called sarumbo leaf, of six yards long, and spread it on the ground for a table-cloth, and cutting another in pieces instead of plates, setting [the guests] on little bow Indian stools, which they cut out of one entire piece of wood, and paint, in a sort of japan work" (122). This description serves to show the similarities between Amerindian and British customs and the nuances as well. To be exemplary, hosts must provide more than their guests' basic needs. Hosts should strive to make guests feel special and their presence desired.

Coinciding with the hosts' welcoming is nature's role in receiving the newcomer. The abundant landscape fills the senses:

[Surinam] affords all things both for beauty and use; 'tis there eternal Spring, always the very months of April, May and June. The shades are perpetual, the trees, bearing at once all degrees of leaves and fruit, from blooming buds to ripe Autumn, groves of oranges, lemons, citrons, figs, nutmegs, and noble aromatics, continually bearing their fragrances. (116)

Nature is an exemplary host, providing food and shelter beyond basic needs by offering an opulent experience and a sensory reminder of its presence.

In conflict with these examples of generosity are invitations used as a means to control the guest or as acts of treachery. Just as the narrator welcomes Oroonoko to gain his allegiance, the British befriend the natives to their advantage. The natives are useful tour guides, “knowing all the places where to seek the best food of the country and the means of getting it” (77-78). In this geographic location, the position of ally or enemy is fluid and the label of stranger never settles. The narrator acknowledges the benefits of engaging in a cultural exchange with the natives: “So that they being on all occasions very useful to us, we find it absolutely necessary to caress them as friends” (78). The relationship lacks genuineness and once again shows the complexity of the guest/host relationship in the Caribbean. In this site of colonial encounter, the roles of guest and host are in flux. Though the natives should inherently be the hosts because they are indigenous to the region, the British view the land as their own and invert the natural order.

The narrator distinguishes between proper hospitality and welcoming the guest with ulterior motives. After the failed slave revolt, Byam and the overseers take Caesar and Tuscan to be punished and tortured, while sparing Imoinda. Instead, they “carried her down to Parham, and shut her up, which was not in kindness to her, but for fear she should die with the sight, or miscarry, and then they should lose a young slave, and perhaps the mother” (132). Imoinda is taken in as a guest to Parham House not out of kindness, but as a way to salvage the slave owner’s property and profits. This motive once again perverts the guest/host relationship and shows the category of guest to be porous. Imoinda is simultaneously guest and prisoner.

A third pattern that develops is the encounter between the colonizer and the colonized that leads to a reinforcement of identities. In the welcoming of Other as guest, Oroonoko’s position as slave is disguised; yet, once the exchange between guest and host is enacted, the



space that emerges unveils truths. The act of enunciation opens a space for revolt and provides the colonized room to reject assimilation. Bhabha focuses on the way in which “the gaze of the discriminated [turns] back upon the eye of power” (112), but Behn also shows that the hybrid space causes those in power to reflect the gaze back upon themselves and doing so both reinforces the hosts’ identities as British subjects, or as part of the British hegemony, and reveals flaws in the system to which they belong. Behn’s narrative simultaneously supports British expansion and opposes barbaric treatment of slaves.

Contradictory representations of this region that arise from the literature remain a part of contemporary views. Travelers expect serenity and escape from a location built on violence and captivity. The stereotypes have also been long lasting and include: (1) the royal slave, or its successor, the noble savage; (2) the British adventurer; and (3) the sensual Caribbean woman. As such, hospitality reinforces identity, but also calls into question British society’s moral character. In *Oroonoko*, Behn’s narrator demonstrates this questioning first hand when she exhibits the vile behaviors of her countrymen. Her work exposes a perspective from which to view the complexity of the relationship between a location and its inhabitants at a time in British history that focused on expansion. The Caribbean maintains a perception of paradise that coexists with capitalistic desires, labor, and a brutal history. Representations of hospitality rooted in the literature of the Restoration and eighteenth-century are largely responsible for this long-lasting image, and in my next chapter the two later fictions I examine utilize these patterns and work to create a model.

## Chapter 2: Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and William Pittis' *The Jamaica Lady*

Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and William Pittis' *The Jamaica Lady; Or, the Life of Bavia* are narratives that establish patterns of how the Caribbean is represented in texts from the eighteenth-century. Examining these works together highlights the double-sidedness of hospitality that continues to grow as colonial domination becomes more prominent. *Robinson Crusoe* tells the tale of the quintessential British explorer, and *The Jamaica Lady* offers an early view of the West Indian character, notably a woman. Just six years before the publication of *Robinson Crusoe* and seven years before *The Jamaica Lady*, Britain was awarded a contract, bought by the South Sea Company, which turned them into one of the largest participants in the slave trade of this region (De Krey 291). The brutality of slavery, no longer deniable, clashed with the British codes of politeness. The emergence of hospitable patterns in the literature shows that writers of the period recognized the need to revisit and construct what it means to be British, with its concepts of politeness and decorum, amidst the backdrop of the Caribbean. The patterns found in *Oroonoko*—the host's welcoming of the guests, nature's complicity in the welcome, and a realignment with British identity—emerge again in these narratives, emphasizing the significance of the guest and host interaction in literature of this region.

### *Robinson Crusoe*

Still a part of popular culture in the 21<sup>st</sup>-century, *Robinson Crusoe* tells the story of an English youth who leaves home to journey at sea and finds himself the sole-survivor of a devastating storm on an island in the West Indies. The bulk of the narrative shares Crusoe's trials and tribulations as he learns to live off the land and struggle with his religious faith. After many years in solitude, Crusoe rescues a Caribe who becomes his servant and companion, and they work to maintain Crusoe's home and vision. The men eventually leave the island and journey to

England; however, Crusoe cannot resist the nomadic life and returns to the seas for further adventures.

It is important to consider Crusoe's motivation for travel in order to fully trace how the environment influences his views. Unlike many before him, he does not travel out of financial necessity, nor does he travel with the approval of his family. In fact, his father questions why he would leave his home, "where [he] might be well introduced, and had a Prospect of raising [his] Fortunes by Application and Industry, with a Life of Ease and Pleasure" (Defoe6). Unable to understand his son's wanderlust, Crusoe's father explains what he views as practical reasons that men choose to go to sea: "He told it was for Men of desperate Fortunes on one Hand, or of aspiring, superior fortunes on the other, who went abroad upon Adventures, to rise by Enterprize, and make themselves famous in Undertakings of Nature out of the common Road" (6). Crusoe, instead, travels to gain experience; he travels because he is "so entirely bent upon seeing the World" (8). His older brother dies in military battle, and another brother is missing, presumed to be dead (5). These losses fuel his propensity towards adventure, his desire to escape, and his search for meaning. The natural world and its curiosities offers travelers inspiration for reflection. Crusoe's search to find himself begins when he experiences gratitude, pushed upon him by the abundance of the Caribbean landscape where he is forced to fully commit to his senses and embrace the environment around him.

Scholarship on *Robinson Crusoe* fails to consider the importance of hospitality within the text. In *Paradise and Plantation* (2002), Ian Gregory Strachen examines both "the discourse of the mother country and the discourse of the colony or independent nation" (5) to trace the representation of the Caribbean as a paradise. Strachen points to the alluring "brochure language" used to draw visitors to the Caribbean region, as noted by Derek Walcott in his 1992

Nobel Prize speech (2-3). Though primarily interested in texts of the nineteenth- and twentieth-centuries, he includes a section on *Robinson Crusoe* that emphasizes Crusoe's lack of "paradisiacal praise" of the natural landscape (47). Aligning himself with Ian Watt, Strachen argues that Crusoe is only interested in the land for capitalistic gain. Nonetheless, Strachen suggests that Defoe's Crusoe plays a vital part in establishing a dichotomy between paradise and the Caribbean; the act of conquering and ruling—Friday, the Spaniard, and Friday's father. Crusoe, he argues, "has become God and Adam in paradise" (50).

In *The Complexion of Race: Categories of Difference in Eighteenth-Century British Culture*, Roxann Wheeler examines "the significance of race to eighteenth-century Britons by examining what constituted human difference and how it was narrated" (6). Wheeler argues that in *Robinson Crusoe*, religion worked "to maintain the boundary between the civilized and the savage" (68). She adds that in eighteenth-century England, "to be a Christian was to be fully human" (16) and that "[s]avagery constitutes the dominant contrast between Europeans and Others" (58). Similarly concerned with issues of the civilized, Alex Mackintosh, in "Crusoe's Abattoir: Cannibalism and Animal Slaughter in *Robinson Crusoe*," suggests that "the nature of human and animals, and the distinction between them, is a central concern of the novel" (25). Referring to both cannibalism and animal slaughter to "food production and consumption," Mackintosh suggests that in *Robinson Crusoe* "the practices of Europeans and cannibals" are similar in that both are politically charged: "the question of who (or what) may eat what (or whom) is shown to be inseparable from the broader questions raised by the novel around sovereignty, conquest and citizenship" (24). Both Wheeler and Mackintosh show savagery to be a central concern in Defoe's text, and I argue that Crusoe's attention to hospitality, with its ties to religion, acts as a way to separate him from the "savage" Other.

Looking at the work through the lens of hospitality allows for a richer reading of the novel and a greater understanding of how past perceptions gave rise to current views of the region. I argue that *Robinson Crusoe* portrays the island as a place of religious revelation through the lens of hospitality. For the guest and host exchange to be played fairly, a witness is required. Crusoe is the sole inhabitant of the island for much of the narrative, and as such the roles of guest, host, and witness lack fixity and the emergent patterns are less divisible. Over the course of the long narrative, Crusoe takes the roles of guest and host; nature acts as host, witness, and teacher; the rescued Caribe, Friday, becomes guest; and God acts as the supreme host.

In the first significant hospitable encounter, the land acts as host and welcomes Crusoe by providing for his basic needs. His first contact with the Caribbean environment takes place after a near-death experience: “I clamber’d up the Clifts of the Shore, and sat me down on the grass, free from danger, and quite out of the Reach of Water” (40). A weary traveler, Crusoe finds a place to rest, offered to him by the island. The landscape offers him this space. Crusoe’s vulnerable state allows him to feel a passing moment of salvation (a hint at his future spiritual evolution) before fear returns when he believes he has no way of existing on the island. He perceives few resources; Crusoe’s island is “barren” (46), or so he believes upon first inspection. But even in these first moments, the land welcomes him, offering protection by providing him shade where he pitches his first tent.

In this tropical place, Crusoe begins to reflect, mourning first for what he has lost—a future that he saw with limited options—before questioning his role to play in life. He considers “[w]hy Providence should thus completely ruine its Creatures, and render them so absolutely miserable, so without Help abandon’d, so entirely depress’d that it could hardly be rational to be thankful for such a life” (54). His status as the lone survivor of the shipwreck causes him to feel

that he is in some way God's chosen one, but nonetheless chosen to suffer alone on the island. He secures a home in a make-shift cave on the side of a hill that overlooks the water and begins to contemplate his situation, showing signs of spiritual awakening: "All Evills are to be consider'd with the Good that is in them, and with what worse attends them" (54).

Like a guest who brings gifts to a host, Crusoe brings provisions that have survived the wreckage to the land: "Bread, Rice, three Dutch Cheeses, five Pieces of dry'd Goat's Flesh...and a little Remainder of *European* corn" (44). Initially, Crusoe's scope is narrow, able only to view his survival as dependent on his habitual needs. Tim Cresswell contends that displaced people add pieces of themselves in their new location to evoke memories of the homeland they leave (5). Crusoe acts this out and creates a hybrid space—part Caribbean part British—through an agricultural exchange.

It is because of his environment that he begins to awaken spiritually. Crusoe lands "some Hundreds of Leagues out of the ordinary Course of the Trade of Mankind" (54), with little chance of being rescued by a European vessel and thereby removing him from economic transactions. Encouraged by the contemplative quality of the natural environment, Crusoe recounts the moments of his spiritual negation. His father's religious instruction was interrupted by the eight years he spent at sea, what Crusoe refers to as "Seafaring Wickedness" (76). When he was "on the desperate Expedition on the desert Shores of *Africa*" (76), he did not turn to God, but instead, "acted like a meer Brute from the Principles of Nature, and by the Dictates of Common Sense only, and hardly that" (76). And when he is the only person who survived the drowning, having food and supplies to live, thoughts of God were fleeting. But after some time on the island, and becoming ill from the conditions of the hurricane, "Conscience that had slept so long, begun to awake, and [he] began to reproach [him] self with [his] past Life, in which [he]

had so evidently, by uncommon Wickedness, provok'd the Justice of God" (77-78). He utters his first prayer, asking for help.

In the Caribbean landscape, Crusoe begins to contemplate the world outside of himself and ultimately his role in God's plan (79). While sitting on the ground, overlooking the sea, he asks, "Why has God done this to me? What have I done to be thus us'd?" (79). His feelings of victimization develop into contempt at himself for lacking gratitude after the horrors from which he has been saved. He does not feel welcomed into this new space; yet, he continues to practice prayer. In imitation of the Biblical verse in which Israelites ask, "Can God spread a table in the wilderness?" Crusoe questions, "Can God himself deliver me from this place?" (81), a thought he confesses to contemplating often. In the asking, Crusoe reveals doubt, a lack of acceptance in God's grace. Though Crusoe's request appears to be ignored since he remains on the island for quite a while, he is changing. He is experiencing a removal from the spiritual stagnation and deliverance into an understanding of self and the divine. Furthermore, after recovering from illness—a bout of Distemper—he begins to see differently:

[I]t occur'd to my Mind, that I pored so much upon my deliverance from the main Affliction, that I disregarded the Deliverance I had receiv'd; and I was, at it were, made to ask myself such questions such as these, *viz.* Have I not been deliver'd, and wonderfully too, from sickness? From the most distress'd Condition that could be, and that was so frightful to me, and what notice I had taken of it? Had I done my Part? *God had deliver'd me, but I had not glorify'd him*; that is to say, I had not own'd and been thankful for that as a Deliverance, and how cou'd I expect greater Deliverance? (82)

If we examine this Christian awakening in light of the Caribbean paradigm of hospitality, we can see Crusoe in the role of faulty guest. The expectations are that guests will show thanks to their

host. As Crusoe's faith develops, the role of host shifts from natural environment to God. Crusoe equates God with the landscape and begins to fulfill part of the guest/ host transaction. In this early stage of his relationship with God, Crusoe enacts a hospitable interaction—the guest asks, the host grants, and the guest gives thanks.

During the rainy season, and the anniversary of his landing, Crusoe again shows gratitude to God for saving him and begins to feel a sense of happiness (96). He notes his changes before and after: "From this Moment I began to conclude in my Mind, that it was possible for me to be more happy in this forsaken Solitary Condition, than it was probable I should ever have been in any other Particular State in the World; and with this Thought I was going to give Thanks to God for bringing me to this place" (97). Place acts as a conduit to his happiness and to his spiritual development, though as soon as the thought passes over him, he recants, believing himself hypocritical since he still desires rescue.

Nonetheless, in the plentiful island of the Caribbean, Crusoe learns to feel gratitude, an essential part of spiritual growth. The abundance of the land, which at first seemed to Crusoe to be void of things, or void of the commodities in which the British indulge, pushes him to new insights, to see his world as having more than what he could desire and in contrast to England's consumerism. Calling to mind his earlier utterance, Crusoe's perspective expands further: "What a Table was here spread for me in a Wilderness, where I saw nothing at first but to perish for Hunger" (125). As he begins to adapt to his environment, and accept the offerings of the land, his perspective shifts and he adjusts to his position as guest.

After some time, Crusoe views the island as his home, and he considers how to protect his place. He reflects on the dangers he has escaped, namely the brutality of the "Cannibals" and "Savages" (166). He also recollects the dangers he has observed and desires a servant to not only



act as guard, but also to be a “Companion, or Assistant” (171). In year twenty-five, his wish is granted when he spots over thirty men on the island, men who danced in “barbarous Gestures and Figures” around a fire (170). Seeing that the men had two prisoners with them who they were to slaughter and consume, Crusoe intervenes, saving one who tries to escape and gaining his loyalty in turn.

Like Oroonoko, this servant, who Crusoe names Friday, blurs the lines between slave and guest. This naming of the Other, though described by Crusoe in sentimental terms, is an act of violence on the guest. According to Derrida, language is the passage between absolute and conditional hospitality, and questioning the guest is an act of violence, of imposing, furthered by requiring the guest to converse in the host’s language (*Of Hospitality* 15). An imposed idea on the guest, or stranger, is an act of violence. The act of identification, displayed here because Crusoe assigns his guest a name, forces a condition of hospitality, and again, an act of violence. Crusoe shapes Friday to fit his needs, policed by the environment, but also occurring because of the environment.

In a dramatic scene that grossly manifests the master/slave dynamic, Friday offers himself to Crusoe: “he...laid his head upon the Ground, and taking [Crusoe] by the Foot, set [Crusoe’s] Foot upon his head” (172). Crusoe translates this gesture as a pledge to serve. Implicitly rejecting the master/slave relationship, in response Crusoe lifts him and “ma[kes] much of him, and encourag[es] him” (172). Though his first intention is to gain a servant, Crusoe’s gesture of benevolence, saves Friday’s life. This act initiates their relationship dynamic, and as Crusoe desires, it becomes one between companions rather than servant and master. Friday enters into the guest/host exchange as an indebted guest. Friday’s attempted escape from the other men demonstrates that he has agency to leave so if Crusoe stopped being worthy of his

loyalty, Friday could leave the relationship. Friday enters the home on his own volition, but Crusoe distrusts his guest. He “had plac’d a kind of Trap-door, which if it had been attempted on the outside, would not have open’d at all, but would have fallen down, and made a great Noise; and as to Weapons, [he] took them all in to his Side every Night” (176). Crusoe is quick to follow this passage with a disclaimer that he “needed none of all this Precaution” (176); however, the host’s actions emphasize Crusoe’s feelings of vulnerability as a threatened host opening his home to the other.

Friday’s position as guest relies on the romanticized and popularized image of the native tropicopolitan. Much like the narrator in *Oroonoko*, Crusoe’s treatment towards Friday appears connected to his attractiveness. Crusoe writes:

[Friday] was a comely handsome Fellow, perfectly well made; with straight strong Limbs, not too large; tall and well shap’d, and as I reckon, about twenty-six Years of Age. He had a very good countenance, not a fierce and surly Aspect; but seem’d to have something very manly in his Face, and yet he had all the Sweetness and Softness of an *European* in his countenance too, especially when he smil’d. His Hair was long and black, not curl’d like Wool; his Forehead very high, and large, and a great Vivacity and sparkling Sharpness in his Eyes. The Colour of his Skin was not quite black, but very tawny; and yet not of an ugly yellow nauseous tawny, as the *Brasilians*, and *Virginians*, and other Natives of *America* are; but of a bright kind of a dun olive colour, that had in it something very agreeable. (173)

Like *Oroonoko*, Friday’s features are described in terms of British standards, an idealized beauty that makes him worthy of welcoming. Friday is the Other, but an acceptable Other. Just as the narrator’s British identity in *Oroonoko* is reinforced through the hospitable exchange, so is

Crusoe's. By treating the servant as guest, Crusoe affirms his British identity; he is both a powerful master and a polite host.

This hospitable encounter allows Crusoe to demonstrate his movement from a guest in need to a learned host. In *Making Room: Hospitality as a Christian tradition*, Christine Pohl notes that the practitioners of hospitality also become teachers of hospitality (11), and nature coupled with God's grace, guide Crusoe towards becoming a good, Protestant Christian host. Crusoe welcomes Friday and offers him safety and shelter. He nourishes him with bread and raisins and offers him a place to rest, "a Place where [he] had laid a great Parcel of Rice Straw, and a blanket upon it, which he used to sleep upon [him]self sometimes" (173).<sup>13</sup> He provides Friday with clothing and a tent, carefully creating a place for him.

The space of the Caribbean, and more specifically the island in which Crusoe lives, acts as witness in the host and guest exchange. A pact takes place between the host and guest, Crusoe and Friday respectively, that is guaranteed by the conditions of place. Crusoe needs Friday to help with his habitat and also to reaffirm his identity as master of his castle, to reinforce his Englishness and prevent a perceived descent into savagery. Crusoe's position of host reenacts characteristics associated with English identity; he describes his interactions with Friday with British expectations. On the island, Friday needs Crusoe's protection from the cannibals. The island creates this framework and promotes an exchange between the two players.

### *The Jamaica Lady*

By turning to Pittis' *The Jamaica Lady*, I leave the idealized, Christianized Caribbean and turn to a text that problematizes the representation of this region. Pittis' novella tells the

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<sup>13</sup> In 2 Samuel 16:1-2, David and his men are provided with bread and raisins for their journey, and in Paul Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*, travelers are provided with bread and raisins for sustenance. Crusoe repeats both of these offerings of religious generosity.

story of Bavia and Holmesia, two women of mixed race on a ship traveling from Jamaica to England. Holmesia, a Creole, not only allows for a study of early perception of the Caribbean woman, but coupled with Bavia, of Scottish and English decent, illustrates the perceived corruption of the geographical place, Jamaica, which according to the male characters in the text, works to further degenerate them. Hospitality in this text shows 18<sup>th</sup>-century British society's bigotry towards bi-racial women specifically, as these women act as a cautionary tale of the blending of cultures, and furthermore, against British expansion to the West Indies. Women, like Eve, are susceptible to the temptations of paradise and are blamed for the corruption of men in turn.

Pittis' text lacks Defoe's and Behn's narrative sophistication which may explain why it has garnered little attention by scholars. However, readings by Melissa K. Downes and Erin Mackie offer compelling reasons to recuperate the text and gain a greater understanding of societal response to colonial expansion. Both scholars view the narrative as forwarding an anti-expansionist perspective. Downes points to a connection between representations of the Caribbean and economic struggles in eighteenth-century England, particularly the South Sea Bubble (24).<sup>14</sup> She reads *The Jamaica Lady* as a parable, borne from the "anxieties of the domestic market and the changing economic identity of England" (24), using financial failure as a deterrent for expansion to the region (28). Mackie takes an alternate route to reach a similar end. She views the work as an anti-paradisiacal text, a "counter-discourse to visions of the West-Indies as Edenic sites of limitless resources and profit, of pure potential for the realization of

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<sup>14</sup> The South Sea Bubble was a British joint-stock company created as a public-private partnership to consolidate and reduce the cost of national debt and was also granted a monopoly to trade with South America. There was no realistic prospect that trade would take place, and the company never realized any significant profit from its monopoly. Company stock rose greatly in value as it expanded its operations dealing in government debt, peaking in 1720 before collapsing.

commercial imperialism's highest hopes" (197). From her perspective, the text acts as "an early specimen of anti-immigration propaganda" (196), working to deter a merging of boundaries between England and the Caribbean. Like both of these scholars, I see the Pittis' story as speaking directly to prospective travelers; yet, I contend that, not despite of but because of its licentious representations of Jamaica, the text acts as a marketing tool, paradoxically working to lure the reader/traveler to the Caribbean and impacting the creation of the image of this region still enacted on today's tourist, one of seduction and mystique. Temptation and the possibility of corruption make paradise more appealing. It is Eve's act of indulgence, the moment she bites the serpent's fruit, that the story takes hold of its readers, and I argue that this same dynamic charges this text for the eighteenth-century reader/traveler. Undeniably, much of England's wealth and identity during this period was built by trading in commodities of the Caribbean: slaves, sugar, and tobacco. The lure of prosperity, the seductive representations of abundance, and the temptation to start anew proved to be powerful persuasions.

Most of the action in the text takes place on board Captain Fustian's naval ship travelling from Jamaica to England. The text opens with a description of Captain Fustian that lists his bad qualities before the good. In addition to the characters already named and the ship's crew, the passengers include: the doctor, Pharmaceuticus and his unnamed wife; Holmesia's African slave, Quomina; the Irish surgeon, Phlebotomus; the Captain's son, Compy-boy; the sparkish lieutenant, Frutesius; and a second mate who tells much of Bavia's history. The hospitality on board happens as a result of transaction; both Bavia and Holmesia pay for their passage. As host, the Captain's extension of welcoming his female guests depends on various factors: (1) their beauty; (2) their wealth; (3) perceived virtue; (4) his mood. Bavia and Holmesia's histories, a

bulk of the narrative, are told to the Captain to abate his curiosity, and as demonstrated in *Oroonoko*, guests must share their histories as part of an unspoken condition of transaction.

*The Jamaica Lady* contains an exorbitant amount of prejudice that British expansion frequently produced, and as both Downes and Mackie identify, is explicit in its misogyny and xenophobia. This early 18<sup>th</sup>-century text works to institutionalize stereotypes of the Caribbean region that, surprisingly, often persist today, specifically that of the sexual and available female body. Antonio Benítez-Rojo's influential, postmodern study, *The Repeating Island*, graphically illustrates the sexualized and feminized Caribbean landscape. He refers to Europe as "that insatiable solar bull... [who] conceived the project of inseminating the Caribbean womb with the blood of Africa" (5). Using "the Atlantic" to signify Western economic, capitalist powers such as NATO, World Bank, and the New York Stock Exchange, he calls this trade route "the painfully delivered child of the Caribbean, whose vagina was stretched between continental clamps" (4). This metaphor acts in tandem with the image of women that emerges from this region. In his study on tourism in the Anglophone Caribbean, Ian Strachen rightly argues that advertisements for Caribbean travel frequently exploit the female body, with images of thinly dressed women seemingly "willing to be sexually penetrated" and "already being visually consumed" (30). Tracing this trope to its roots, the characters in Pittis's story show that the Caribbean was believed to have seductive powers that compelled women to offer their bodies to men, paid and unpaid, in the ultimate act of hospitality.

In the minds of several of the male characters and narrator, the negative attributes of the female characters directly correlate to time spent in Jamaica; a female perspective is never provided. Pharmaceuticus, British himself and married to a British woman, uses the landscape to justify his wife's adulterous behavior:

[H]e thought was not so much the fault of the Woman as the Climate, believing 'twas not her natural inclination, but that cursed malevolent planet which predominates in that Island, and so changed the Constitution of its Inhabitants, that if a Woman land there as chaste as a Vestal, she becomes in forty-eight hours a perfect Messalina, and that 'tis as impossible for a Woman to live at Jamaica and preserve her Virtue, as for a Man to make a voyage to Ireland and bring back his honesty. (35)

According to him, Jamaica has the power to change a chaste woman into a promiscuous one, adding that "her now having liv'd five years in Jamaica was time long enough, not only to tincture, but to change her whole Mass of Blood, and totally alter her Nature" (36). Despite the story's attention to what at first glance may be corruption, the promise of sexual freedom calls to those women who search for escape from societal constraints.

From a Eurocentric perspective, Jamaica's welcoming includes the available female body, and evidence of this offering can also be found on the Captain's ship crossing the Atlantic on its way to the island. Readers are introduced to Holmesia, the daughter of a London shoplifter turned Jamaican prostitute who follows her mother's Caribbean career path and gains extravagant wealth in her homeland until contacting syphilis. A Creole, she is described as "consequently of a pale yellow Complexion, of Stature tall and meager, very demure and precise in carriage, but withal haughty; and when mov'd, of an implacable, revengeful Temper; yet a great pretender to Piety and Virtue" (8-9). The reader never sees Holmesia pretending to be pious or virtuous. Her history, told by Pharmaceuticus who cured her sexually transmitted disease, tells of her falling in love with a man named Galenicus who "takes her home under the Pretence of being his House-keeper" (43). She becomes pregnant and hopes for marriage, but he instead wants to marry a merchant's daughter and grow his wealth (47). When a ship arrives to Kingston

with servants from England, Galenicus “went on Board her; and seeing a lusty young Fellow, who was a Carpenter by Trade, agreed for him, had him assigned over for the usual time, and took him Home with him” (47). Galenicus pushes Holmesia to marry the servant and offers to end the carpenter’s contract upon marriage and provide financial assistance. Galenicus tries to coax her into believing that this arrangement will allow them to continue their affair without censor. Though she does not want to marry the carpenter, she complies after Galenicus threatens to “turn her out of Doors” (48). A testament to its power, the denial of hospitality ultimately persuades her to agree to his plan. This manipulative use of hospitality shows a perversion of the hospitable exchange.

The arrangement works well for the carpenter; he improves his condition and becomes successful on the island. Galenicus convinces him to allow Holmesia to travel to England to visit her in-laws. When Pharmaceuticus ends his story, Holmesia, unsuspected by her husband, is on her way to meet Galenicus in England. The story makes clear that she cannot be welcomed in England because she is too loose for the virtuous country. When Holmesia reaches England and makes her way to London, the reader witnesses her being refused welcoming twice. First, a peddler who mistakes her for a gypsy due to her “Appearance, and her [Creole] Cant” (85) ignores her when she attempts to speak to him. Holmesia, “angry at the Fellow’s Neglect” (85) tells her servant, Quomina, to punish him. As the narrator describes the scene, “[t]he Man did not perceive the Negro till he heard her at his Heels, when turning, and seeing her Black Face, he thought certainly the Gipsej had sent the Devil for him” (86). Two men passing by restrain the women and are on their way to take them to a judge until Galenicus, who happens upon them, offers them money in exchange for their release.



In this scenario, refusal of hospitality is due to a lack of identification with the stranger. Mireille Rosello, in her examination that conflates the immigrant with the guest, notes the relationship between hospitality and racial difference. She links “the portrait of the immigrant as ill-mannered guest” to the intention behind the “invitation” into the host country (9). Rosello’s connection facilitates a reading of Holmesia’s treatment of both immigrant/guest. Holmesia is misidentified as a gypsy and highlights the issue of intent. Though Jamaica is a British colony, as a Creole, Holmesia is considered an outsider, despite her mother’s British origins. She is an unwelcomed guest who imposes a threat to the identity of England.

There is a “language of social contracts” (Rosello 9) that cannot develop between the peddler and the two women, not solely because he does not understand the pidgin she speaks, but also because of racial difference. Rosello notes that “[w]henver any type of exchange between people occurs..., different laws of hospitality clash, sometimes violently” (20), and this observation is acted out in this scene. The peddler misidentifies Holmesia as a gypsy and withholds welcoming; the same is true of the men who seize them. When Holmesia tries to explain that she is not a gypsy and has no intention of stealing from the peddler, language acts as a barrier once again and solidifies Holmesia and Quomina’s position as strangers and racial Others. In Creole patois, she questions: “Boonsam yamyam de Baccarara, can he no save be quiet, and let some Body alone?” (87). One of the men responds: “Don’t think your Gibberish shall save you? We know you are a pack of counterfeits, and stroll about only to cheat the Country” (87). In his rejection of hospitality, the man reveals a broader point of view of gypsy immigrants and how invitation plays a role in the extension of hospitality. Gypsies are not viewed as guests, but as imposed dangers to the host, thereby refused hospitality en masse rather

than as individuals. The same holds true for those from the Caribbean who, like the gypsies, do not live up to British racial and social standards.

The second occurrence of denied hospitality comes as a consequence of Holmesia's sexuality. She is initially welcomed into the home of her brother-in-law and wife who receive her "with all imaginable kindness, and took care for his Brother's sake to treat her far beyond her Desert, or his own ability" (93). After they see that Galenicus and Frutesius make frequent visits, her in-laws "entertain her no longer" (93). This refusal shows that there are conditions to hospitality that coincide with the beliefs of the host. Holmesia is forced to return to Jamaica where she discovers that her husband has left her and moved to America after hearing about her adulterous behavior. She must work the "meanest Drudgery to acquire a miserable Livelihood" which the author comments is "too good for a Person that had been so infamously scandalous" (95-96). Even Jamaica refuses her, "so that Holmesia had a cold reception, tho' into a hot Country" (95). Though Holmesia's body is in effect a site of welcoming, when she is put out of doors, she is no longer wanted by the men or her country.

Similarly, Bavia's history contains several moments of refused hospitality. The first version, contrived to gain her passage aboard the ship, describes how she was tricked by her husband whose intention was to have her sold into slavery in Turkey. She pleaded to the captain who was to take her there to instead sell her as a servant in the West Indies where she could live amongst Christians" and have "a greater Happiness to preserve [her]self inviolate" (18). Perhaps more important to the Captain than the religious declaration is that Bavia is said to be of a "wealthy Family, the only Child of a Gentleman of Great Estate" (18). He agrees to give her passage, but second-guesses his decision when he sees her.

Bavia's physical description paints a grotesque image: "She was of dead Wainscot Complexion, large pobble Wall eyes, Bottle-Nose, very wide Mouth, with great Blubber-Lips; her Teeth broad, long and yellow, with Space enough betwixt each to fix one of a moderate size; and one of her Legs much shorter than the other" (21). Her monstrous looks guarantee her a lack of hospitality, and despite her expectations, the Captain offers her no greeting or food when she first boards the ship (22). Bavia was born in England to a Scottish father and English mother, and her physicality implies that her horrific features are a result of the monstrosity that could occur with the blending of cultures. The Caribbean landscape also contribute to her degeneration. Similar to Pharmaceuticas's wife, the "West-India Climate has something alter'd [Bavia] for the worse" (53).

Bavia's cross-cultural origins not only produce her physical deformities, but also flaws in her countenance: "her vicious Inclinations being visible to the minutest Observer without the help of a Microscope" (54). She is described as "a Liar from her Cradle" (54), suggesting that wickedness is in her blood. Her true story is eventually relayed by the ship's mate. Bavia was born in England to a Scottish father and English mother. Her father was a teacher who taught "young Gentleman" and "gain'd a good Reputation in his Profession" (53). Because of his daughter's defects, he was forced to use "all the Cunning of his Country to ensnare some of his young Students to marry her" (54), and eventually Aesculapius, "whether induc'd thereto by the hope of Riches, or the Father's soothing Persuasions" (55) does, though he never receives the money he is promised. Again, the insinuation here is that those who are biracial or engage in cross-cultural relationships are immoral.

Bavia's inclinations towards corruption continue after her marriage, and she ultimately abandons and is abandoned by all, including her father and husband. The ship's mate proceeds to

tell the story of the person she most deceived: a man, trying to rebuild his fortune and searching for a wife. Bavia takes money that she swindled from the man and afterwards flees to Jamaica where she creates further havoc: she pretends to be an expert seamstress, is hired by a planter's wife, causes trouble between her master and mistress, and once again must leave.

She heads towards Spanish Town and “call[s] at a Plantation by the way to beg Refreshment” (65). Pittis writes that “the Planter, who was a Widower, and had one only Daughter, entertain'd her, where she continue'd several Years” (65). Pittis' use of the phrase “entertain'd her” in this scenario is notable. Rosello points to the often “blurred...distinction between being hired and being invited, being a worker and being a guest” (9), rhetorically questioning whether “the confusion sometimes lead[s] to redefinitions of servitude as gift” (9). She adds that the guest is “always implicitly an equal, who could, presumably, reciprocate at a later date, in a different space, at a different time” and that “[c]onfusing the guest and the employee risks depriving the so-called guest of the type of contract that exists in a business-like relationship” (9). But what this use of phrase also does is to once again link hospitality to transaction.

It is in this home where yet another account of Bavia's deception originates through hospitality. Bavia assists a man, Colonel Ebrardus, in “debauching” a young girl, Dacia. With Bavia's encouragement, Colonel Ebrardus uses hospitality to trick Dacia. Recalling the similar tactic used to enslave Oroonoko, he “made [Dacia and Bavia] an handsome Entertainment” (67) before he “rob'd the young Girl of her Honour” (68). Dacia becomes pregnant and tells her father who stops Bavia before she can escape. Bavia's punishment is severe:

She is bound Hand and Foot, and for three Days fed by an old negro with nothing but Cassava Bread and Water, then stript bare to the Waist and tightly lash'd by the Overseer

with a Horsewhip, and this was continued for a whole Month, the same Provisions, and every third Day the same Correction, and then turn'd off to seek better Food for herself.

(68)

Though Ebrardus initially rejects Dacia, he eventually marries her after his wife dies. For a short time, Bavia is celebrated for her fortune telling skills.

The women's bodies are treated as open to the men for the taking, whether to beat them or sexualize them. Yet, the women are also feared; they are believed to have mystical powers responsible for climatological control. The Captain assumes that "[Bavia] was a Sorceress; and calling to mind that she was partly Slavonian Extract, did not doubt but she was a Witch of the first Rate, if not a Limb of the Devil" (75). Assuming that "Witches lose their Diabolical Power when confined, the Captain gave orders to "nail her up in her Cabbin" (78); however, a storm that quickly drifts towards the ship changes his mind. Captain Fustian believes that Bavia "was undoubtedly the Cause of this Mischief, and would not give over till she had sunk the Frigate, and pickled the whole Ship's company" (78). Frutesius desires the company of the women for his own entertainment and devises a plan that utilizes hospitality to free them:

[I]f you gave them an Invitation to dinner to Morrow; or, as their Stock of Provisions is very near exhausted, should you take them into the Mess, it will be no great Charge to us, and a sure way to please them: And as you know, Sir, according to the old Proverb, *The Devil is good when he is pleased*. (80).

Once again, hospitality is used as a manipulative tool, but this time it is the host who is tricked into believing that the guests are controlled when in fact it is he who has been deceived.

Nonetheless, the Captain's wish is granted: "The Women were very well satisfied that they were to eat at the Old Gentleman's Table, being assur'd of good Living to the end of their Voyage"

(81). The weather clears, the women are given credit, and readers are left with an satisfying scene of women enjoying the host's offerings.

*The Jamaica Lady* is an invitational text that problematizes the era. Admirable heroines of later fictions such as Eliza Haywood's Betsy Thoughtless and Frances Burney's Evelina begin virtuous and naïve young women and grow to be moral and prudent. Instead, Holmesia and Bavia demonstrate a lack of constraint, the ability to sleep with more than one man and to reinvent oneself. They are misused and criticized, but they are also influential and self-indulgent. Though not always an ideal condition, Jamaica offers an alternate choice for women: the possibility of sexual and financial autonomy. A part of hospitality is an invitation, and Pittis' story creates intrigue and as a result, interest in Jamaica.

*Oroonoko* established the patterns of hospitality that appear in *Robinson Crusoe* and *The Jamaica Lady*, the use of these patterns in works with such different perspectives and tone emphasize their importance. In all three works, the guest/host relationship begins with a welcoming, though appearing with varying degrees of sincerity. There is often a lack of genuineness that demonstrates the complexity of the guest/host relationship in the Caribbean. These hospitable encounters also reveal that race, social status, and gender complicate the guest and host relationship. The oxymoronic description of "royal slave" in Behn's *Oroonoko* highlights the value placed on race and social status in the Caribbean setting. This image repeats in *Robinson Crusoe* when Crusoe describes Friday as "a comely handsome Fellow, perfectly well made" (173) and likens him to Europeans as a testament to his worthiness and innate nobility. In contrast, Holmesia and Bavia are painted as grotesque in physicality, indicating a lack of good character that deems them unfit for welcoming and calls their virtue into question.

Following the second pattern, nature works in tandem with the welcoming in the three texts. In *Oroonoko* and *Robinson Crusoe*, nature acts as exemplary host, supplying food, shelter, and beauty. In Pittis's text, nature forces proper hospitality and corrects the Captain's ill treatment of the women on his ship. Believing the oncoming storm is a result of the unhappiness of his guests, the Captain opens the nailed door of the cabin and welcomes the women to his table. And finally, as in *Oroonoko*, an alignment with British identity is reinforced. Crusoe becomes the ideal British explorer, and the purity of the British race is reinforced in the negation of the mixed-race women. Examining these dynamics of exchange in the works of Defoe and Pittis show that they still held strong over thirty years after *Oroonoko*. This longevity points to the power of prose narratives to create and maintain long lasting images in British perceptions of the West Indies and its inhabitants. These beliefs continued to develop with increased expansion and involvement in slave trade and sugar production.

## SECTION TWO:

### DRAMA

#### Chapter 3: Thomas Southerne's *Oroonoko*

The entertainment value of Restoration comedies tends to overshadow the powerful commentary provided in the performances of the time. Yet, plays such as Thomas Otway's *Venice Preserv'd* (1682) and Susanna Centlivre's *The Bassett Table* (1705) addressed political and social topics while amusing audiences. Otway's exposure of political corruption and Centlivre's portrayal of female education demonstrate that the theatre of the period provided a communal space to address topical subjects and critique social ills in ways that may be deemed inappropriate for other genres. Laura J. Rosenthal recognizes the space for candor that the theatre provides, arguing that "drama often confronts head-on certain issues that the novel tends to raise only obliquely or implicitly" (174). The plays discussed in this section highlight the British perspective of the West Indies as a region for opportunists and show increasing concern for how colonial expansion transforms the British character. Just as a host's character is revealed by the treatment of his/her guest, a nation is marked by its treatment of visitors, and theatre allows audiences to observe scenes of hospitality that work to shape national character through performance and reception. Hospitable behaviors are represented on stage, reflecting the audience's would-be actions or offering possible scenarios and outcomes that provide a direct evaluation and often condemnation of societal thought.

In the prose works examined in section one, the host welcomed the outsider, the land served as witness, and the arrival of the guest initiated a realignment of British subjectivity. The



theatre creates a shift in these categories as a direct result of space, performance, and shared experience. The works included in this section of the dissertation show the hosts welcoming the outsider (a condition of the social code) and the arrival of the guest initiating a realignment of British identity. These patterns remain consistent with what a study of the prose works revealed, but the theatre shifts nature's complicity in the welcoming over to the performance space and the imagined representation of the West Indian landscape. The stage acts as hospitable space where performers enter and exit, while the spectators are guests who act as witness and welcome the actors with their communal gaze. In the first chapter of the section on drama, I explore scenes of hospitality in Thomas Southerne's *Oroonoko*, differentiating between hospitality for advantage and those without expectation for advantage. I examine how hospitality links to issues of marriage and argue that the theatre continues to establish a view of the West Indies as amoral and sexualized with loose moral codes while working to establish a counter-narrative of respectability and honor. These connections show that beliefs surrounding the colonized, tropical regions, manifested by the characters for the stage, reveal much about the shaping of England's national identity.

Thomas Southerne's adaptation of Aphra Behn's novella blends *Oroonoko's* tragedy with the comedic tale of Charlotte and Lucy Welldon, two sisters who travel to the West Indies in search of husbands. Charlotte masquerades as Lucy's brother, referred to as Welldon while presumed to be a man, to secure an inheritance and play the lead role in the matchmaking. The Widow Lackitt, a wealthy, British transplant residing in Surinam, becomes a pivotal player in the sisters' scheme which ends with the marriages of all three women. A second plot follows Behn's tale of the African prince, *Oroonoko* who after being sold into slavery, reunites with the woman he loves, attempts a revolt, and ultimately dies in captivity. In addition to the inclusion of the

Wellton plot, Southerne takes further creative license with the details of the story. For example, he writes Imoinda as a white woman, allows Oroonoko to die by his own hand rather than being dismembered by the British, and as Cynthia Lowenthal identifies, reduces the role of the native Indians to practically null.<sup>15</sup>

Kalissa Hendrickson addresses the often discussed disconnection of the two merged plots in “‘The trust and credit of a Guinea-bawd’: Circulation, Credit, and the Bodied Economy in Thomas Southerne’s *Oroonoko*.” She aligns herself with the position that “split-plot tragicomedies purposely sought to foreground differences in tone and content in order to confront the audience with a series of potential outcomes on various political, social, and...economic issues” (37). Hendrickson argues that in its divided plots, *Oroonoko* examines British involvement with international trade and credit. She views the play as “actively endors[ing] a set of [economic] principles” that would “govern the policies behind England’s economic and commercial expansion” and adds that the play “explores complicated economic questions through the body of its actors” (38-39). Hendrickson’s emphasis on the actors’ performance suggests that a study of drama has possibilities unavailable to other genres and is particularly poignant when applied to commodification in the West Indies with its history of the economic exchange of bodies.

Diana Jaher takes a different approach in “The Paradoxes of Slavery in Thomas Southerne’s *Oroonoko*.” Jaher notes that the play aligns with Behn’s version in showing that aristocracy and social privilege are primary markers that determine slavery and rights for freedom; however, she also points to the inconsistencies of this position in Southerne’s version. She argues that through

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<sup>15</sup> In *Performing Identities on the Restoration Stage*, Lowenthal argues that the “Indians have become a backdrop, a part of the landscape against which important action takes place. It is a powerful erasure of the representation of the group, historically, putting up some of the fiercest resistance to British colonization at the very moment Southerne’s play was produced, and a powerful loss of the nuanced relations among colonists, slaves, and indigenous people” (197). Contrastingly, in Behn’s work the Amerindians host Oroonoko, the narrator, and others at their camp, acting as exemplary hosts and foils to the British characters who treat Oroonoko as an enemy.

the character of Aboan, “Southerne subverts one major rationalization he offers for enslavement—the traditional aristocratic justification that slaves are naturally inferior and therefore suited to bondage—by presenting an exceptional, nonaristocratic slave” (51). Though of higher rank in Behn’s version, Southerne’s Aboan is an attendant who refers to himself as Oroonoko’s “lowest slave” (3.2.24). Jaher notes that not only does Aboan’s speech “echoe[ ], in its graphic detail and powerful metaphors, the rare cases of antislavery rhetoric existent at this time” (58), but he also “gives Oroonoko a lesson in aristocratic behavior by redefining the prince’s role as that of an altruistic leader coming to the aid of his lowliest and neediest subjects, rather than a noble enjoying a life of comfort and privilege” (59). In ““Does Performance Studies Speak to Restoration Theatre?” Deborah Payne Fisk suggests that Restoration theatre’s privilege of “pleasure” over “social efficacy” (672) makes it a difficult fit for performativity’s commitment to social action, but Jaher’s reading shows otherwise. Jaher’s attention to the power of Aboan’s speech to alter Oroonoko informs my reading of how language in the play, specifically that which enacts hospitality, constructs and performs individual, cultural, and national identity.

In his lectures delivered at Harvard University that are published posthumously as *How to Do Things with Words*, J.L. Austin examines groups of words that he names a “performative utterance” or a “performative” (6). Austin defines performatives as utterances which satisfy the following conditions: (1) “they do not ‘describe’ or ‘report’ or constate anything at all, are not ‘true or false’; and” (2) “the uttering of the sentence is, or part of, the doing of an action, which again would not *normally* be described as, or as ‘just’ saying something” (5). He provides several examples, including the words “I do” during a marriage ceremony, “I name” during the christening of a ship, and “I give and bequeath” contained in a will (5). In all of these examples,

the words are part of the action rather than serving as description or report. Austin adds that the power of the performative utterance comes from additional characteristics of the act:

[I]t is always necessary that the *circumstances* in which the words are uttered should be in some way or ways, *appropriate*, and it is very commonly necessary that either the speaker himself or other persons should *also* perform certain *other* actions, whether 'physical' or 'mental' actions or even acts of uttering further words. Thus, for the naming the ship, it is essential that I be the person appointed to name her, for (Christian) marrying, it is essential that I should not be already married with a wife living, sane and undivorced, and so on: for a bet to have been made, it is generally necessary for the offer of the bet to have been accepted by a taker (who must have done something, such as to say 'Done'), and it is hardly a gift if I *say* 'I give it to you' but never hand it over. (8-9)

Furthermore, Austin addresses the conditions that cause failure, or those that negatively influence the ways in which performatives function. He refers to these unsatisfactory utterances as "infelicities" which arise if six rules are broken (14). Included in his requirements is an existence of "accepted conventional procedures having a certain conventional effect" and "persons and circumstances. . . appropriate for the invocation of the particular procedure invoked" (14-15). Failure to adhere to these conditions or to take the act into its completion results in a performative that is "misfire[ed]" and "void or without effect" (16-17).

Austin's observation lends itself into a discussion of the conditions of hospitality that cannot be upheld because of the absence of shared beliefs and intentions. The scene of false hospitality between the Captain and Oroonoko in Behn's version and again in Southerne's play serves as an example. Without this essential requirement the performatives lack sincerity, and

thus Austin transparently refers to them as “insincerities” (18). He uses the act of welcoming as an example:

I may say ‘I welcome you’, bidding you welcome to my home or wherever it may be, but then I proceed to treat you as though you were exceedingly unwelcome. In this case the procedure of saying ‘I welcome you’ has been abused in a way different from that of simple insincerity. (“Performative” 24)

Austin also argues that “a performative utterance will. . . be *in a peculiar way* hollow or void if said by an actor on the stage, or if introduced in a poem, or spoken in soliloquy” because, he argues, “[l]anguage in such circumstances is in special ways—intelligibly—used not seriously, but in ways *parasitic* upon its normal use—ways which fall utter the doctrine of etiolations of language” (22). This contextual condition that Austin outlines and his referral to these utterances as non-serious became a point of contention for theorists to follow.

In *Limited Inc*, Derrida criticizes Austin’s emphasis on the necessity of contextual situations in order for utterances to succeed and addresses his negation of literary works from his analysis. He takes issue with Austin’s demarcation of “fictional utterances as non-serious” (17) and asks: “[I]sn’t it true that what Austin excludes as anomaly, exception, ‘non-serious’ *citation* (on stage, in a poem, or a soliloquy) is the determined modification of a general citationality—or rather, a general iterability—without which there would not even be a ‘successful’ performative?” (17). By iterability, Derrida refers to a speech act’s repeatability and sees this as an essential condition of communication of any form (9). Kira Hall states Derrida’s position succinctly in her essay, “Performativity”: “Derrida looked to literature, arguing in a deconstructive vein that because the text can always be detached from the context in which it is written, the intentionality of its author is irrelevant” (185). For Derrida, “context can never be

identified, since speech acts work through a potential of never ending citationality” (185). In speech acts, he offers, the meaning of the words alters slightly with each utterance and within particular boundaries.

Judith Butler popularized performativity studies in her work on gender, sex, and sexuality. She argues that “gender is constituted through the performance as a set of *acts* that serve to forge us as gendered subjects” (Loxley 118). These acts include the gestures and movements of the physical body. For Butler,

Our identities are not given by nature or simply represented or expressed in culture; instead, culture is the process of identity formation, the way in which bodies and selves in all their differences are produced. So culture is a process, a kind of making, and we are what is made and remade through that process. Our activities and practices, in other words, are not expressions of some other identity, but the very means by which we come to be what we are. (118)

I propose that national identity can be examined along similar lines. Following Butler’s lead, I use performativity to examine social and cultural constructs of the West Indian and British subjects within literary works and made apparent through rituals of hospitality. Like Butler’s position on gender, the identities described through terms of nationhood is constituted through performance of a set of acts that serve to identify characters as national subjects, or in this case, as British (living in the homeland), as British (living in the West Indies), or as Other (non-British). In *Oroonoko*, categories of identity—what it means to be British or Other—is reinforced with each repetition of the citation of the utterance or act. Following Derrida and Butler, I apply performativity to encompass more than the limiting definition that Austin initially outlined, defending the approach’s usefulness in its application to dramatic works.

Though residents of the West Indies, the characters in Southerne's play are outsiders and have experienced what it is like to be newcomers in a foreign land. Examining the scenes of hospitality within the dual plots reveals that the choice of marital partner, or who would be invited to share one's home, parallels the treatment of the guest or stranger. It is difficult to predict what the set may have looked like during *Oroonoko*'s run on eighteenth-century stages; however, the theatre space asks that performers and audience work together in the evocation of the West Indies as a place different than London, one that is a hospitable nation for some but not for all. In the West Indies, "welcome" changes meaning. For example, though the word remains the same, the performative, "welcome," alters whether spoken to a purchased slave or a potential marriage partner. Yet, both work together to shape national identity through rituals of hospitality.

The play's opening lines establish the location as outside of London and inside of a plantation colony. Lucy expresses loyalty to her country of origin and speaks to the myth of abundance in the West Indies: "You [Charlotte] have persuaded me to leave dear England, and dearer London, the place of the world most worth living in, to follow you a-husband-hunting into America. I thought Husbands grew in these Plantations" (1.1.1-5). Southerne transforms Behn's descriptions of Surinam's bounteous landscape into talk of the generous supply of men. Behn's "ripe fruit" that "bloom[s] young or produce[s] everyday new" (47) becomes husbands who grow on plantations, "as thick as oranges, ripening one under another" (Southerne 1.1.6-7). Charlotte tells her sister that "[w]eek after week they drop into some woman's mouth" (1.1.7-8). The prominent sexual innuendos and the randomness of the encounters feed the myth of a sexualized tropical landscape where, as in *The Jamaica Lady*, women's libidos are believed to heighten with the tropical heat.

Denied by men in England, the sisters travel to the West Indies in hope of a better reception and devise a scheme for husband-catching that is built upon a false welcoming. Charlotte explains the foundation of her plan: “I pass for your brother; one of the richest planters here happening to die just as we landed, I have claimed kindred with him; so, without making his will, he has left us credit of his relation to trade upon. We pass for his cousins, coming here to Surinam chiefly upon his invitation” (1.1.93-98). This fabricated welcoming, one that involves Charlotte masquerading as a man, provides the women with the reputation needed to make connections in their new location. Additionally, it establishes hospitality as the means and marriage as the goal of the play’s comedic scenes.

In her examination of Christianity and hospitality, Christine D. Pohl argues that the eighteenth-century showed a decline in hospitality as a moral practice and an increase in the connection between hospitality and the changing social and economic conditions. Pohl quotes Samuel Johnson’s observation on the connection between wealth and hospitality, a fragment which I include below:

You are to consider that ancient hospitality, of which we hear so much, was in an uncommercial country, which men being idle, were glad to be entertained at rich men’s tables. But in a commercial country, a busy country, time becomes precious, and therefore hospitality is not so much valued. No doubt there is still room for a certain degree of it; and a man has a satisfaction in seeing his friends eating and drinking around him. But promiscuous hospitality is not the way to gain real influence. (Pohl 37-38; Boswell 273)

“Promiscuous hospitality” implies an indiscriminate and random welcoming of guests, with the opposite being a focused and selective hospitality. In his response, Johnson reveals a less than



altruistic view of hospitality, and Southerne's *Oroonoko*, in part, validates Johnson's view. The Welldon sisters plot, or the comedic scenes of the play, show hospitality used for personal gain. Each host has a motive, and each guest an agenda.

In the first hospitable encounter of the play, the Widow Lackitt welcomes Lucy and the disguised Charlotte to the West Indies and extends an invitation to dine at her home. By entering the Welldon household without an invitation, the Widow shows a lack of refinement in her manners: "Mr. Welldon, your servant; Your Servant, Mrs. Lucy. I am an ill visitor, but 'tis not too late, I hope, to bid you welcome to this side of the world" (1.2.102-104).<sup>16</sup> Welldon, in turn, apologizes for not "hav[ing] done the civilities of [his] house before" (1.2.105-106). The Widow and Welldon know the rules, but the West Indian landscape allows for some alteration with less risk of penalty. This exchange indicates the proper order of things: Lucy and Welldon should have invited the Widow to their home. Additionally, the Widow's forward misstep conveys a break in the normal protocol and presents her as a social rebel.

Though she expresses a lack of interest in marriage, the Widow is flirtatious with Welldon and admits to being open to temptation. She speaks to the difference in hospitality between England and the West Indies: "Indeed we can't pretend to have so good company for you, as you had in England; but we shall make very much of you. For my own Part, I assure you, I shall think myself very happy to be more particularly known to you (1.1.159-163). This encounter reinforces the belief of the West Indies as a place less run by strict rules of manners than in England and links the pleasures offered to the guest by the host to the act of courtship.

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<sup>16</sup> Following Southerne, I refer to Charlotte as Welldon when she is dressed as a man and utilize the pronoun "he" as referent.

Stanmore, a Brit residing in Surinam who knows the Widow and Welldon, comments on the interaction, addressing Welldon: “[Y]ou’re a happy man. The women and their favors come home to you” (1.1.212-213). To “come home” suggests again a parallel between courtship and hospitality. Like a guest and host, the marital partner must be invited and welcomed, and acceptance comes with standards to be upheld. As Stanmore points out, men traditionally do the calling in matters of marriage, and the Widow’s forwardness inverts the process. The Widow continues to break decorum and perverts the prescribed protocol of hospitality. She tells Welldon: “I am a little out of order; but pray bring your sister to dine with me” (1.2.79-80). She simultaneously aligns herself with her Britishness by showing awareness of the rules while arranging them slightly askew.

In her discussion of “tragi-comic representations of metropolitan manners, colonies, colonials and emigration” Bridget Orr “examine(s) the establishment of a sense of a specifically English notion of genteel manners, against which foreigners, provincials, creoles, and savages are measured and found lacking (11). Support for the crudeness of manners that Orr describes appears in *Oroonoko* as a parody of adherence to British customs in a scene of human trade. The Widow is the first to condemn the Captain, an essential character to the plot, and in doing so, reveals his lowly background to Welldon, Lucy, and Stanmore who are listening nearby. In her attack of the Captain, she expresses what she views as preferential treatment towards the male planters.

You forget yourself as fast as you can, but I remember you; I know you for a pitiful, paltry fellow, as you are, an upstart to prosperity, one that is but just come acquainted with cleanliness and that never saw five shillings of your own without deserving to be hanged for ‘em. (1.2.56-63)

Wealth is new to him and respectability will continue to evade him. The Captain insults the Widow, calling her a “stink-pot” (1.2.66) to which she replies, “By this good light, it would make a woman do a thing she never designed: marry again, though she were sure to repent it, to be revenged of such a—” (1.2.67-69). This interaction shows that even outside of England in a location with less adherence to law, women require a husband to have economic power equal to men and to have their honor defended. Her consideration of marriage, though she believes she will regret her choice, normalizes the outlandish, brassy Widow, and reminds the British audience that these uncouth transplants are indeed one of their own, thereby stealthily reshaping their ideas of Britishness through the performance.

The Widow’s denunciation of the Captain and Lucy’s lack of interest do little to deter Welldon from viewing him as a possible suitor for Lucy. The Captain’s wealth overshadows his contemptible treatment of the Widow and his ethically questionable profession. Comparisons between marriage and slavery are repeatedly drawn throughout the play, and the guest and host interactions function as a vetting process to judge the character of the potential suitor. Though he is willing to accept most of his shortcomings, Welldon refuses to make a match between the Captain and Lucy without a visitation. Immediately following the encounter, Welldon asserts his invitation to the Captain with clear purpose: “This is your market for slaves; my sister is a free woman and must not be disposed of in public. You shall be welcome to my house, if you please. And upon better acquaintance, if my sister likes you, and I like your offers. –” (1.2.126-130). It can be assumed that Welldon would complete this sentence with an affirmation that a deal would take place. Hospitality enacts the initial phase to a possible economic transaction in the guise of marriage.

In Southerne's play, hospitality acts as a way to determine marriageability, and Welldon's invitation to the Captain illustrates the importance of abiding by moral codes. Motivated by the desire to provide a match for Lucy, he asks the captain to visit his home. The Captain, a slave trader and the first character to appear in Southerne's play who is also in Behn's version, acts as a pivotal figure that ties the comedic and tragic sections together. The Captain's function in Behn's work is vital; he is responsible for Oroonoko's capture. Behn, however, never presents the Captain's point of view. In Southerne's version, the Captain shares his story to the Governor and Blanford. His explanation, overheard by Welldon, Lucy, Stanmore, and several planters proves to be to his detriment. The Captain admits to using the trust of a host, whose role on the most fundamental level is to provide safety for the guest(s), as a means to a wicked end:

[Oroonoko] [i]s naturally inquisitive about men and manners of the white nations.

Because I could give him some account of the other parts of the world, I grew very much into his favor. In return of so great an honor, you know, I could do no less upon my coming away than invite him on board me. Never having been in a ship, he appointed his time and I prepared my entertainment. He came next evening as privately as he could, with about some twenty along with him. The punch went round, and as many of his attendants as would be dangerous I sent dead drunk on shore; the rest we secured. And so you have the Prince Oroonoko. (1.2.160-171)

The Captain shows his awareness of proper codes of hospitality by performing some aspects of his role as host; he invites, welcomes, entertains, and offers refreshments to his guests. Yet, as in Behn's version, he utilizes hospitality for personal gain and reaffirms Derrida's claim that true hospitality, one that is pure and free of motive, does not exist. The host, according to Derrida, affirms his identity through the act of welcoming (*Of Hospitality* 25). The planters on the stage

(whose importance, or lack thereof, is indicated by their namelessness and are instead identified as first and second planter) assert that the Captain's "[i]ndustrious[ness] should be encouraged" and that the "[t]he plantation will thrive" because of the Captain who is "fit to be employed in public affairs" (1.2. 173-175). The political recommendation implies corruption, a double entendre that would be obvious to eighteenth-century British audiences. The Governor, who shows his lack of scruples in this scene and those to come, only wonders why Oroonoko was not sold for more profit.

The remaining characters who hear the Captain's account of treachery towards Oroonoko—Blanford, Stanmore, Welldon, and Lucy—condemn him for the perversion of his position as host. Blanford declares his behavior as "[u]nheard-of Villainy," while Stanford exclaims that it is "[b]arbarous treachery" (1.2.178-179). Welldon momentarily considers the Captain a viable husband still because of his wealth, but Lucy denounces the possibility for economic exchange and makes the depths of her position clear: "Well, if the Captain had brought this prince's country along with him and would make me queen of it, I would not have him after doing so base a thing" (1.2.276-278). She finalizes her determination by announcing: "Hang him, nothing can prosper with him" (1.2.281). His mistreatment of Oroonoko, a worthy guest, indicates a lack of principles, and he is no longer viewed as a marriage possibility. Thus, the invitation extended to the Captain by Welldon never comes into fruition. He is no longer welcome in to the Welldon home.

Lucy refuses to consider the Captain as a possible husband because of his actions as host, and her next suitor functions to emphasize the denial's importance. Act II begins at the Widow Lackitt's house where Welldon and Lucy have been invited to dine; Lucy is off stage. An after dinner conversation between the Widow and Welldon reveals that the Widow proposed marriage

to Welldon who, because he is really a she, must discover a way to decline. Welldon contrives a story that his dying father has made him promise to see his sister married before he does so himself (2.1.19-21). The Widow suggests the Captain, but Welldon affirms that “[Lucy] hates him” (2.1.33-34), leading the Widow to offer her son, Daniel. When Welldon discloses this option to Lucy, she resigns herself, declaring: “I don’t know what confinement marriage may be to the men, but I’m sure the women have no liberty without it: I am for anything that will deliver me from the care of a reputation, which I begin to find impossible to preserve” (2.1.76-80). Both Welldon and Lucy describe Daniel as “a fool” (2.1.81,92), but a fool is preferable to a deceptive host like the Captain.

At the Widow’s insistence, Daniel welcomes Lucy, but he is an incompetent host who requires constant instruction from his mother: “Come, Daniel, hold up thy head, child. Look like a man. You must not take it as you have done. Gad’s my life! There’s nothing to be done with twirling your hat, man.” (2.1.103-106). Daniel resists, but the Widow encourages Lucy to “come forward, and let him salute you” (2.1.111). Daniel calls Lucy a “stranger” and fails to welcome her properly; however, the Widow continues to instruct him and the stage notes directs that she “thrusts him forward” (39). After he succumbs to orders from his mother and Welldon to kiss his wife-to-be, the Widow advises Daniel as to how to welcome a wife: “You must live with her, eat and drink with her, go to bed with her, and sleep with her” (2.1.145-146). Despite his dim-wittedness, lack of sense, and child-like attachment to his mother, Lucy prefers Daniel over the Captain. Neither are presented as proper host, but Daniel can potentially be shaped by his mother and wife, and the Captain’s moral corruption is beyond hope.

With her sister married to Daniel, Welldon finds himself unable to back out of his agreement to marry the Widow. The union takes place, but Welldon manages to trick his new

wife by having Stanmore's cousin, Jack, act as the stand-in to consummate the marriage. When Charlotte appears as a woman without her disguise, Stanmore believes her to be Welldon's cousin. Having received word that Welldon has been murdered during a slave revolt, he says to her: "This is but a cold welcome for you, madam, after so troublesome a voyage" (5.1.7-8). Charlotte agrees, repeating the phrase "cold welcome" (5.1.9). The conflicting image portrayed by the oxymoron recalls the importance of hospitality. The outcome of the comedic plot asks audiences to accept the easy resolution of a complex situation: The Widow accepts Jack as her husband, and Welldon removes her disguise and marries Stanmore as Charlotte.

Hospitality occurs without expectation of advantage in the scenes of *Oroonoko* that align itself with the tragedy. Blanford treats Oroonoko hospitably without interest in reciprocation or gain. A more elevated theatrical genre than comedy, tragedy serves a purpose beyond entertaining audiences. The tragic form also offers a moral and presents the audience with a model of behavior typically through the tragic hero's downfall. Southerne's play presents Oroonoko as the tragic hero, but it is Blanford, the overseer of the Lord Governor's plantation, whose repeated emphasis of dedication to his guest, acts as exemplary host and by extension exemplary Englishman.

Felicity Heal argues that in England during the Early Modern period, hospitality was seen as one of the foundations of the moral economy, though a foundation that was constantly shaken by the failures of Englishmen as hosts" (3) She points out that hospitality functions as a ritual practice, one influenced by Christianity, moral duty, social levels, and settings (3). Blanford embodies the ritualistic practice of British hospitality in an unambiguous way from his first encounter with Oroonoko at the slave auction. Oroonoko is part of the Lord Governor's purchased lot, and Blanford acts as representative. The African prince's royal status drives

Blanford to treat him as a guest rather than a servant; he orders the chains removed and assures Oroonoko proper treatment. Blanford tells him: “You know your condition, but you are fallen into honorable hands; You are the Lord Governor’s slave, who will use you nobly: In his absence it shall be my care to serve you” (1.2.223-226).

Blanford enacts a pure level of hospitality, one that upholds him as a moral figure and one whose morality is upheld through his speech. The invitations in the Welldon plot come with a condition: characters are welcomed with the understanding that each will receive something tangible—marriage—in return. Blanford’s speech acts say otherwise. His avoidance of directives shapes his identity as one who is expansive in his generosity. He does not display his position of power overtly, but instead shifts his language to one of suggestion and promise rather than command. In so doing, he creates a relationship with Oroonoko that aligns with host and guest rather than master and slave.

Blanford’s proclamation to serve, presents him as a model of humility and moral standing. Rather than exploit Oroonoko like the Captain, he transposes the relationship and attends the slave. In so doing, Oroonoko shifts into the role of guest, but this repositioning does little to lessen the power divide between them. Blanford’s words, “[i]n his absence it shall be my care to serve you” are spoken with the intention to lower Oroonoko’s guard. He wants to communicate safety to set Oroonoko at ease. In order to do so, however, Blanford, as host and as representative of the Lord Governor (a designation he makes known repeatedly), reaffirms his appointed authority through his alignment with the British crown. He can only provide safety from a position of power.

Oroonoko is a skeptical guest who is slow to trust his host, but Blanford begins to prove himself when he protects him from the planters who are “pulling and staring” (32). Blanford



acts as a model of British ethics and respectability and reiterates his promise to serve Oroonoko. When Oroonoko resigns himself to his position as slave, he tells Blanford: “Do as you will with me” (1.2.274). Blanford emphasizes his welcome: “I’ll wait upon you, attend, and serve you” (1.2.275). Though a colonial outside of England, Blanford’s appeal to Oroonoko shows him to be a paragon of manners. As host, he maintains his position of power and is distinguished from Oroonoko in his ability to choose.

As in Behn’s version, Oroonoko performs his role as guest by offering to share his story with his host. He tells of his love for Imoinda with several alterations to the original. In Southerne’s version, Oroonoko and Imoinda marry and Imoinda is impregnated prior to their enslavement. The change that has garnered substantial interest, however, is the authorial decision to change Imoinda from an Afro-Surinamese, black woman to the daughter of a white “stranger” in Oroonoko’s father’s court who was “[v]alued and honored much” and who “changed his gods for [theirs]and so grew great” (2.2.71-74). In “Race, Women, and the Sentimental in Thomas Southerne’s *Oroonoko*,” Joyce Green MacDonald notes that the play “images a twinned relationship between white women’s social representation and black women’s invisibility and loss of agency under colonialism’s raced visual regimes” (556). Macdonald views the “whitening of Imoinda” as enabling the white, female audience members to connect to her character. While I agree with MacDonald’s view of the erasure of the black woman, if through Southerne’s alteration he made space for a greater sympathy through recognition of sameness between Imoinda and his audiences, he also presented one of the earliest examples of a mixed-race, specifically Creole, pregnancy albeit one that never comes into fruition.

As in *The Jamaica Lady*, the inviting, abundant, and from a British standpoint, available West Indian landscape includes the female body, and Imoinda’s commitment to Oroonoko does

not exempt her from being targeted. The Lieutenant Governor enters the plantation managed by Blanford and home to Imoinda uninvited and attempts to seduce her. She denies him, and he pushes forward, ignoring her refusal. He tells her: “I may take/This pretty hand; I know your modesty/Would draw it back. But you would take it ill/If I should let it go, I know you would./You shall be gently forced to please yourself;/ That you will thank me for” (2.3.16-22). The stage directions say: “She struggles and gets her hand from him, then he offers to kiss her” (47). He sees her body as available to him: “Nay, if you struggle with me, I must take—” (2.3.23). Imoinda manages to escape and leaves the stage just as Blanford, Oroonoko, and Stanford enter. Blanford speaks to the Lieutenant Governor about his longing for Imoinda and shows compassion towards her situation: “I pity her./She has lost a husband that perhaps was dear/To her, and then you cannot blame her” (2.3.38-40). The Lieutenant Governor lacks sympathy: “No, no, it is not so: If it be so,/I must still love her, and desiring still,/I must enjoy her” (2.3.42-44). Blandford replies: “Try what you can do with fair means, and *welcome*” (emphasis mine 2.3.45). Blandford’s use of “welcome” reinforces a connection between hospitality and non-romantic relationships which the Welldon plot illustrates. To properly court a partner, one must follow the social codes of hospitality which begins with a welcoming and invitation. Yet, the inequality of position and gender between the Lieutenant and Imoinda creates a divide. As both slave and woman, Imoinda’s position as guest dissolves, and the Lieutenant believes in his right to fulfill his own desires without consent.

Driven by his passions, the Governor pressures Blandford to sell Imoinda to him, offering ten slaves in exchange, but Blanford refuses to place her in danger. He tells him: Were she within your pow’r, you do not know/How soon you would be tempted to forget/The nature of the deed, and maybe, act/A violence, you would after repent” (2.3.53-56). Oroonoko, who does not

yet know the slave they speak of is Imoinda, views Blanford's protection of his guest as admirable. He tells Blanford: "'Tis godlike in you to protect the weak" (2.3.57). Blandford displays the proper way for a host to behave, offering shelter and protection to his guests.

Though he is not Christian, Oroonoko's mention of "godlike" attributes connect this hospitable encounter with religion. Referring to religious parables of hospitality, Pohl writes that "[a]cts of hospitality in the biblical narratives tended to reveal and reflect the underlying good or evil of a person or community" (26). I argue that the same holds true for Southerne's play, where there are numerous references to religion and hospitality. How a guest is welcomed and to what purpose reveals much about the host's goodness and moral character and, by extension, the character of the community and nation.

Continuing to exceed expectations of host, Blanford goes amongst the slaves to seek a friend for his guest. He discovers Aboan, Oroonoko's closest attendant in his homeland, and presents him to Oroonoko. Entering with Aboan, Blanford announces to Oroonoko: "I have a present for you" (3.2.23). Aboan, Blandford tells him, "shall wait upon your person, while you stay" (3.2.33). Oroonoko shows his gratitude by responding: "I owe everything to you" (3.2.35). Oroonoko's words work twofold in constructing the image royal slave. Just as Blanford is upheld as the example of benevolent host, Oroonoko is to demonstrate the role of the grateful and humble guest. But coming from the mouth of a colonized subject, this utterance gains force in its double meaning and works to shape the racial Other who has been conquered by the British as a subordinate who needs the protection of the English. Presenting Oroonoko as a guest, and reinforcing this treatment through the language of the host, softens the reality of the horrors of colonization and the displacement of the Other. The audience sees that it is bad men like the Lieutenant and the Captain who cannot be trusted, but gentlemen like Blanford show the proper

way to treat a stranger. Blanford concerns himself with making Oroonoko feel welcomed to an excessive degree, attempting to correct the Captain's wrongs.

Blanford continues to keep his promise to protect his guest when a native rebellion begins, and the Captain and other planters seize Oroonoko for fear that he will rise against them as well (29). Oroonoko, a warrior, does not turn to violence, but instead calls out to Blanford for protection: "Are you there, sir; you are my constant friend" (2.3.128). Oroonoko's powerlessness stems from difference. He cannot participate in the rituals because his interaction with the Captain has demonstrated that he does not know the rules; therefore, he turns to his host. As they begin to chain him, Blanford orders them to stop: "Away, you brutes: I'll answer with my life for his behavior; so tell the Governor" (2.3.37-38). They stand down, and Oroonoko shows his gratitude by fighting by Blanford's side against the Indians.

The two plots converge when a servant tells Stanmore that Blanford invites him and his friends to "come to him" (5.1.161-162). The details of the invitation are not disclosed; yet, Stanmore, Jack, the Welldon sisters, the Widow Lackit, and Daniel readily accept. Blanford's request moves beyond an invitation to dine; he instead invites them to serve a humanitarian purpose: "Stanmore, you, I know, the women too, /Will join with me. /'Tis Oroonoko's cause, /A lover's cause, a wretched woman's cause, /That will become your intercession" (5.2.11-15). The welcoming broadens in scope from an invitation to dine to a request to share in a cause. Blanford exemplifies the role of the benevolent host who not only protects his guest in his home, but also dedicates himself to the well-being of the stranger beyond. Stanmore supports Blanford's mission and declares: "Good Governor, /Order his liberty. He yielded up /Himself, his all, at your discretion" (5.2. 34-36). Adhering to the play's division of language from prose in the comedic plot to poetry in the tragic section, Stanmore's lines shift from prose to blank verse, but only

when moralizing on Oroonoko's wrongful treatment and demanding his release. Southerne alters the form of Stanmore's speech to connect an elevated use of language with principled action.

As in Behn's version, status is the barometer that determines whether the slave moves beyond a servile role to that of a guest to be served. Blanford's protection does not extend to Aboan, who is given the most powerful anti-slave speeches in the play and who motivates Oroonoko to action. Aboan recognizes that an equal interaction between host and guest cannot take place and encourages Oroonoko to question Blanford's treatment of him. This idea surprises Oroonoko who views situations simplistically. He asks Aboan what could be gained by doubting the fairness of his host, and Aboan replies "There's this advantage in suspecting him;/When you put off the hopes of other men, /You will rely upon your god-like self/And then you may be sure of liberty" (3.2.57-60). These words confuse Oroonoko; he is unable to absorb the idea of self-reliance and rejects Aboan's position.

A skilled rhetorician who understands the receiver's vulnerabilities, Aboan uses Oroonoko's passion toward Imoinda to persuade him to lead the rebellion. He leads Oroonoko to consider that upon his arrival, the Lord Governor "in a fit of his intemperance, /With a strong hand he should resolve to seize/And force [the] royal mistress from [his] arms" (3.2.202-204). Jealousy motivates Oroonoko, and he agrees to rebel. They make a plan to lead the slaves to the sea, seize the British ship upon which they arrived, and return to Africa. Oroonoko tells them: "That ship secured, we may transport ourselves/ To our respective homes. My father's kingdom/ Shall open her wide arms to take you in/And nurse you for her own, adopt you all, /All who will follow me" (3.4.108-112). In relation to the other slaves, Oroonoko holds a position of power and can provide a home to his potential guests.

A bloody battle ensues, and Oroonoko kills the Captain who began his enslavement. The Lieutenant Governor attempts to get the slaves to stand down by offering to consent to their terms. Oroonoko refuses until Blanford enters and appeals to him. To prove his dedication to act as Oroonoko's protector and do him no harm, Blanford offers another gift. He hands Oroonoko his sword and declares, "I come, I hope, to serve you" (4.2.104). Oroonoko rejects the gift and his position as guest, but Blanford reiterates: "It is not past, and I must serve you still" (4.2.109). Blanford believes that the Governor's pledge to compromise is sincere and is able to convince Oroonoko to stop fighting.

Oroonoko gives up his sword, and he and Aboan are taken into custody. Blanford pleads for freedom, but only for his guest and his impassioned words to the Governor on truth lead to Oroonoko's release. England's social character relied heavily on proper codes of behavior, and welcoming guests into one's home spoke to the host's social stature. But Blanford's lack of attention to Aboan calls into question who is worthy of hospitality. Blanford protects Imoinda from the Governor out of respect to his guest, but Aboan is tortured, "gashed and mangled" (5.5.28). Upon his release, he appears to Oroonoko and asks for a dagger to end his life. Oroonoko hands him the weapon, and Aboan stabs himself.

Like Aboan, Imoinda wants an end to her life and employs language of hospitality in her appeal. Believing that only death can save them from torture and possession, Imoinda resigns herself and asks that Oroonoko kill her. She hands Oroonoko the dagger and directs him: "Strike, strike it home and bravely save us both. /There is no other safety" (5.5.227-228). He falters, and she continues to try to persuade him: "Thus with open arms/I welcome you and death" (5.5.248). Oroonoko drops the dagger, but she returns it to him, places her hands on top of his and stabs

herself. Oroonoko cannot accept her invitation. Her words lack the power to move him to action, and she, like the other women in the play, takes control of the situation.

The welcoming of women in this text fail: Charlotte receives a “cold welcome”; Lucy an incompetent welcome; the Widow Lackitt a manipulative welcome; and Imoinda a forced welcome. Each in their own way take action and show agency in a society that attempts to prevent them from having power. I argue that hospitality breaks down in *Oroonoko* because the conditions required (for example, for Blandford’s performative utterances of hospitality to succeed) do not exist in the West Indian location as they do in England. Oroonoko’s identity as Other deems him inadequate to accept his position of guest for a sustained period. He is a novelty that creates curiosity, but a stranger none-the-less. The Governor and planters despise Oroonoko’s performance of self so much that they want to obliterate it, to remove it from existence, but Oroonoko chooses to die by his own hand rather than wait for someone to take his life.

In *Performativity*, James Loxley writes that “it could be said that [performatives] produce a different world, even if only for a single speaker and a single addressee” (2). But on the stage, with the audience as witness, these utterances serve an additional function, one beyond what they claim to do. When Blandford welcomes Oroonoko and extends an offer of protection, or when Aboan declares the injustices to slaves, the words resonate beyond their purpose within the play. Instead the force of the utterance takes on a new direction, one with the potential for social change. The words enter the audiences’ ears, resonating differently to each listener, and are carried outside of the theatre space. *The London Stage* reports that Southerne’s *Oroonoko* was performed 315 times during the 17<sup>th</sup>- and 18<sup>th</sup>-centuries, and as Derrida notes, with each repetition and citation the speech potentially gains meaning.

Hospitality works to construct patterns that shape newly formed stereotypes of the less civilized, including those who are insiders and outsiders of British society. These distant citizens are part of the British nation, yet their outsider status prevents them from fully belonging. Southerne's play represents the complexity of British perception of West Indian inhabitants. The amoral and ethically challenged appear alongside characters striving for esteem and propriety, and this contrast, emphasized by hospitality for advantage and that without expectation of advantage, presents a paradoxical view of the West Indies as both depraved and virtuous. The performed codes of hospitality must be upheld for one to be considered for marriage, and they must also be upheld to be considered British. Those who lived in the West Indian colonies ran the risk of being different, and adhering to codes of hospitality shared by Londoners binds them to being identified with their homeland. In the chapter that follows, the plays I examine show a continued interest in the connection between hospitality, marriage, decorum, and British identity. Richard Cumberland's handling of a West Indian in London and John Gay's criminal cast work to uncover how expansion to the West Indies effects the shaping of this region in the British imagination.



#### Chapter 4: Cumberland's *The West Indian* (1771) & Gay's *Polly* (1729/1777)

In this chapter I examine Cumberland's *The West Indian* (1771) and John Gay's *Polly* (published in 1729/first performed 1777). *The West Indian*, set in London, tells the story of a British subject born in Jamaica entering England for the first time, while in *Polly*, a continuation of *The Beggar's Opera*, the eponymous character travels a reverse path on the Atlantic from England to Jamaica in search of her husband, Macheath. Cumberland and Gay highlight the British focus on wealth and consumerism brought to the West Indies and show that the perceptions of the region found in Southerne's *Oroonoko* remain. As the playwrights continue to confront the shaping of national identity amidst expansion, concerns with moral corruption and miscegenation and what it means to be British occupy the stage. Examining these plays through the lens of hospitality once again reveal patterns repeated through the dramatic works: the inhospitable British host, the hospitable Other, hospitality as a determinate of marriageability, and the realignment with British identity.

The prologue to *The West Indian*, spoken by Mr. Reddish, manager and performer at Drury-Lane, addresses the audience with an invitation to listen and sets the outlook for the playgoers' perceptions. Referring to the West Indies as Britain's "sister kingdom" (14), he introduces the play's title character as "a brave, unthinking, animated rogue, /With here and there a touch upon the Brogue" (16-17). The audience is prepared for this outlier of society who may not live up to social standards, but is set to entertain through his follies. Much like the female ingénue of domestic fiction, the Creole figure in *The West Indian* must learn the ways of London culture. Stockwell, a wealthy merchant living in London, reveals that he is the West Indian's father at the start of the play; yet, following the recognizable plot of legitimization, Stockwell's son, Belcour, does not discover the truth until the play's conclusion. Stockwell welcomes his

guest under false pretenses and tests his worthiness before revealing his true identity. Throughout this play, Cumberland challenges common perceptions of Creoles with an emphasis placed on hospitality as an indicator of worth. I will show how this text works towards creating and challenging the Creole figure through Belcour's role as guest in his new location.

Despite its popularity with eighteenth-century British audiences, recent scholarship on *The West Indian* is scarce. In "Performing the West Indies: Comedy, Feeling, and British Identity," Jean Marsden connects the dramatic genre of sentimental comedy and what Raymond Williams' identifies as "structures of feeling" to examine how Cumberland uses comedy to connect to British audiences when a play is set in a location to which the "nonexotic English audience" might have difficulty relating (73). Grounded on the belief that "comedy's form and content demonstrate national identity," Marsden argues that Cumberland "depend[s] upon benevolence as a means of negotiating the tensions England faced in redefining its own self-image" and as such "leads to the performance of benevolence as a means of performing a British identity mediated through characters such as the marginalized title character" (77). Through performance, the West Indian Belcour, assures the audience that its British (read white) counterparts in the West Indies "embod[y] a goodness with which the audience can identify" (78). Along similar lines, Jennifer Donahue's "Bringing the Other into View: Confronting the West Indian Creole in *The Conscious Lovers* and *The West Indian*," looks at racial prejudice towards the Creole figure, an issue that she suggests is "often dismissed" in the treatment of race because of skin color (42). She views Cumberland's portrayal of the West Indian character as opposing the stereotypes and "diminish[ing] anxieties revolving around colonization and slave trade" and argues further that Cumberland "calls the necessity of [Creoles'] ill treatment into question" (42-43). Marsden and Donahue agree that Cumberland use sentimentalism to assuage

fears of how colonialism was reshaping British identity, and my attention to hospitality adds to the conversation of how the stage responded to the rapid changes brought on by expansion in the West Indies.

### *The Arrival of the West-Indian*

Because Britain's interest in the West Indies is clearly seen as a way to increase the wealth of the country and its subjects abroad, it is no accident that the play opens in a counting house. Stockwell tells his employee Stukely of the arrival of the West Indian who Stukely affirms is "the young gentleman, who inherited old Belcour's estates in Jamaica" (2), thereby establishing the title character as a man of wealth. Stockwell invites Stukely into his confidence and tells him (and the audience) that he met Belcour's mother while accompanying her father on a trip to Jamaica. The two fell in love and married secretly since Stockwell did not have the wealth to marry her openly. Their clandestine marriage resulted Belcour's birth which was also undisclosed. He explains the details to his confidant:

Not many days after our marriage old Belcour set out for England; and, during his abode here, my wife was, with great secrecy, delivered of this son. Fruitful in expedients to disguise her situation, without parting from her infant, she contrived to have it laid and received at her door as a foundling. After some time, her father returned, having left me [in England]; in one of those favourable moments, that decide the fortunes of prosperous men, this child was introduced; from that instant, he treated him as his own, gave him his name, and brought him up as his family. (2).

Belcour's birth story places him in the position of guest from the first days of his life. His fate pivoted on the threshold of his grandfather's home, and he was granted entry and a place to belong. Setting precedence for the treatment of the stranger, this story also shows that Stockwell

had little choice but to relinquish rights to his son and frees him from the audience's moral condemnation. He reveals that at the request of his dying wife he was not to make his paternity known until her father's passing (2-3).

Like his story of origin, Belcour's admission to his new and yet-to-be-known family depends on the hospitality of his host and his behavior as guest. Stockwell explains to Stukely that before he informs Belcour of their relationship, he will "make some experiment of [his] son's disposition" so that he "shall discover much more of his real character under the title of his merchant, than [he] should under that of his father" (3). Though Stockwell has already agreed to extend hospitality to Belcour as a guest in his home, welcoming him as family is conditional upon his moral character to be determined at the discretion of the host.

The first phase of Belcour's welcoming begins with the arrival of his belongings and shows the guest to have unspoken conditions of his own. A sailor enters with several black servants carrying baggage and announces more items to be delivered: "two green monkies, a pair of grey parrots, Jamaica sow and pigs, and a Mangrove dog" (3). Stockwell accepts the items after the sailor speaks affectionately about Belcour, claiming "bless his heart a'might have brought over the whole island if he would; and didn't leave a dry eye in it" (4). Stockwell views this proclamation of communal melancholy as proof of his guest's worth and accepts the delivery. Belcour's travel items show him to feel affection for Jamaica and reluctant to leave his place of birth and travel to England. He brings items that remind him of his home, and are like himself, out of place in the urban location of London.

Stockwell shows his excitement and his wealth by ordering his servants to make extravagant preparations. Notorious for frankness, servants' gossip often reveals prejudices that polite society may believe but refrain from speaking. Ruffled by the extensive menu ordered for

entertaining the West Indian, the exchange between Stockwell's housekeeper and servant support this belief:

HOUSEKEEPER. A fine pickle he'll put the house into: had he been master's own son, and a [C]hristian Englishman, there cou'd not be more rout than there is about this Creolian, as they call'em.

SERVANT. No matter for that; he's very rich, and that's sufficient. They say he has rum and sugar enough belonging to him, to make all the water in the Thames into punch. (4)

The housekeeper's comment exposes her belief in a social hierarchy that places Creoles below Christian Englishman; however, the servant's response deems wealth as the ultimate determining factor in a guest's worthiness for hospitality. Despite Christian scripture that supports hospitality to the stranger, the degree to which a guest is welcomed in the commercial city of London depends upon the economic status of the guest.

Expectation of Belcour's arrival increases when he sends a letter to his host announcing his intentions. Belcour adheres to the rules of polite society and refrains from appearing without prior notice, but the content of his letter displays a lack of decorum in its informality. He tells his host: "I write to you under the hands of the hair-dresser; as soon as I have made myself decent, and slipped on some fresh clothes, I will have the honor of paying you my devoirs" (5). Instead of criticizing Belcour's candor, Stockwell is charmed by his son's familiarity and expresses hope that though his son's character may be "wild. . . as the manner of his country," that it is not frantic or unprincipled" (5). His comment discloses a bias towards Creoles, repeated throughout the work, as less refined than those born in England and that Belcour would be the exception not the rule. In his praise for one, he betrays his prejudice toward others.

When Belcour finally arrives, Stockwell welcomes his guest both to his home and to England. This encounter demonstrates that the hospitality shown to the guest directly reflects that of the host nation. Stockwell acts as a voluntary ambassador for his country, affirming his patriotism and his power through the alignment with his country. Belcour, though welcomed by Stockwell, reports on the obstructions to hospitality that he faced upon his arrival to London:

Your town's as full of defiles as the Island of Corsica; and I believe, they are as obstinently defended: so much hurry, bustle, and confusion on your quays; so many Sugar-casks, porter butts, and common council-men, in your streets, that, unless a man marched with artillery in his front, 'tis more than the labour of Hercules can affect, to make any tolerable way through your town. (6)

In the eyes of the West Indian, London is as wild as his father believes Jamaica to be. Belcour continues to describe his entrance through the city whose crowds are “worse than a swarm of mosquitoes” (6). Stockwell asks his guest to “not think the worst” of the English from his experience, and his guest's response shows that though he was born in Jamaica, Belcour views himself as belonging: “was I only a visitor, I might, perhaps, wish them a little more tractable; but, as a fellow subject, and a sharer in their freedom, I applaud their spirit” (6). Stockwell feels overjoyed that his son expresses national pride and misses what perhaps the audience may not. In Belcour's reply, Cumberland perceptively suggests that what one may perceive as flaws in the stranger may be admired with those who share nationhood.

As a subject of the British crown and native to Jamaica, Belcour is both insider and outsider, accepted and rejected. As a white, Creole, he holds a liminal space between two separate identities. Kathleen Wilson identifies the cultural differences between the English and Creole in the eighteenth-century in *The Island Race*:

[A]t a moment when expanded concepts of civility—taste, refinement, discernment, generosity of spirit—were heralded as the essence of a superior English culture, the transcultured West Indian Creole seemed to exhibit exuberantly antithetical values. Sexuality, indolence, and love of luxury and display were said to be endemic feature of white (and black) society in Jamaica by virtually every English observer. . . (144).

In spite of these two extremes, Belcour's position as Stockwell's son (though still unbeknownst to Belcour) presents an opportunity for the him to feel a sense of belonging. Yet, their conversation continues to establish differences between a British and West Indian character. Belcour declares his good fortune to be in England, "the fountain-head of pleasure" and "the land of beauty, of arts, and elegancies" (7) with money to spend. Stockwell responds with his wish that he will not act "as a vassal, over whom [he] has a wanton and a despotic power; but as a subject, which [he is] bound to govern with a temperate and restrained authority" (7). Stockwell's use of "temperate and restrained" act in direct opposition to the view of the West Indies as loose and driven by passions as well as the common belief that climate affects temperament. Belcour speaks to this perception: "[m]y passions are my masters; they take me where they will; and oftentimes they leave to reason and to virtue nothing but my wishes and my sighs" (7). The guest's identity as a West Indian is less refined because he chooses passion over reason and must be shaped to adapt to England. Stockwell's respect for his guest grows at the admission of what he perceives as flaws, and as a representative of England, he agrees to instruct him.

### *The Discretion of Lady Rusport*

Issues of hospitality are also central to the home of Lady Rusport, a member of the upper class. A brief summation of her relationship to other characters will help with the understanding

of her position. Lady Rusport is the daughter of the deceased Sir Oliver, widow of Stephen Rusport, and step-mother to Charlotte Rusport who shares her home. Lady Rusport's older sister, also deceased, married Captain Dudley and bore two children, Charles and Louisa. In practice, Sir Oliver's estate would go to Charles, the son of his eldest child, but his will did not take the children into account and consequently, Lady Rusport inherited. The Captain and his children are destitute and rent space at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Fulmer. Major Dennis O'Flaherty, a suitor, is also important to the interactions in her home.

The scene opens to a room at Lady Rusport's where she and Charlotte discuss the Dudley family. Lady Rusport acts as arbiter of hospitality and charity from her position as head of household and possessor of wealth, and she denies assistance to her sister's family. She asks rhetorically: "[B]ecause my sister chose to marry a beggar, am I bound to support him and his posterity?" (8). Though not expecting an answer, Charlotte responds in the affirmative and Lady Rusport asks for legal proof for of her presumed obligations. (8). Charlotte tells her: "I am not proficient enough to quote chapter and verse; but I take charity to be the main clause in the great statute of [C]hristianity" (8). Instead of answering Lady Rusport's request, Charlotte identifies social laws on morality to support her view. Hospitality holds a significant position in religious and social practice, and Lady Rusport's denial of charity shows a flawed moral character.

The widow believes in her ability to dictate whether or not guests are welcome into her home and into London. Lady Rusport demonstrates her power as host when Charles Dudley visits on his family's behalf. Instead of welcoming him, she treats him inhospitably and questions his motives for coming to see her. Charlotte urges her to "speak more kindly" to Charles, but Lady Rusport sends her out of the room, no longer admitting her step-daughter into her sight (10). Before Charles has an opportunity to share the purpose for his visit, Lady Rusport



declares: “Tell your father and your sister I totally disapprove of their coming up to town” (11). Like Stockwell, Lady Rusport’s encounter with her visitor inspires her to speak as a representative of London; instead of welcoming the Dudley’s, however, she rejects them and expects them to follow her command. Derrida speaks to welcoming as a double yes, suggesting that in order to turn the guest away, the host must have already unconsciously welcomed the subject (*Adieu* 23). The unconscious yes is already enacted, but the conscious rejection of her relations requires her speech act. Charles makes his request nonetheless and asks his aunt to supply his father with a small sum of money so that he can join a brigade in Senegambia to make money for his family (11). Another guest, Major O’Flaherty, interrupts with his arrival, and she invites him further into her home. She leaves to play host to her preference, but not before refusing her nephew.

As in all of the works thus far, wealth and social standing affect the welcoming of the guest. Though Charlotte desires to visit Charles at his lodgings, he pretends not to notice her interest in him, and his answer reveals the difficulty of playing host in London without a home: “[T]is a poor little inconvenient place; my sister has no apartment fit to receive you in” (12). The Dudleys lack power because they lack wealth, and therefore they cannot claim the position of hosts. Showing further contrast in situation, a servant interrupts and announces that Lady Rusport desires her company (12). In a conversation with his father concerning his visit to Lady Rusport, Charles reaffirms the connection between status and hospitality:

DUDLEY. Did you find your aunt Dudley at home?

CHARLES. I did.

DUDLEY. And what was your reception?

CHARLES. Cold as our poverty and her pride could make it. (16)

Charles' response to his father show both money and character as a factor of hospitality.

Hospitality as a moral responsibility loses value for those who lack compassion and strong principles.

### *A Financed Hospitality*

Captain Dudley's impoverished conditions leads to another type of guest/host relationship founded in an economic exchange. The Dudleys rent space from Mr. and Mrs. Fulmer and live above their bookshop. The Fulmers lack respectability and are not legally married. Mr. Fulmer reminisces about his numerous means, both legal and illegal, for gaining wealth, but it is Mrs. Fulmer who concocts a scheme to hook the West Indian visitor. The Fulmers discuss their boarders, viewing Louisa Dudley's beauty as a way to increase their own wealth. Mrs. Fulmer exits, Captain Dudley enters, and the two men engage in conversation. Fulmer comments on Louisa's beauty, and when the Captain mentions that she is without fortune, Fulmer's reply places the host at risk of violence: "Rather say that you have none; and that's a sore defect in one of your years, Captain Dudley" (15).

The issue comes to a head when Fulmer suggests that the Captain use his daughter as a way to finance his trip. Captain Dudley threatens his host, who says: "Wou'd you strike me, Sir; wou'd you lift up your hand against a man in his house?" (16). The risk the host takes by allowing a guest into the house is at play; however, this guest/host relationship is complex. Captain Dudley pays for his lodgings which also gives him rights as a host. He reinforces his own position of power when he releases Fulmer and devalues him with his words: "Go, Sir; you are too mean for my resentment; 'tis that and not the law that protects you" (16). After the host's safety has been risked, he wants to deny hospitality to his guest, but Captain Dudley's position as renter/host complicates the rejection. Mr. Fulmer rants to his wife, declaring: "I'll unlodge him;

I'll unharbour him, I warrant" (19). Mrs. Fulmer refuses to believe her husband and shows compassion for their lodger. The profits received from the Dudleys and the promise of more to come eclipse the potential hazards and wounded egos.

### *Hospitable Tropics*

West Indian women do not appear in the play as characters, but the trope of the available, welcoming, body of these tropical women is further established through contrast with English women. When Belcour sees Louisa on the streets of London, he performs as the Creole stereotype who cannot control his passions. In his pursuit, he demonstrates his ignorance of the customs of courtship in his new location. His emotions drive his actions, and he follows her to her home though she tries to lose him. He "peeps in at the door" and enters unannounced and initially undetected (17). Belcour declares:

If every handsome girl I meet in this town is to lead me such a wild-goose chase, I had better have stayed in the torrid zone: I shall be wasted to the size of a sugar-cane: what shall I do? give the chase up? Hang it, that's cowardly: shall I, a true-born son of Phoebus, suffer this little nimble-footed Daphne to escape me? –Forbid it honour, and forbid it love. (17)

His surprise at Louisa's rejection leads the audience to assume that West Indian women behave otherwise. Like the Lieutenant Governor in Southerne's play, he assumes that persistence is the key to love and romanticizes his desire in his allusion to Ovid's mythological figures. Louisa's body, however, remains unavailable to him.

Though refused by Louisa, Belcour's unwelcomed visit results in a hospitable deed. He overhears the Fulmer's discussion of Captain Dudley's need for financial support to join his regiment in Senegambia and of the continual denial he has received because the high risk of

financial return. The climate, he is repeatedly told, is too dangerous. Belcour tells Fulmer: “[London] is a dam’d good for nothing town; and I wish I had never come into it” (20). He condemns the English for their lack of hospitality towards their own countrymen. Demonstrating his benevolent character, Belcour anonymously donates the money Dudley requires.

Charlotte proves that Belcour’s opinion of London is flawed by attempting to help to the Dudleys before knowing that the money has been offered. She gives her jewels to Charles to take to Stockwell in exchange for a part of her inheritance so that she can provide for Dudley’s excursion. Stockwell refuses the collateral but agrees to provide the money. He asks Belcour to deliver both the jewels and money to Charlotte, and though Belcour agrees to delivering the jewels, he does not want to deliver the money leaving Stockwell to bring the money to her. A letter to Belcour from Mrs. Fulmer inviting him to her home and promising a visit with Louisa, however, lures the West Indian away from his obligation.

Like Oroonoko, Belcour’s vulnerable position as guest places him at risk and causes him harm. Once inside of her home, Mrs. Fulmer controls him with information about Louisa; yet, when she tells him that Louisa is the Captain’s daughter, he wants to end his pursuit in fear that it will appear as if his charity has come with a price. He tells her: “There’s an end then to the matter at once; it shall be said of me, that I took advantage of the father’s necessities to trepan the daughter” (35).<sup>17</sup> Mrs. Fulmer tricks the naïve West Indian into believing that Louisa is instead Charles Dudley’s mistress by telling him that in England the word “sister” refers to a prostitute (35). Belcour’s gullibility allows her to press on, and she convinces him to hand over the jewels intended for Charlotte so that she can offer them to Louisa on his behalf. He hesitates

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<sup>17</sup> As used in 18<sup>th</sup>-century, the word “trepan” means “to catch in a trap; entrap, ensnare, beguile” (*Oxford English Dictionary Online*).

and asks her to wait until he returns with double their worth to offer, but she denies his request insisting on the necessity of an immediate transaction. Mrs. Fulmer brings Louisa to him, but keeps the jewels for her own financial gain without his knowledge.

In contrast to Mrs. Fulmer, Charlotte acts as model for the proper treatment of guests. Of Belcour, she tells Stockwell, “[A]ny friend of yours cannot fail of being welcome here” (40), and she moralizes on judging the guest: “[W]e’ve no right to be over strict in canvassing the morals of a common acquaintance” (40). Furthermore, when he visits to atone for giving away her jewels by replacing them, she extends him a warm welcome: “I’m proud to see you: your friend, Mr. Stockwell, prepared me to expect this honour; and I’m happy in the opportunity of being known to you” (41). She readily forgives him, showing herself to care much about character and little about objects or place of origin.

The mistreatment of the guest holds resonance and even in the home of a gracious host places him at risk of his life and demonstrates the dangers imposed on the stranger by an unworthy host. Belcour’s forward advances and assumptions that Louisa is a prostitute inflict a crime on her honor, and after much commotion and insult, Charles challenges him to a duel to protect his sister’s reputation. Before the fight occurs, the trick is discovered by Stockwell, the Fulmers are taken into custody, and Belcour is absolved from blame. Stockwell tells Belcour that he is “no match for the cunning and contrivances of this intriguing town” (62). Belcour replies: “I had not liv’d long enough in your country to know how few informers words are to be taken” (63). This statement betrays his previous feelings of belonging to England and presents Creoles in Jamaica as more honest than those living in England.

*Emergent Patterns*

One pattern that appears in this work is the inhospitable British host. Keeping Derrida's categories of hospitality in mind, the host's position of power conflicts with the possibility of an absolute hospitality, or that without motive, and Cumberland continually shows his audiences that hospitality is always conditional. In this play, hospitality comes with strings attached and reinforces the host's position of power or, at the very least, the belief in the host's position of power. The West Indian must pass his father's test of character before he receives a full welcoming. Lady Rusport wields her power from the protection of her home, believing that the financially crippled Dudleys have no right to visit her or the entire city of London. The Fulmers extend hospitality to the Dudleys for financial returns, and though justified, Louisa welcomes Belcour's courtship only after he proves himself hospitable. These conditions of hospitality demonstrate that the belief in the imperial power of the British nation results in England's cultural narrative of civility and refinement and the perceived entitlement of its people.

In order to be fully welcomed, Belcour is forced to align himself with the customs of his new location. Derrida suggests that the first violence enacted on the guest/foreigner is the requirement to speak the host language. Belcour shares the same mother tongue, but the garish and forward speaking visitor must aim towards refinement and propriety. His passions rule over his reason, and his host/father, viewing this as a flaw to be corrected, enlists as his instructor: "we'll agree upon your admission, and enter on a course of lectures directly" (7). Belcour assimilates and is eventually rewarded through familial acceptance.

A second pattern that appears in this work, as in Southerne's play, is that of the hospitable Other. The actions of those who are believed to be less learned are presented as more moral. Belcour refers to London as "the land of beauty, of arts, and elegancies" (7), and Jamaica is affirmed to be "wild" and unrefined (5). Yet, Belcour demonstrates altruistic hospitality by

providing for Captain Dudley anonymously and shows that welcoming should follow Kant's notion of a categorical imperative and exist as an unconditional moral law. Belcour does not test Dudley's character and provides for him without want of return. Charlotte speaks to the difference between the two locations, upholding the Caribbean as a place with people to be admired: "O blessed be the torrid zone for ever, whose rapid vegetation quickens nature into such benignity! These latitudes are made for politics and philosophy; friendship has no root in this soil" (44). Belcour's lamentation after discovering that he has been duped by Mrs. Fulmer draws a further comparison: "Why did I ever quit the soil in which I grew; what evil planet drew me from the warm sunny region, where naked nature walks without disguise, into this cold contriving artificial country? (60). The Edenic quality attributed to the Caribbean in Behn's *Oroonoko* returns in this image; West Indians, though believed to be less enlightened are shown to be purer of heart. The paradox, however, is that there is no condemnation towards Belcour for pursuing a prostitute, but only for mistaking a virtuous woman for one who is promiscuous.

Just as in the comedic plot of Southerne's *Oroonoko*, a third pattern shows hospitality to be an indicator of marriageability. Major O'Flaherty pursues the widow Lady Rusport as a way to increase his fortune. He attends to her needs and responds to her commands. The Major delivers a letter, contents unknown to him, with a command which he relays to the Captain, the receiver: "I promised Lady Rusport you shall do whatever it is she bids you to do in that letter there" (23). Captain Dudley shares the message of Lady Rusport's order for him to leave London, once again denying the Dudley hospitality not only from her home but from the hub of the country. Dudley, who because of Belcour has the financing he needs to join the regiment, agrees without difficulty, and the good-natured O'Flaherty is overjoyed. He shares his interest with Dudley: "Give me your hand, my dear boy! this will make her my own; when that's the

case, we shall be brothers, you know, and we'll share her fortune between us" (24). He is not privy to Dudley's lack of share in the estate until Dudley sets him straight, announcing that "the man who marries Lady Rusport will have fair title to her whole fortune without division" (24). The Major expresses his confidence that she will agree to his proposal for three reasons: (1) "because she is a woman"; (2) "because she's a widow"; and (3) "because [he's] married five wives ...and never failed yet" (24). Though a jovial character, the Major's motives are less than admirable.

The Major's flawed character serves to further highlight the importance of hospitality as an indicator of character when selecting a marriage partner. Very little ranks above wealth when choosing a prospect to wed, yet as Lucy demonstrated in her rejection of the Captain in Southerne's *Oroonoko*, the mistreatment of a worthy guest proves to be the most important determinant. When Lady Rusport expresses pleasure in Dudley's departure from London and admits to denying him assistance, the Major ends his chase, but not before speaking his mind: "You preach, and you pray, and you turn up your eyes, and all the while you're as hard-hearted as an hyena—A hyena, truly! By my soul there isn't in the whole creation so savage an animal as a human creature without pity" (30). Major O'Flaherty takes leave and no longer remains a guest in Lady Rusport's home.

A final pattern to emerge, and one that has remained consistent across genre, is the reinforcement of identities as a result of the hospitable encounter. With each comparison drawn between the nature of those in England to those in the West Indies, the British character becomes more clearly defined. Belcour asks Louisa to show him how to behave like an Englishman: "New to your country, ignorant of your manners, habits and desires, I put myself into your hands for instruction; make me only such as you can like yourself, and I shall be happy" (50). He wants to



be English to be desirable to Louisa, but his perception of the host country is negative. In a prior conversation with Charlotte, he offers his opinion: “I think the town and the town’s folk are exactly suited; ‘tis a great, rich, overgrown, noisy, tumultuous place: the whole morning is a bustle to get money, and the whole afternoon is a hurry to spend it” (42). The belief of the effects of climate on national character add to the distinctions. Belcour attributes his inability to control his passions to his birth place. He tells Stockwell: “Oh, Sir, if this is folly in me, you must rail at Nature: you must chide the sun, that was vertical at my birth, and would not wink upon my nakedness, but swaddled me in the broadest, hottest glare of his meridian beams” (33). The temperature is to blame for the heat of his passions.

Speaking to the differences between the two locations, Wilson argues that in contrast to England, Jamaica “seemed to embody the combination of tropical plentitude, economic and mortal precariousness and cultural motley that was believed to produce political irascibility and sexual and moral latitude in its inhabitants” (147). In a plea for Belcour’s pardon, Stockwell connects climate to character and expresses his confidence in Belcour’s adaptability to a new environment: “You will not be over strict, Madam, in weighing Mr. Belcour’s conduct to the minutest scruple; his manners, passions and opinions are not as yet assimilated to this climate” (69). And in a speech that appears equally intended to raise the morality of the audience as much as Louisa, he adds that the West Indian “comes amongst you a new character, an inhabitant of a new world and both hospitality as well as pity recommend him to our indulgence. (69). In his appeal for his son’s acceptance, Stockwell reinforces England’s position of power to act as host and the ability to grant absolution.

*A Hospitable Feast/A Missing Invitation*

The setting of the final act further demonstrates the emphasis on hospitality. Stockwell extends an invitation to those in the play worthy of sharing a table: “Let us all adjourn to my house, and conclude the evening like friends: you will find a little entertainment ready for you” (67). The play’s conflicts are resolved in the home of the hospitable host. Lady Rusport’s financial condition as sole controller of her father’s estate is found to be in error, and the discovery of a will leaves Charles Dudley in charge of the estate while providing for Louisa and offering a small annuity to Lady Rusport. The widow is punished for her failure as host, a moral responsibility once again connected to religion: Dudley postulates on this turn of events: “’tis the justice of Heaven that wou’d not suffer innocence to be oppress’d, nor [our] base aunt to prosper in her cruelty and cunning” (71). In contrast to Lady Rusport, Belcour is absolved of his errors, and Louisa not only forgives him, but also agrees to marry him (70-73). Belcour has passed Stockwell’s test, and his father reveals his true history. Charles and Charlotte are able to marry now that Charles has financial means, and Captain Dudley can retire from his military work. O’Flaherty is also rewarded for his role in the discovery of the will; Charles offers him “asylum in the bosom of [Ireland]” (72). The prominent theme of hospitality encourages audiences to be hospitable hosts and uphold England’s national character as benevolent.

Once the conflicts are resolved, they join together at Stockwell’s table for food and entertainment. The host promises to engage his guests with “every circumstance of [his] mysterious story” of his travels to the West Indies that led to his paternity (77). He makes one final pronouncement of his son’s character: “I have discover’d thro’ the veil of some irregularities, a heart beaming with benevolence, an animated nature, fallible indeed, but not incorrigible; and your election of this excellent young lady makes me glory in acknowledging

you to be my son” (77). Belcour expresses gratitude in turn, proving himself to be an exemplary guest.

Wilson suggests that “[i]n the eighteenth century, as the ideologies of nation used fictions of homogeneity to invent and perform social and historical difference, those differences invariably not only distinguished *the* nation from other nations, but also divided subjects within its own boundaries” (379). Despite the seemingly pro-Creole stance taken by Cumberland in this work, Belcour’s acceptance pivots on his assimilation to the values upheld by the British. His final line, the last of the play, show that he has indeed been the apt pupil that Stockwell intended. Belcour declares: “I will turn to reason and obey” (77). He has learned the position of privilege that reason holds in England during the Age of Enlightenment, and he must learn to tame the passions associated with the hot climate of Jamaica and his Creole constitution. He is welcomed fully only because he wears the mask of conformity, and through language and performance, he becomes more British. The audience is reminded that these encounters would not be possible without the power of the British empire, and whether slave like Oroonoko or Creole like Belcour, both are believed to belong to England though not as equals.

### *Polly*

The performance history of Gay’s *Polly*, premiering almost 50 years after its publication, complicates its categorization. Banned from the stage for its controversial critique, and because of Gay’s satire on political corruption in *the Beggar’s Opera*, the play circulated in print before opening to stage audiences. This gap in time and shift from print to performance affects the immediacy of the play’s commentary, intended for a 1729 audience, but due to the popularity of its prequel and the stir caused by the ban, Gay “made more money out of *Polly*, which was not acted, than *The Beggar’s Opera*, which was” (Pearce 158). Between 1729 and 1777, perceptions

of England's expansion in the Caribbean inevitably experienced change as it became increasingly more difficult to ignore the contrast between England's belief in natural rights and the violence in the tropical region. Wilson notes that "British attempts in the late 1760s to expatriate or exterminate the Caribs on the island of St. Vincent in order to appropriate their lands produced a particularly gruesome and bloody war on the island that forced English observers to confront, and decry the realities of conquest and question the long-vaunted moral superiority of British imperialism" (51). Because *Polly's* first appearance on the stage was altered by its producer George Colman and the changes were unrecorded, I will focus on the printed text keeping in mind that Gay intended the opera to be performed. The patterns resulting from the guest/host interaction that appear in Cumberland's play can also be found in *Polly*, and the West Indian characters bear close resemblance to inhabitants in England who show a propensity towards luxuries, commodities, and indulgences.

A continuation of Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*, its sequel follows Polly from London to the Caribbean in search of her husband, Macheath. She arrives destitute and sold as a mistress to Ducat, a Creole planter, though she believes she has been hired as a servant-maid for his wife. Macheath, now named Morano and faithfully married to another woman, leads a band of pirates and disguises himself in black face to, in his words, "screen [him] self from women who laid claim to [him] where-ever [he] went" (2.3.34-35). A battle between the pirates and the Indians results in his capture, and he is sentenced to death. Polly escapes the planter, becomes a captive of the pirates, negotiates another escape, and marries an Indian prince. Morano's identity remains undiscovered to Polly until minutes before his death, and she fails to save him at the plays conclusion.

Scholarship on the opera focuses on issues of morality and race. In “John Gay’s *Polly*: UnMasking Pirate and Fortune Hunters in the West-Indies,” Robert G. Dryden views the play as Gay’s condemnation of British colonization and corrupt commerce outside of the British Empire (539). Dryden views Morano’s black face disguise as an attempt to “insert himself into colonial society” by choosing “the culturally marginal position” (541), and he adds that his death “demonstrates that there is no place for a black rebel” (540). Dryden reads Gay’s inclusion of pirates as forwarding his view that “England’s relentless acts of colonial appropriation are acts of piracy” (543). In “John Gay’s *Polly* and the politics of ‘Colonial Pastoral,’” Jochen Petzold disagrees with Dryden’s reading of Morano as a “self-conscious rebel who chooses liminality” and instead minimizes the authorial choice of black face as a plot device used to merely suspend recognition by Polly” (115-116). He contends that *Polly* is less of an anti-colonial text than critics have often stated and, like *The Beggar’s Opera*, more of an attack on London’s political establishment (110). In a second article, “Polly Peachum, a ‘Model of Virtue’? Questions of Morality in John Gay’s *Polly*,” Petzold also argues against a reading of *Polly* as a corrective to the “moral problem” presented in *The Beggar’s Opera* (343) He instead suggests that the play is “more subversive than it is usually given credit for” pointing out that Polly appears virtuous, but closer scrutiny reveals that her proclamations of virtue are undercut by her actions (345). Petzold identifies the “irony inherent in [Gay’s] play through the discrepancy between some of the songs Polly and Cawwawkee sing in their spoken dialogue and actions, a strategy by which Gay plays, once again on notions of morality and poetic justice” (“Polly” 345). In this way, Gay extends his judgment of London society in England to its Caribbean colony. In this chapter, I build on these readings and suggest further that the pirate figure works to increase travel interest to the region

and examine the strength of the opera as a text that comments on colonial expansion as well as the corruption in Britain's mainland.

### *Portrait of a Creole Planter*

The opening lines of Act 1 repeat a sentiment that resonates throughout each of the works in this study that include a Creole character. Trapes, who first appeared as criminal cohort to the Peachums in *The Beggar's Opera*, says to Ducat: "Though you were born and bred and live in the Indies, as you are a subject of Britain, you must live up to our customs" (1.1.1-3). Like Cumberland, Gay notes that Creoles were expected to follow the social habits of the English, and Ducat partially succeeds. As suggested by his name, his attention to wealth and a desire for *things* mirrors characters often criticized in depictions of London society. He describes his belongings: "I have a fine library of books I never read; I have a fine stable of horses that I never ride; I build, I buy plates, jewels, pictures, or anything that is valuable and curious, as your great men do, merely out of ostentation" (4). Gay's condemnation of London society's love of material goods carries over to this West Indian location as Ducat attempts to become more British by mimicking even their basest behaviors.

*Polly* is another work that ties the Caribbean to the sexual availability of the female body. In this play Trapes acts part agent and part madam to the newly arrived women and sells them to West Indian planters. An experienced crook and master in the art of persuasion, she convinces Ducat that to be truly like the English, he needs a mistress, and she has "a fresh cargo of ladies" for his selection (1.1.62). Women are her business, and Polly is her item for sale. Ducat temporarily resists, afraid of his wife's response, but Trapes targets his desire to be like "the fine gentlemen" of the "high life" who treat their wives with "indifference, contempt, and

neglect” (1.1. 99-101). She adds that “many a lady of quality have servants of this sort in their families” and completes the bargain by appealing to his desire to flaunt his wealth (1.1.113-114).

Through this transaction, Ducat buys himself the position of host to assert his power over his purchased guest and his wife, but Trapes, also a guest in his home, has control of the initial welcoming. Trapes is not aware initially that the woman she sells is Polly, and she instructs Ducat to leave while she speaks with her. When Polly enters Ducat’s home, Trapes welcomes her, and the two women are surprised to see each other. Polly shares the purpose for her arrival to the West Indies and explains that she was robbed during her travels. Trapes offers to recommend Polly for a job as a servant, offering her refuge in the Ducat home, but unbeknownst to Polly, she has already been sold to Ducat. Trapes grants Ducat permission to join them, commanding: “You may come in” (85). Her temporary position as host in the Ducat’s home shows her control over both parties and diminishes Ducat’s role as head of household. Though she is a crook exiled to Jamaica as punishment, as a native to England, she holds a higher status than even a successful Creole planter.

In *Hospitable Performances: Dramatic Genre and Cultural Practices in Early Modern England*, Daryl W. Palmer suggests that “[h]ospitality in drama means admitting outsiders who threaten decorums of sexuality and marriage otherwise preserved by generic customs” (25). Polly’s arrival into the Ducat home supports Palmer’s observation and affects the behaviors of hosts, both Ducat and his wife. Mrs. Ducat objects to Polly’s arrival, attempting to refuse her entry. She declares to her husband: “I tell you once again, that you shall keep you trollops out of the house, or I will not stay in it” (1.8.66-68). Polly threatens the peace of the household, but Ducat asserts his power over his wife and demands Polly’s entry and acceptance.

Ducat does not expect Polly's resistance to his advances and orders his guest's compliance. She ignores his flattery and attempts to adhere to the rules of proper hospitality by expressing gratitude and inquiring about his wife. Ducat persists, and instead of offering protection, he threatens her: "[Y]ou obstinate slut, you shall either contribute to my pleasure or my profit" (1.11.82-83). Polly's refusal of her host's welcome leads to Ducat's threats of punishments: "[I]f you refuse to play in the bed-chamber, you shall go to work in the fields among the planters" (1.11.83-85). Damaris, Ducat's servant, interrupts Ducat's forced advances by urging him to grant her entry: "Open the door, Sir. This moment, this moment" (1.11.102). The maid, acting as witness, stops the host's violence towards his guest with news of more violence: pirates are attempting to take over the island.

Ducat's home acts as a place of refuge for those who are fearful of the pirate attack. His footman tells him that his neighbors "leave their houses, and fly to [his] for protection" (1.11.7-9). His home also functions as a place to meet his Indian allies to strategize a defense, and he welcomes a representative of the Indian King Pohetohee who reports on their readiness to battle with the pirates. Before exiting, Ducat orders Mrs. Ducat to treat Polly well and "leave[s] [Polly] under [her] protection" (1.12.77-78). Because of his wealth, he holds a position as officer and must help defend the plantations. In Ducat's absence, Mrs. Ducat transitions to host and regains power over her husband. A proper guest, Polly shares her story with her host, and the two women arrange an escape. Mrs. Ducat agrees to tell her husband that Polly has been stolen by the pirates, and Polly leaves disguised in men's clothing.

### *Native Hospitality*

Polly is captured by the pirates and brought to Morano whose black face disguises his identity. Neither wife nor husband recognize the other. Believing Polly to be a man, Morano



invites him to join the pirate group in their attempt to take over the island and leaves her to be questioned by his more recent wife. Attracted to Polly, Jenny kisses her and makes forward advances. Gay plays on the image of the oversexualized woman in the West Indies who as a result of the hot climate cannot control her passion, and even in disguise, Polly's body is deemed available. Polly refuses, and Jenny's rage leads to Polly's imprisonment with the Indian Prince Cawwawkee.

Morano refers to the Indians as "Barbarians" because they align themselves with the British planters rather than the pirate outsiders (3.8.36-37). In response to the Indian Prince's declaration of bravery, and his resolution to neither "lie" nor "betray" despite the threat of torture (2.8.54-56), the pirate Capstern asks: "But how can you expect any thing else from a creature, who hath never seen a civiliz'd country? Which way should he know mankind?" (2.8.65-67). The Indians are referred to as ignorant, uncivilized, and uneducated because of their adherence to moral behavior which contrasts with that of both the pirates and the planters. Ironically, those who are typically considered savages by the British are instead the most civilized. Cawwawkee refuses to talk, and Morano instructs the other pirates to "[t]orture him leisurely, but severely" referring to him as an "obstinate, audacious savage" (2.8.114-125). Before Cawwawkee's torture is carried out, Morano is called away, and Polly convinces the Prince to use his wealth to negotiate their release. He attempts to resist any form of trickery, but eventually gives in to the scheming and tells her that "whatever [Polly] promises for [him], contrary to the European custom, [he] will perform" (2.11.64-65). Petzold argues that Gay uses irony in Polly's interactions with Cawwawkee. He acknowledges that Gay's "irony is on one hand levelled against romantic notions of piracy" and referencing Polly's use of disguise and willingness to escape by any means necessary, Petzold suggests further that it is "equally ironic that Polly, who

had been introduced as a model of virtue in the first act, resorts to deception, trickery and lies as soon as this suits her” (349). Using the Prince’s wealth, they bribe the pirates to release them and betray Morano.

At the Indian camp, King Pohetohee makes much of the prince’s arrival: “Let me embrace him. Welcome, my son. Without thee my heart could not have felt a triumph” (3.2.1-3). Pohetohee’s warm welcome aligns with his moral character, and with his son’s encouragement, Polly, still in disguise, receives hospitable treatment. The encounter is different for Laguerre, the pirate who has come to take the promised reward. Petzold notes that the “former jailer. . . to whose corruption Cawwawkee and Polly more directly owe their liberty, receive [a] smaller welcome” (“Polly Peachum” 351). The prince invites Polly to join forces in their fight against the pirates, and they succeed in the battle with Polly ironically capturing Morano as her prisoner.

Polly reveals her true identity to the Prince who has fallen in love with her, but even though she does not yet know Morano is her husband, her marriage prevents him from professing his love. When Jenny arrives to plead for Morano’s release, Polly realizes that it is Macheath who she has captured and who the Indians have sentenced to death, and she makes an attempt to save him. As a black man, Macheath is an outsider. His gang of pirates refuse him welcome and plot a mutiny. The planters deny him welcome out of fear that he will attack. His wife, Jenny Diver, prefers the disguised Polly to her husband, and Pohetohee refuses him welcome and commands his execution.

### *The Allure of the Pirate*

Like *The Jamaica Lady*, I argue that though Gay shows the Caribbean as corrupt as he does London’s society in *The Beggar’s Opera*, he paradoxically creates interest in this region through his representations. The eighteenth-century showed a growing fascination with pirates,

and Gay utilizes their popularity to draw his audiences into the Caribbean.<sup>18</sup> Dryden states that “the outlaw culture of the pirate ‘nation’ was being dissected” in England, and surmises that “pirates were fashionable” (56). One of Morano’s men describes pirate life to his cohorts and creates an image that recalls contemporary advertisements for the Caribbean: “Fatigue, gentlemen, should have refreshment. No man is requir’d to do more than his duty. Let us repose ourselves a-while. A sup or two of our cag would quicken invention” (2.2.19-22). Time for relaxation and a drink with friends to restore oneself not only describes pirate life in the eighteenth-century, but also how the tourism industry portrays the island region in current times.

Dryden points out that though Gay fell victim to the South Sea Bubble in 1720, his interest in the West Indies continued as evidenced by his choice of location for *Polly* eight years later (542). Like other rebels, pirates’ lives are romanticized with the promise of prosperity, the lure of freedom, and the power of rebellion. The pirates in *Polly* dream of controlling Mexico, Cuba, and Peru to collect the silver and gold found in those locations. The pirate, Hacker, declares: “Our profession is great, brothers. What could be more heroic than to have declar’d war with the whole world?” (2.2.25-27), and Morano tells Polly that “[a]n open war with the whole world is brave and honourable” (2.5.20-21). Ironically, the pirates are explorers like the beloved Robinson Crusoe, but they are transparent with their motivation of self-interest. Gay critiques English commercial activity in the Caribbean just as he critiqued London society in *The Beggar’s Opera*.

Gay’s *Polly* and Cumberland’s *The West Indian* reveal that dramatic works helped to shape British perceptions of West Indian region and of its inhabitants. Wilson states that “[t]he

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<sup>18</sup> For a list of eighteenth-century works on pirates, see Dryden’s “John Gay’s *Polly*: Unmasking pirates and Fortune Hunters in the West Indies” (2001).

body and its eloquence in speaking to and ultimately eradicating difference—ethnic, racial, sexual, gender, national; alive or dead—underlines the importance of theatre and performance as *embodiment*, as praxis and episteme, through which people learned about themselves and their history” (*The Island Race* 383). Hospitality in these plays act as indicators of moral character and repeatedly show British hosts to be inferior to the more hospitable West Indian Others. As British presence in the West Indies experienced continued growth, the theatre responded to these changes by boldly engaging with their audiences.

## SECTION THREE:

### POETRY

#### Chapter 5: Nathaniel Weekes' *Barbados* and Francis Williams' "An Ode to George Haldene, Governor of the Island of Jamaica"

Poetry was the popular mode of writing in eighteenth-century England, and poetic personas in the early part of the century generally fell into specific categories, the most popular being public voices of satire, history, or lament. They were informed by and reminiscent of the classical genres. By the mid-century, poets began to explore a subjective persona, and new representations of the poetic voice emerged from the Caribbean region. British writers writing from and about the Caribbean used the literary conventions of the day while adapting the poetry for their own cultural purposes. Like codes of hospitality, the rules of verse were upheld and reshaped. This section examines Nathaniel Weekes' *Barbados: A Poem* (1754), Francis Williams' "An Ode to George Haldane, Governor of the Island of Jamaica" (1759), and James Grainger's *The Sugar Cane* (1764), revealing the tropes that emerged and demonstrating how the Caribbean land is visualized as a welcoming space. Rather than function as merely poems of pleasure, all three works act to persuade readers, and the inevitable politicality of works emerging from a region fraught with risks becomes a characteristic of Caribbean poetry of the period.

Nathaniel Weekes' *Barbados* and Francis Williams' "An Ode to George Haldane..." precursors to Grainger's *The Sugar-Cane*, provide eighteenth-century poetic contributions from

the Caribbean locations of Barbados and Jamaica. Unlike Grainger, both Weekes and Williams were natives to the Caribbean, and Williams alone writes from a position rarely seen in his time from the Anglophone Caribbean—that of a free, black man. Nathaniel Weekes, born in 1730, published his poem in London ten years prior to Grainger’s *The Sugar-Cane*. The patterns that reveal themselves in Weekes’ and Williams’ work—language of invitation, images of abundance, and the erasure of slave hardships—later appear in Grainger’s as all three works continue to emphasize hospitality in poetry from the region.

### *Barbados*

In the preface to *Barbados*, Weekes suggests that his poem is more inviting to mass audiences than John Milton’s *Paradise Lost* and Edward Young’s *Night Thoughts*. Both poems, he argues, require reading skills that few grasp. He also suggests that their one fault “(and that might be deemed no fault at all)” is that they are given to moralizing (v-vi). Weekes’ preface argues against too harsh of a criticism of his work, warding off critique by suggesting that “[t]he Man who looks for *Trash* among his *Food*, must certainly prefer the former to the latter” (vi). He introduces his poem on the defense, not only ranting about the judgment of literary skill, but also against the use of Latin which he sees as lacking purpose as well as the learning of the French language. Weekes also spends a considerable amount of space condemning the French whose language “not only contributes to the Corruption of our [English] Language, but will in Time work the ruin of this [British] Kingdom” (ix). In his xenophobic condemnation of France as “Evil,” Weekes elevates the British Kingdom and affirms his identity as a patriotic British citizen and a voice of authority. Hospitality is denied to the French and Weekes ultimately declares: “As a Nation I hate them; and being a subject of Great Britain, I think, I am in Duty bound to do them all injury that lies within the Compass of my Power” (x). His excessive hatred unintentionally

borders on the comedic in its hyperbolic proportions and presents an unusual welcoming to his readers, presuming they are not French.

The poem opens by justifying his topic as one that is worthy of address. Barbodos is described as “that industrious venerable Isle” (3) to which the poet lays claim as his “native Land” (11) worthy of celebration. Weekes appeals to the readers’ desire for exploration by addressing the iconic literary hero, Robinson Crusoe, with invitation and praise:

Come, Robinson! Skill’d to instruct, or please,  
With Truth respected, and with Warmth carest,  
Whom Learning, Candor, Sense, and Manners grace,  
In all their bright Array; attend my Theme. (16-19)

Weekes’ connection to Defoe’s Crusoe gives weight to his invitation to readers to explore the “[t]reasures” (22) of the island that Crusoe “didst govern once” (20), and his celebratory poem acts as a guide through a tour of the island. In his introduction to an anthology of Caribbean poetry, Thomas Krise notes that Weekes “presented the island landscape as a garden created for man’s recreation: the appropriate setting for civilized activity (xliv). Krise argues that in the last part of his verse, Weekes uses the pastoral tradition to “plea to the British not to begrudge a good price for sugar, a warning against the threat posed by France, and a request for adequate defense” (xlv). In so doing, he acknowledges the political power of poetry from this region.

Weekes offers practical information to travelers in poetic form and by providing the island’s location, dimensions, and the proper handling of winds on the way to reaching the destination by boat. Once the traveler arrives, the island offers an alluring experience:

Smooth is the Surface, Beauteous to the Sight,  
And blest with ev’ry Requisite for Life.

Sweet is the Air, and mild, and pure; no Damps  
No fogs, no subterranean Blasts infect  
Her healthy Sons; Let Temp'rance be their Guide,  
And Physic starves in spite of all its Drugs. (33-38)

In addition to sharing the beauty of the island, Weekes addresses travelers' fears. British constitutions were rumored to suffer in the island heat and to be vulnerable to disease. However, with moderation as a guide, there is little need for doctors and medicine.

Weekes presents a second purpose to writing his poem besides sharing the beauty of the island and encouraging others to share in the experience. *Barbados* serves to remind Britain of its value as a major contributor to the wealth of the empire:

Tho' small this Spot, important is its Worth;  
What mighty Sums dost thou still Yearly yield?  
Incredible to tell! No country sure,  
However large, in all Britannia's Realm,  
Can rival Thee in Worth. Great is thy Trade,  
And by thy Produce still increasing more. (39-44)

Weekes falsely represents Barbados' position; Jamaica was the Caribbean's highest contributor to the Britain's economic growth. However, the poet's message rings clear: the small piece of land does much for Britain's global identity and economy. Weekes lists the various exports which include "Pickles, Sweet-meats, Cordials, and Preserves" (45) and describes them as Barbados' "Gifts" to the world (46) reimagining the island as a welcoming place with food recognizable to eighteenth-century British readers. He transforms the economic practice to a hospitable practice that makes Barbados seem like a more generous host.



Weekes also lists a vast variety of food native to the Caribbean region and employs the trope of bounty and abundance. The island supplies foods worthy of “Fame” and ideal to serve to guests. In addition to the lime, lemons, citron, and ginger, the “*Popaw’s Blossom*, and the *Orange grand*, /With the majestic, and triumphant *Pine*” provide table adornments for the “noblest Entertainments” (56-58). The sorrel and guava create incomparable sweet liqueurs that replace the cordials of England and “shame them from the World” (63). Demonstrating the copiousness of the islands offerings, Weekes dedicates over sixty lines to celebrating the island’s produce and several more to its seafood and delicacies. Throughout the poem, he dramatizes the use of the land’s contribution for entertainment. Housewives use the sorrel plant to create drinks that will not go “unnotic’d by the Guests” (442). Furthermore, the guava marmalade “no British *Quince* excels” (466), and for “Evening Fare,” Weekes asks: “What Gallic Cook. . .can make an evening Fare /More wholesome, rich, or pleasant for his Guests?” (470-472). The wide array of offerings characterizes Barbados as an island of plenty—an earthly paradise with incomparable luxurians that appeal to the senses.

At “Feasts of Turtle” which he describes as “Luxurious” (626), the guests take part in “Scenes of Jollity, and Jovial Mirth” (627). Considered a delicacy to British mainlanders, Weekes exaggerates the supply of turtle and brags at the abundance. While the cook prepares the feast for entertainment, the guests spend their time in leisure and prepare their appetites:

Meanwhile retir’d, to kill the tedious Time,  
And wear insensible the Hours away,  
The hearty Joke, and merry Tale goes round:  
While Some, on Dinner deep intent, to make  
The Appetite more keen, propose *Man-Dram*;

The Motions heard, and loud Applause ensues. (655-660)

In a note to the text, Weekes explains that the “*Man-Dram*” is an alcoholic concoction that mixes “Cucumber, Onion, Lemon Juice, Kyan Pepper, Salt, Water” with wine and is used to increase appetities (p.48). Guests to Barbabos are supplied with so many resources that rather than eat a moderate portion, they must create ways to make room for increased consumption. With the “Table spread, and all Things neatly set” (676), the guest devour the offerings while their lips “smack Applause” (683).

Weekes portrays the island’s inhabitants as inviting, friendly, and of moral character. Barbados’ “Sons” are “Healthy, Strong, and Brave” (65), and visitors to the island will observe them to be patriotic and “generous to Strangers” (66). Furthermore, “a cheerful Welcome/Smiles in ev’ry Face, (the Index of their Hearts)/And Hospitality crowns all their Boards” (66-68).<sup>19</sup> In contrast to the view of Caribbean women as oversexualized, Weekes describes the “Daughters” as “blest with ev’ry Virtue” (69); they are “Prudent, and chaste, and modest, and Discreet” (70). The “Matrons” too are “most obedient to their Lords” (83) and adultery is “shunn’d, reproach’d, [and] despis’d” (87). This dramatic change from previous representations of women (for example in *The Jamaica Lady*, *Polly*, and both versions of *Oroonoko*) shows an awareness of the stereotypes associated with Caribbean by presenting their opposites. He attempts to change the view of the tropics from licentious to one that is moral.

A pattern that has appeared in a number of works related to this region, Weekes utilizes the image of Eden to represent the islands beauty. After a rainfall to “cheer the Earth” (159), a “second Paradise appears” (160). Flowers bloom and the island brightens:

With heav’nly Fragrance; the Citron too, now

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<sup>19</sup> Board—a table used for meals (Oxford English Dictionary Online)

Breathes its Hoard of rich Perfumes; while All  
Their various Odours join, and to the Mind  
Inspire a Likeness of what Eden was. (164-167).

Weekes carefully shows the island to be like Eden before the fall, rather than filled with the sin of mankind. After listing the unparalleled fruit yielded by the natural landscape, he writes:

Nor is the large *Forbidden-Fruit* despis'd,  
But honor's, prais'd, and lov'd; sweet is its Smell,  
Grand to the Sight, and Delicate in Taste,

Whether this Fruit which we *Forbidden* style,  
Be the Self-same as erst in *Eden* grew,  
Which our first Parents were forbad to taste,  
On pain of Death, and everlasting Woe,  
To *Nat'ralists* I leave it to decide. (432-436)<sup>20</sup>

Weekes plays with the image of Eden's gardens to show that the fruit of the island provides pleasures so delightful that one cannot help to think them sinful. In doing so, he also presents Barbados as a location sanctioned by God. Barbados is a location of pleasures provided to its guests by divine providence.

In the pastoral tradition, Weekes attempts to erase the labors of agricultural life, but in the Caribbean the work of slavery in the sugar fields cannot be ignored even though the poem tries

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<sup>20</sup> See Kim D. Bowmen and Frederick G. Gmitter's "Forbidden Fruit (*Citrus* sp., Rutaceae) Rediscovered in St. Lucia" for further discussion of references to "forbidden fruit" since 1750.

to disguise the drudgery. Though he does not take a stance against slavery, he recommends that planters avoid cruelty:

But spare your cruel, and ungen'rous Stripes!  
They sure are Men, tho' Slaves, and colour'd Black;  
And what is Colour in the Eye of Heav'n?  
'Tis impious to suppose a Diff'rence made;  
Like you they boast sound Reason, feeling, Sense,  
And Virtues equally as great, and good,  
If Lesson'd rightly, and instructed well.  
Spare then your Tyranny, inhuman Men!  
And deal that Mercy you expect from Heav'n. (835-843)

At the reaping of the cane he adds that

While Peals of Gladness burst from ev'ry Mouth  
And ev'ry Heart beats Joy. There's not a Slave,  
In spite of Slav'ry, but is pleas'd, and gay;  
For this is their delightful, darling Time! (861-863).

In *Colonizing Nature*, Tobin points out that the disappearance of hard labor along with the “concept of bounty. . . erases the material conditions. . . of the local production of tropical commodities” (12). The slaves appear joyous and delighted in the poem rather than exhausted from their toils because of their benevolent planter/host and the gifts from the land.

As has been customary in the works set in the West Indies included in my study, Weekes professes his loyalty to England through praise. In the closing stanzas of the poem, he restates Barbados' contribution to England. The sugar-cane yields “large revenues to *Britannia's* Crown”

(1125) so vast that “Language cannot justify its Worth” (1124). He makes a plea to “Britons” his “Countrymen” (1131) to protect Barbados from enemies, unsurprisingly he specifically names the French (1142). With a prayer to close, Weekes asks: “Let far Barbados share your gen’rous Love, /And crown her Labours with Supreme Success, /But most of All, my Britain still Protect!” (1155-1157). He aligns himself and Barbados with the greater goal of the British empire.

“An Ode to George Haldane”

Francis Williams provides a rare look at poems authored by a black writer in the eighteenth-century Caribbean, and his life and work offer a much needed voice of a black, native Jamaican. He was born at the start of the eighteenth-century to James and Dorothy Williams, a free black couple, and by the time he wrote his ode, Jamaica was at the height of its profit-making. Though he is rarely read today, in “Who Was Francis Williams?” Vincent Carretta suggests that “at least into the early nineteenth century Francis Williams was arguably better known than [Olaudah] Equiano” (213). The primary source for Williams’ biography and poetry originates from Edward Long’s expansive *History of Jamaica* published in 1774, twelve years after Williams’s death, and as Carretta, Thomas Krise, and nineteenth-century writer, Henri Grégoire identify, Long’s judgments of Williams are biased in that he held strong prejudices towards Blacks (213-214). The story of how Williams came to be educated in England appears implausible to modern readers, and therefore is typically reprinted alongside of his poetry. I maintain the tradition by including the original version from Long’s *History*:

Francis was the youngest of three sons, and, being a boy of unusual lively parts,  
Was pitched upon to be the subject of an experiment, which, it is said, the Duke of  
Montague was curious to make, in order to discover, whether by proper cultivation, and a

regular course of tuition at school and the university, a Negroe might not be found as capable of literature as a white person. (Long 475-476; Caretta 216)

Williams proved to be successful in his studies and returned to Jamaica in hopes of taking a position with the government; however, because black men could not hold office, he instead began a school in his birth place of Spanish Town (Krise xlv).

Beyond its history, Williams' ode to George Haldane Williams has not been addressed in recent critical scholarship. Only Edward Long in *History of Jamaica* published in 1774 offers even a brief analysis of the work and one that cannot be considered impartial. Though he offers notes on his translation of Williams' text, Long's promise to refrain from "wilfully doing injustice to the original" falls short (Carretta 228):

There is, in this performance, a strain of the superlative panegyric, which is scarcely allowable even to a poet. *Buchanan* is compared with *Virgil*, and *Mr. Haldane* made equal to *Achilles*; nay, exalted still higher, for he is hailed the *Caesar* or emperor of *America*. The author has taken care, whilst he is dealing about his adulation, not to forget himself. His speech is represented erudite and modest; his heart is filled with wisdom; his morals are immaculate; and he abounds with patriotism and virtue. (231).

This brief commentary follows Williams' biography in which Long clearly shows his distaste for the writer: "In regard to the general character of the man, he was haughty, opinionated, looked down with sovereign contempt on his fellow Blacks, entertained the highest opinion of his own knowledge. . .and was fond of having great deference paid to him (227). Among his contemporaries, Williams is not only an unwelcomed poet, but also an unwelcomed man.

Despite the hurdles he faced in mid-eighteenth century Jamaica where the number of black slaves outnumbered all other groups, Williams fought for a place of authority. He praises

and welcomes the newcomer by utilizing a popular British poetic form. In his offering of the ode, he places himself in the position of host, welcoming Jamaica's new governor, George Haldane, though paradoxically he himself was denied acceptance of a government post. Haldane's rule was short lived; he governed Jamaica for three months before dying in office (D'Costa and Lalla 130). His death is a testament to the difficulty of adapting to the new environment, both physically and mentally. In the position of host, Williams grants himself the power to make his expectations known, and his choice to write 46-lines in Latin verse establishes that he has the intellectual capacity to equal, or surpass, his peers. Unlike Weekes's who takes an anti-intellectual stance in his opening, Williams use of Latin shows a conscious choice to prove his intelligence by demonstrating his mastery in poetic form.

The ode's opening personifies the land and portrays it as filled with pleasures. Jamaica is shown to be a place of leisure and invitation. The "live-long day" expresses "joy" and "cheer[s]" as "[n]ew harvests rise to glad th' enliven'd lawn" (3-4). Williams represents the land as self-sufficient, providing bounty in celebration of the rising sun. Meanwhile, "[w]ith the bright prospect blest, the swains repair/In social bands, and give a loose to care" (5-6). The country youth welcome new governance as the day invites new growth while those who have "malignant plan[s]" flee Jamaica under Haldane's watch.

In his position of host, Williams aligns himself with "Brittania's crown" (19), praising the governor and speaking to the conditions of slaves. Jean D'Costa and Barbara Lalla argue that the "physical condition of the slave might be vastly worse than that of the overseer, but both were prey to a profound sense of alienation and both strove to adapt or escape in the ways that have become peculiar Jamaican culture" (2). Williams speaks to the slavery's oppression to all involved: "Alike the master and the slave shall see/ Their neck reliev'd, the yoke unbound thee"

(11-12). These lines communicate Williams' hope that slaves will be alleviated from the heavy binds of the master's treatment. The land, however, is freed from blame: "Ere now our guiltless isle, her wretched fate/Had wept, and groan'd beneath th' oppressive weight/Of cruel woes" (13-15). Williams expects the new governor to bring peace and to release them from subjugation, repeatedly using images that refer to slavery's binds: "Oh! Blest of heroes, ablest to sustain/A falling people, and relax their chain" (21-22).

Despite taking a position of authority by taking it upon himself to welcome the new governor and speak for Jamaicans, Williams projects a poetic persona of an apologetic inferior in the offering to new governor:

Yet may you deign accept this humble song,  
Tho' wrapt in gloom, and from a falt'ring tongue;  
Tho' dark the stream on which the tribute flows,  
Not from the *skin*, but from the *heart* it rose.  
To all of human kind, benignant heaven  
(Since nought forbids) one common soul has given.  
This rule was 'stablish'd by th'Eternal Mind;  
Nor virtue's self, nor prudence are confin'd  
To *colour*; none imbues the honest heart;  
To science none belongs, and none to art. (53-62)

In this work, the colors depicted do not describe the landscape, but rather the poet who makes an argument for his equality of character. His tongue hesitates because the blackness of his skin causes him to be mistreated and deemed unworthy. He is doubly alienated because of an experiment that denies him the community of fellow blacks. Williams argues that his poetic



force comes from the heart, and that God-given attributes such as virtue and honesty are colorless.

Williams shifts from his address to Haldane and appeals to poetic inspiration. The black Muse is encouraged to be a fearless as he approaches the home of the new Jamaican ruler:

Oh! *Muse*, of blackest tint, why shrinks thy breast,  
Why fears t'approach the *Caesar* of the West!  
Dispel thy doubts, with confidence ascend  
The regal dome, and hail them for thy friend:  
Nor blush, altho' in garb funereal drest,  
*Thy body's white, tho' clad in sable vest.* (63-68)

Hospitality is employed in the above stanza, but the Muse takes the position as guest. Because of his black skin, he is afraid to visit Caesar's "regal dome" (66). The speaker encourages the Muse to be bold and approach the host as a friend without embarrassment because though his skin is black, his character exhibits virtuousness and purity.

In the epode, Williams works to justify his worth as a poet, a Jamaican, and a British citizen. He is "learned" (71), patriotic (73), and virtuous (74); yet, he must defend his identity and value as a peer to his countrymen:

In this prolific isle I drew my birth,  
And *Britain* nurs'd, illustrious through the earth  
This, my lov'd isle, which never more shall grieve,  
Whilst you our common friend, our father live. (77-80).

Williams draws a comparison between his relationship with his mixed identity to that of an idealized home. The mother country of Britain supports and loves the distant island and its inhabitants while Haldane keeps Jamaica safe.

Weekes' *Barbados* and Williams "Ode to George Haldane. . ." show that as early as the eighteenth-century, the Caribbean's image as a hospitable location had already begun to form in the literary imagination. Viewed more as a point of interest than having literary skill, Williams rarely received worthy literary recognition during his lifetime. Carretta suggests that what drove "Edward Long and other defenders of slavery to deny the poetic achievement of Francis Williams" was due to the fact that "[i]f even one person of African descent was capable of producing literature, the argument for African inferiority was challenged" (217-218). Though not due to skin color, Weekes' *Barbados*, seemed to be largely ignored in eighteenth-century literary circles (Krise 393). Both writers attempt to beautify their islands through poetic diction, but this attention to the aesthetic serves the purpose to attract travelers and to justify the worth of both poet and region. In the chapter that follows, I examine James Grainger's *The Sugar-Cane* whose long, georgic poem continued to uphold the image of the tropics as a paradise while instructing readers on the production of the Caribbean's largest and labor-intensive export.

## Chapter 6: James Grainger's *The Sugar-Cane*

Published in 1764, *The Sugar-Cane* has gained popularity in academic circles in the last several years, particularly because of its extensive attention to sugar cultivation, landscape, and slavery in the early stages of Caribbean colonialism. Grainger's poem imitates the classical georgic form with a division into four books that describe various aspects of agriculture associated with the growing of sugarcane. Following Virgil, the mundane details of agricultural life are described in language of grandeur. Also like Virgil whose theme in his *Georgics* moved beyond descriptions of agrarian life and into "the relationship of man and nature as a whole" (Gilmore 26), Grainger's *The Sugar-Cane* serves additional purposes. Amidst classical allusions, Grainger uses language indigenous to the various cultures of the region creating a hybrid work rooted in tradition and introducing the language of the emerging Anglo-Caribbean character. Grainger's aim is, in part, didactic, but his transcultural work not only familiarizes potential newcomers with sugarcane production, it also advocates respect towards the West Indies for its contribution to the wealth of the British Isles. *The Sugar-Cane*'s form creates a sense of familiarity to its British readers and introduces foreign images to promote travel and expansion. Reading though a lens of hospitality, I argue that Grainger's poem moves beyond that of instruction on the cultivation of the land and management of slaves and into the realm of shaping how readers should or would come to perceive this region.

Born and educated in Scotland, Grainger travelled to St. Kitts in 1759 when his student and friend, John Bourryau, invited him on a four-year tour and "promis[ed] to settle on him in return an income of £200 a year for life" (Gilmore 12). Though they planned on a Grand Tour through Europe, on his way to his first stop in St. Kitts, Grainger met Daniel Mathew Burt, "whose masculine-sounding Christian names were those of prominent Caribbean families to

whom she was related,” and they married upon their arrival (13). Grainger’s medical degree and experience as a doctor in the military landed him a position as plantation doctor. In 1756, the island “was reported to have 21, 891 slaves and 2, 713 white inhabitants,” and Grainger spent much of his time attending to slave illnesses (14-15). Despite his knowledge of sugar planting, he never gained enough wealth to purchase his own land though he owned a few slaves. In his introduction to *The Sugar-Cane*, James Gilmore notes that “[e]ighteenth-century medical men often were, or at least inspired to be, gentlemen of wide general culture as well as practitioners of a specific scientific discipline,” and Grainger enjoyed moderate literary success in London by publishing poems, translations, and reviews (9-12). At the completion of his georgic, he travelled to Scotland and England where he remained several months and was able to have *The Sugar-Cane* published before returning to St. Kitts (17-18). The Caribbean remained his home until his death in 1766.

Much of the scholarship on *The Sugar-Cane* focuses on Grainger’s attempt to bring recognition to the West Indies as a contributor to the British crown and to himself as a contributor to literature. In “The Inhospitable Muse: Locating Creole Identity in James Grainger’s *The Sugar-Cane*,” Beccie Puneet Randhawa connects hospitality to the building of national identity, viewing Grainger’s poem as an attempt to break down the image of the Creole planter “as corrupt, licentious, and enervated by excessive luxury” (69). Furthermore, she argues that the poem as a way for Grainger to appropriate himself back into the England’s “polite” society (69). Interested in the construction of Creole figures who return to their native land, Randhawa argues that *The Sugar-Cane* “aggressively reworks and revises the predominant Creole stereotype of the eighteenth-century by manipulating the conventions of an already existent code of cultural management: hospitality” (73). In “‘Wish You Were Here’: Exporting

England in James Grainger's *The Sugar-Cane*," Shaun Irlam views what he refers to as Grainger's "quirky" poem as "a conspicuous attempt to exhibit that cultural artifact called the British West Indies for metropolitan and colonial audiences" (379). He argues that Grainger used the georgic form as a way to "stabilize social relations and domesticate the foreign, Caribbean terrain" in a palatable and familiar format for British readers (379). Like Randhawa, Irlam notes Grainger's overt desire to be accepted by London's literary elite; Irlam reads the poem's mention of Samuel Johnson, Thomas Percy, and Charlotte Lennox as Grainger "beseeching their collective cultural authority to endorse his morally compromised landscape" (383). Irlam concludes that Grainger fails both to hide the "darker side of the colonial landscape" and to become a part of the literary elite (383).

Similarly, David Fairer argues for the importance of Grainger's poem, in "A Caribbean Georgic: James Grainger's *The Sugar-Cane*," declaring the work as deserving of "an honourable place as an early achievement of Caribbean literature. . . because it is a responsible poem with genuine artistic conscience" (28). Fairer gives more weight to Grainger's attempt of the unchartered task of the inclusion of medicinal remedies both from England and the tropics in his poem than to the artistic value of Grainger's results; however, his position convincingly supports the historical value in studying this work as a way to better understand the tropical region. In "All Apollo's Arts: Divine Cures, Afro-Caribbean Knowledge, and Healing Poetry in the British West Indies," Kelly Wisecup reveals how Grainger utilized various traditions—medical and religious—to "confront the challenges involved in using poetry to heal disease in the Americas" (300). These sources include "not only neoclassical poetic traditions and eighteenth-century medical philosophy but also forms of knowledge commonly repudiated as unscientific or superstitious, including Protestant religious beliefs and African medical and spiritual knowledge"

(300). Her position relies on the power of words in Protestant, African, and poetic traditions to enact healing, and she argues that Grainger understood that in these various traditions words could be “employed to cure disease” (301). Wisecup does not suggest that Grainger believed that words alone resulted in healing of sick bodies, but that he attempted to use poetry to argue against the view that the tropical climate could cause a loss of “the rational minds that Britons claimed their cool environment bestowed upon them” (309). Grainger’s poetry, therefore, “incorporated systems of knowledge that drew on connections between medicine and religion” to “soothe doubts regarding the status of colonists’ mind” (309). In this way, his words are performatives, enacting healing on both the minds of the colonists and the minds of the British readers. Building on the blending of cultures represented in Grainger’s work, my discussion avoids judgement of *The Sugar-Cane*’s literary value and focuses instead on how invitational language and scenes of hospitality in the West-Indian georgic shapes British national identity and cultural perceptions of Caribbean inhabitants.

From the poem’s opening, Grainger constructs a poetic persona of a knowledgeable and compassionate colonial who acts as laudatory guide. The trope of the benevolent farmer who grows crops in celebration of nature emerges, but Grainger’s voice is temperate and reasonable. He opens the Preface by expressing that however artistically flawed, because the Caribbean environment is vastly different from that of England, his poem “could not fail to enrich poetry with many new and picturesque images” (89). Grainger aims to advertise the region, masking the hardships of the labor by focusing on the moral and financial rewards. The heart of Grainger’s poem is a contradiction. Agriculture, built on slavery, is an inhospitable act; yet the bounty it reaps results in food to potentially share.

In Book I, Grainger presents St. Kitts as a welcoming space through language that expresses pleasure. The “[j]oy of the planter” (1.30) comes from the cultivation of sugar, “Supreme of Plants” (1.24), and if “happy Fate” (1.30) bestows the planter with fertile land, “Thrice happy he, to whom such fields are given!” (1.53). For this planter, “the Cane with little labour grows” (1.54). Grainger’s word choice presents the planter who is given the right planting conditions as not just mildly content but ecstatic with colonial life and works to establish the myth that “those who dwell in the tropics have nothing more to do than to gather nature’s bounty” (Tobin 4). The tropical landscape is a joyous place with the power to inspire strong emotions. Additionally, Grainger personifies the landscape to match the delight of its custodian. The fertile ground contains “glad soil” (1.88), and “the soul of vegetation wakes. /Pleas’d at the planter’s call, to burst on day” (1.52). He describes the type of soil “the Antillean Cane/Supremely loves” (1.138-139) and others that need more coddling “art may tutor to obtain its smile” (1.140). Grainger’s diction is invitational and entices readers to long for the enjoyment of agricultural life.

In *The Poetics of Empire*, John Gilmore addresses the perception of the Caribbean planter in the eighteenth-century and states that the

stereotypical view of ‘the West Indian’ was not of the plantation slave, but of the planter, as a colonial exotic, whose ability to command his slaves’ obedience to his every whim gave him autocratic ideas and habits which were supposedly un-British, and whose excessive wealth was potentially a corrupting influence. (35)

Grainger presents a counter image in his sympathetic portrait of Montano, a planter who arrives in the tropics a “poor outcast” (1.106), “an alien” (1.106), and a guest on the land with only his wife and infant beside him. His diligence brings him success with various small crops until he is

able to move on to sugar-cane which secures him wealth. Though Montano owns slaves, they are “[w]ell-fed, well-cloath’d all emulous to gain/their master’s smile, who treated them like men” (1.610-611). Montano is a benevolent planter who is admired by his “gang of sturdy slaves” (1.609). Significantly, Grainger shows Montano to be a generous host:

His gate stood wide to all; but chief the poor,  
The unfriended stranger, and the sickly, shar’d  
His prompt munificence: No surly dog,  
Nor surlier Ethiop, their approach debarr’d. (1.618-621)

Douglas Murray, in “Feasts of Reason and Charity: The Iconography of Hospitality in Eighteenth-Century English Poetry and Fiction,” notes that in biblical scriptures of both the Old and New Testaments, “hospitality is an important feature of the perfect cities to be established in the future” (1405). He adds that one motif of hospitality, found in the books of Isaiah and Revelations, is that of the “open gate” (1405). Grainger ties the image to Montano, showing him to be like the traveler in the good Samaritan parable who teaches to “love thy neighbor” (The King James Bible, Luke 10: 25-37).<sup>21</sup> Montano advises his son to “[b]e pious, be industrious, be humane” (1.630), and these declared attributes, Grainger bestows on the model West Indian planter, subsequently working towards reshaping the stereotype. The poem bases its moral claims in the belief that God sanctions the colonial project.

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<sup>21</sup> In the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus teaches to love “thy neighbor as thyself” (Luke 10:27). A lawyer questions: “And who is my neighbor?” (10:29) to which Jesus replies: “A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. /And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. /And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. /But a certain Sa-mar’-i-tan as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, /And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him. / And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. /Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves? /And [the lawyer] said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then Jesus said to him, Go, and do thou likewise” (Luke 10:28-37).



In his preface, Grainger promises to share the details on sugar-cane cultivation, and though he opens by inviting readers to experience the welcoming land, he later introduces its unwelcomed guests. Grainger, in the voice of the Muse, appeals to his deceased friend, Shenstone, to “lend a patient ear, /And weep at woes unknown to Britain’s Isle” (2.23-24) before he tells of the sugar-cane’s dangerous intruders. His assurance that Shenstone will “weep; for pity chose [his] breast, /With taste and science, for their soft abode” (2.25-26) artfully encourages readers to respond sympathetically to the afflictions of their distant compatriots. Planters who grow on “the upland sugar-groves” (2.34) must beware of intruders from the “monkey-nation” (2.35) who “[i]n silent parties, they descend by night, /And posting watching sentinels, to warn/When hostile steps approach; with gambols, they/Pour o’er the Cane-grove” (2.36-39). The monkey trespassers are hazardous to the health of the plantation and the wealth of the planter. Grainger’s recommends that “faithful dogs” (2.50), animals often associated with protecting one’s home, be used to chase the thieves off of the land.

Rats are a second family of unwelcomed guests, but they instead invade the “low-land Cane” (2.63). Grainger recommends cats, another domesticated animal, as one way to reduce their numbers. Several critics have pointed out that Grainger was good-naturedly teased by his literary friends Thomas Percy, Samuel Johnson, Sir Joshua Reynolds for editing his original choice of “mice” to “rats” as a way to sound “more dignified” (Boswell 2:453-454).<sup>22</sup> Though seemingly good-natured, Grainger’s final editorial choice was to omit both words in favor of the phrase “the whisker’d vermine-race” in the body of the poem (2.62). In his extensive notes on the poem, Grainger tells readers that rats “are not natives of America but came by shipping from

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<sup>22</sup> See John Gilmore’s *The Poetics of Empire: A Study of James Grainger’s The Sugar-Cane*, Shaun Irlam’s “‘Wish You Were Here’”: Exporting England in James Grainger’s *The Sugar-Cane*, and Beccie Puneet Randhawa’s “The Inhospitable Muse: Locating Creole Identity in James Grainger’s *The Sugar-Cane*.”

Europe” and that “cane-rats” are “nourishing” and a favorite delicacy of the slaves (182). Even the scraps of rats, Grainger adds, “are publicly sold in the markets of Jamaica” (183). The most efficient way to rid the cane of these outsiders, he writes, is to mix arsenic with cassada root and spread the mixture around the perimeter of the cane field. The “greedy” rats (2.87) will “swift devour/Their palatable death” (2.88-89). Grainger offers a flour and plant mixture as safer deterrent, that causes the rats to “colonize some distant vale” (2.98) when they inhale its “deadly scent” (2.97).

Furthermore, Grainger utilizes images of home and hospitality when referring to other unwanted visitors: “Mosquitos, [and] sand-flies, seek the shelter’d roof, /And with fell rage the stranger-guest assail” (1.334.335). Most weeds are also unwelcome as are various diseases to which Grainger offers ameliorants. In his reading of *The Sugar-Cane*, Rusert writes that the “sugar plantation emerges in such sections of the poem as a perpetual war zone, where ‘monkey-nations,’ ‘humble weeds,’ and ‘insect tribes’ continually attack and assault the plantation” (364). He argues that Grainger “transforms the plantation into a sovereign nation, a metonym for imperial Britain, whose control over the West Indies is continually put into jeopardy by adjacent colonial powers” (364). Rusert compares the monkey invasion to “colonial narratives that focused on the maroons’ sinister occupation of mountains surrounding the plantations and attacks on the planter elite” (365). Following this line of thinking, as invaders of European import, the image of rats devoured by slaves provides an image of the macabre.

Grainger directly addresses Creoles in Book III and encourages them to remain home in the tropics rather than leave for Europe. The idyllic portrait of the West Indies presented in the lines directly preceding his entreaty to Creoles advertises the region as paradisiacal, with

numerous sounds to delight listeners. Sounds familiar to British ears, such as the “herald-lark” (3.558) are absent in the tropics, but the island’s natural music is worthy of celebration:

Yet musical those little insects hum,  
That hover round us, and to reason’s ear,  
Deep, moral truths convey; while every beam  
Flings on them transient tints, which vary when  
They wave their purple plumes; yet musical  
The love-lorn cooing of the mountain-dove  
That woos to pleasing thoughtfulness the soul;  
But chief the breeze, that murmurs through yon canes,  
Enchants the ear with tunable delight. (3.568-576)

Grainger carries readers into the experience of the Caribbean’s sounds that encourage contemplation. He utilizes words that contradict the region’s association with passion. Terms such as “reason,” “moral truths,” and “thoughtfulness of soul” present the West Indian as reflective and philosophical, an image that contrast with the stereotype of the West Indian planter.

At the close of this scene, Grainger repeatedly questions Creoles and betrays his purpose of using poem to lure planters to remain in the Caribbean. He asks: “While such fair scenes adorn these blissful isles, / Why will their sons, ungrateful, roam abroad? /Why spend their opulence in other climes?” (3.577-579). A lack of gratitude shows a breach in the hospitable contract between God who offers the welcoming land and the planters who reap the rewards of wealth. Grainger continues to employ the rhetorical strategy of question and response, a technique still used in contemporary advertisements, and dedicates over one hundred lines to the

purpose of promoting the region to the Creoles he addresses. He first appeals to patriotism and military courage by asking: “Does martial ardour fire your generous veins?” (3.586). In response, he uses attributes such as “brave,” “victory,” “glory,” and “pride” to fuel the spirit of those who are moved by nationalistic causes (3.589-600).

Alternatively, to those drawn to opulence, he asks: “Or are ye fond of rich luxurious cates? —/Can aught in Europe emulate the pine, /Or fruit forbidden, native of your isles?” (3.601-603).<sup>23</sup> In the eighteenth century, pineapples symbolized hospitality, exoticism, and luxury, and the transposition of the words “fruit” and “forbidden” fails to veil the allusion to the biblical paradise of Eden and its tempting fruit. Grainger continues to list items along this vein and argues that Europe cannot compete with the tropics’ incomparable turtle (a delicacy), the “delicious. . . Jew-fish,” and the “rich[ly] flavour[ed]” crab (3.606-610). According to Grainger, “[e]ven Britain’s vintage,” or wine, improves as it gains “strength and flavor. . . [i]n this delicious clime” (3.615-620). The wealth of successful planters allows for indulgences of affluence that grant them power: “the Cane/Wafted to every quarter of the globe. /Makes the vast produce of the world your own” (3.620-622). As Gilmore points out, Grainger’s poem works to promote the West Indies contribution to the wealth of England and to its power (29). Though these lines speak to the Creole planter, they voice a reminder to English readers by extension that the region is part of the collective.

Grainger returns to the aesthetic pleasures of the tropics when he asks: “Or rather, doth the love of nature charm; /Its mighty love your chief attention claim?” (3.623-624). He urges Creoles to “[I]eave Europe” (3.625) and travel to the Caribbean where nature’s “savage

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<sup>23</sup> cates - “delicacies; provisions or victuals bought (as distinguished from, and usually more delicate or dainty than, those of home production); in later use, sometimes merely = victuals, food” (Oxford English Dictionary Online).

loneliness. . . reigns” (3.627). Grainger turns to images of abundance: “unnumbered trees” (3.630) and “sulphurs, ores, what earths and stones abound!” (3.630,635). The landscape has the power to incite “joy” and “energy of soul” (3.642), but also philosophical musings and empirical knowledge. Through experience with nature, “[w]ith candid search, /Examine all the properties of things; Immense discoveries soon crown your toil, /Your time will soon repay” (3.627-640). He closes his list by likening Creoles to “conquerors” (3.654) and explorers of the land. Like Behn in *Oroonoko* but more directly, Grainger advertises the region through imagery, luring the Creoles he addresses and potential travelers to the Caribbean.

In Book IV, Grainger approaches the subject of slaves and presents himself as a humanist by encouraging hospitable treatment; however, *The Sugar-Cane* does not speak to the eradication of slavery. Grainger attempts to minimize the mistreatment of slaves through poetic diction and pastoral images, and scenes of hospitality are born out of the labor. The section opens with descriptions of slaves by region, listing positive and negative traits to determine the best slaves for types of occupation. For example, he portrays those from the Congo as unsuitable for the fields but can be “train’d/To household offices” (4.51-52), while those from the Gold Coast “Such [as] the Papaws” are “of negroes far the best” (4.62-63) for laboring the fields. He continues with tips on how to choose a slave, advising against those who are old because “[w]ith heart-felt anguish, they lament their home” and often end their servitude “by suicide” (4.68-71). Rather than pause to lament this miserable end, Grainger moves into physical clues for determining a slave’s health and further warning to avoid those from “Cormantee” whose “breed too generous for the servile field;/They born to freedom in their native land, /Chuse death before dishonourable bonds” (4.82-84). Grainger never mentions Behn’s fictional Coromantin prince,

Oroonoko, but his description of slaves from this region align with the royal slave's history and continues to uphold the image of the noble Afro-Caribbean slave.

Grainger instructs planters to act hospitably towards recently purchased slaves by feeding them well with "hearty food" and healing their illnesses with "pleasing fruit" and "turtle" (4.146), a favorite of the British travelers and considered a delicacy. Of labor, he suggests little:

. . . Let gentle work,

Or rather playful exercise, amuse

The novel gang: and far be angry words;

Far ponderous chains; and far disheartening blows. — (4.131-134)

Grainger refers to this modified welcoming as "seasoning" and suggests that this time of "easy labour" last a year (4.158-162). He urges planters to "let humanity prevail" (4.210) and consider the life the slave may have left behind. As Derrida notes in *Of Hospitality*, there is no hospitality "without finitude, without sovereignty of oneself over one's home" (55), and being hospitable allows the planter/host to maintain control over the guest/slave. Yet though he often recommends gentle treatment, Grainger acknowledges that force may be necessary: "And some I've known, so stubborn is their kind, /Whom blows, alas! Could win alone to toil" (4.209-210). In these lines the association of the slave as guest cannot sustain itself, and the host reverts back to master.

Additionally, hospitality offered by planters to slaves is a form of false hospitality in that the hosts are disingenuous in their offerings. The slaves are manipulated into passive servitude by an unreliable sense of trust motivated by selfish means. The planter/host's goals are multiple: (1) to acclimate the slave to harsh conditions to avoid a loss of investments; (2) to maintain a sense of power in the host position; and (3) to be viewed as a benevolent sovereign by outsiders who view West Indian planters as barbaric. Grainger further encourages planters to allow the

“faithful slave [to] erect/His sheltered mansion near; and with his dog, /His loaded gun, and cutless, guard the whole” plantation (4.482-484), but again this offer of land is motivated by false charity. Welcoming the slave to a location near the planter, even providing the possibility that the slave with his own home can also play the role of the host, still serves the planter’s purpose. This faithful slave is employed to prevent “negro-fugitives, who skulk ‘mid rocks/And shrubby wilds, in bands will soon destroy/Thy labourer’s honest wealth” (4.485-487). With a home, slaves appear to have some semblance of power and autonomy, but they are still property and under the power of the planter.

In *Colonizing Nature: The Tropics in British Arts and Letters, 1760-1820*, Beth Fowkes Tobin identifies the trope of bounty. This pastoral trope, she argues, is used “to underscore the ease with which plants grow in the West Indies” and “suggest[s] that slaves. . . do not labor. . . but merely reap what nature generously bestows” (74-75). Tobin examines the concept of bounty at it applies to Grainger’s poem and argues that

[i]n their attempt to valorize intellectual labor, [Grainger and other] georgic poets employed the trope of bounty to undo the power of direct producers—the peasants, slaves, and natives who grew plants and raised animals and who possessed a kind of knowledge that was based on practices specific to a region or cultural group. . . (32)

She attributes georgics, of which she specifically names *The Sugar-Cane*, with participating in “erasing indigenous knowledge and peasant technology surrounding plant reproduction” (33).

Tobin rightly identifies the trope of bounty, but I suggest that it serves an additional purpose for Grainger. Just as in Behn’s *Oroonoko*, Southerne’s *Oroonoko*, and Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*, the descriptions of bounty and abundance visualize the land as a welcoming space, enticing reader to

visit the region. The erasure of indigenous knowledge makes the British occupation of the region as hosts less obviously transgressive.

Lorna Burns, in “Landscape and Genre in the Caribbean Canon: Creolizing the Politics of Place in Paradise,” argues that the trope of the Caribbean landscape as paradise is a result of “the appropriation of the landscape itself by the colonial imagination and its reformulation as the site of Europe’s lost Eden” (20). Burns argues that “those colonial discourses which sought to depict the Caribbean as an idyllic, fecund paradise. . . conceal historical legacies and their role in shaping both environment and people” (20). She accuses Grainger of using paradisiacal imagery “to erase the hardships of plantation life by evoking the lazy languor of life in the tropics” (20). However, like Edward Brathwaite, she credits Grainger’s poem with beginning the tradition of engaging in a process of “creolization of poetic representations of place and paradise” by “relocating familiar literary conceits to the New World” (21). As my study shows, this process has been prepared for by earlier texts. For example, Southerne’s *Oroonoko* makes Behn’s version less violent and transgressive, and Grainger makes Southerne’s representation idyllic.

Without question, Grainger forwards an idyllic view of the region by offering numerous images that appeal to the senses. The streams are “arrested with enchanting song” (1.70), “ten thousand blooms, /Which, with their fragrant scents, perfume the air” (1.372-373), and trees “of endless green, enormous size, /Wondrous in shape, to botany unknown” (1.381-382) fill the landscape. The poem also highlights food, another important aspect of hospitality. In addition to the cane, Grainger lists local varieties of available fruit: “Wholesome food the ripened guava yields” (1.38); “sweet-smell’d cassia” (1.36); “regal apple” (1.419)<sup>24</sup>; “green avocato” (1.420); “lemon, orange, and the lime/Amid their verdant umbrage, countless gold;/Till yellow plantanes

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<sup>24</sup> pineapple



bend the unstain'd bough/With cooked clusters/prodigally full" (1.427-431); and "oranges erect/Their shapely beauties, and perfume the sky" (1.501-502). Even the local privet plant's "white flowers rival the first drifts of snow/On Grampia's piny hills" (1.515-517), mountains located in central Scotland. Furthermore, Grainger writes the slaves are contributing to the utopian image of the region:

Thy Negroe-train, (in linen lightly wrapt,)
Who know that painted Iris girds the sky,
(Aerial arch, which Fancy loves to stride!)
Disperse, all-jocund, o'er the long-hoed land." (1.396-399)

In his notes to the *The Sugar-Cane*, Gilmore notes that Iris "is the goddess of the rainbow in classical mythology" (231). These poetic lines suggest that under the colorful sky and amidst the smells and sounds of the landscape, the slaves, themselves part of the aesthetic appeal wrapt in linen, are happily work the land.

In "Plantation Ecologies: The Experimental Plantation in and against James Grainger's *The Sugar-Cane*," Britt Rusert examines "how the ecologically enclosed, experimental plantation was both articulated and challenged through tropes and forms of colonial poetry" (345), and, she argues, while Grainger portrays the plantation as a place for medical, scientific, and ecological experimentation, the protected and decidedly British land enclosure (plantation) and the literary enclosure (the Georgic form) ultimately breaks down and reveals itself to be a "fragile colonial fantasy, always on the verge of being 'infected' and creolized by indigenous plants, animals, and diseases, as well as by Africans both within and outside of the plantation" (346). However, I argue that it is just this creolization that Grainger supports in *The Sugar-Cane*. Grainger writes:

In plants, in beasts, in man's imperial race,

An alien mixture meliorates the breed;  
Hence Canes, that sickened dwarfish on the plain,  
Will shoot with giant-vigour on the hill.  
Thus all depends on all; so God ordains.  
Then let not man for selfish ends,  
(Britain, remember this important truth;)  
Presume the principle to counteract  
Of universal love; for God is love,  
And wide creation shares alike his care. (1.458-467)

Like Homi Babha's concept of hybridity that results in a new space that acts as a cultural mixing spot, a place of transformation, and a place that calls established categories into question, Grainger not only understands that "alien mixture" strengthens the health of the sugar-cane, but also that of the British nation, including Scotland, Ireland, and the Caribbean Islands. Words such as "universal love" and "share" encourage hospitality and once again harkens back to the biblical lesson to love thy neighbor and once again showing that God endorsement of the colonial project.

*The Sugar-Cane* functions as an invitational text; by sharing his knowledge of Caribbean life, Grainger invites British readers into the world of the planter. However small the location appears in geographical dimension, its role in Britain's wealth and its contribution through exports to the pleasures of the British people are immeasurable. Gilmore rightly suggests that Grainger "constantly reminds his readers that Britain is more than England, and that the British empire is more than the British Isles" (33). As he points out, Grainger's Scottishness "meant that he belonged to a nation which was—particularly in the aftermath of the 1745 Jacobite

rebellion—to some extent a victim of cultural imperialism in the same way as the sugar colonies in the Caribbean” (33). Through images of hospitality, Grainger, the poetic host, aligns the region with the British Isles. In his invocation, he expresses his hope to please “Imperial George,” (1.20) who took the British throne four years prior to the poem’s publication, and acknowledges the need to pay homage. The text is Grainger’s effort to show that the region is ready to move from “guest” in Britain’s home to an essential position in England, and Grainger attempts to become part of the host’s home, removing himself and other West Indian planters from outsider status.

Joseph Addison, in his “Essay on Virgil’s *Georgics*,” describes what he views as a significant difference between the pastoral and the georgic form. He writes that “the speakers in them are a quite different character, since the precepts of husbandry are not to be delivered with the simplicity of a ploughman, but with the simplicity of a poet” (154). In using the georgic form, Grainger aims to join a literary lineage; he not only aligns himself with Virgil, but also with John Dryden who translated Virgil’s work, and Alexander Pope who had also imitated Virgil’s form.<sup>25</sup> Grainger’s subject position is that of careful observer; he presents himself as a poet, doctor, and scholar. He identifies as British subject who, like Crusoe, travels to the Caribbean and reports back to his nation. Weekes instead rejects tradition and, in his preface, refers to John Milton and Edward Young to state his departure. He discourages the use of Latin and prefers what he views as plain language. Though he is anti-French, because he is Barbadian by birth, his connection to England is less overt than Grainger’s. Lastly, as a black man and social experiment, Williams’ position is that of both insider and outsider. Part of him belongs to the Caribbean, and yet he has ties to Britain where he was educated. Like Grainger, he aims to be

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<sup>25</sup> See Pope’s “Messiah: A Sacred Eclogue in Imitation of Virgil’s ‘Pollio.’”

viewed as an intellectual, yet his black skin prevents him from being fully accepted. *Barbados*, “An Ode to George Haldane,” and *The Sugar-Cane* demonstrate that poetry from the Caribbean, like the other genres in this study, participated in the creation of the long lasting images in British perceptions of the region and its people.

## CONCLUSION

Representations of the West Indies in eighteenth-century British literature reveal how British society viewed the region with respect to the identity of the British national identity. Reading through the lens of hospitality uncovers an understanding of the expectations of the host and guest and a larger picture of how the British shaped their expanding relationship with the transatlantic world as well as who fit into the category of stranger/foreigner through the cultural blending of the West Indies. Clear lines of distinction of who is host and who is guest blurred as the colonial project continued to grow, and borrowing a phrase from Mirielle Rosello's *Postcolonial Hospitality: The Immigrant as Guest*, "a clash of hospitality between cultures" began to appear. Unique to the experience in the tropics that resulted from colonization is that the clash was most often between those people with a shared identity—those who were members of the British Empire. However, an examination of the literature reveals that Creoles and others who made the Caribbean their home were often identified as outsiders. Hospitality connects those who inhabit the tropical space to those living in England because it requires a shared moral foundation and cultural practice.

Section one of the dissertation examined what hospitality revealed about the region by looking at fictional prose works of Aphra Behn, Daniel Defoe, and William Pittis. Behn's *Oroonoko* revealed three narrative patterns that repeated in the later texts of the region: the host welcomes the outsider, the land serves as witness, and the arrival of the guest initiates a realignment of the British subjectivity. I examined three scenarios that uncovered the perversion of the cultural practice of hospitality as well as its more elevated use. The Captain's manipulative

intentions behind his invitation to Oroonoko and his men debase the hospitable practices of entertainment and welcoming. The mistreatment of his guests lead to their enslavement and feeds into the fear of the West Indian region as corrupt. In the hospitable scenarios that follow Oroonoko's capture, Trefry and the narrator hold the position of hosts and present a counter-image to the Captain. Also a part of the colonial project, Trefry and the narrator align with the image of the British citizen as moral and honorable, and their treatment of their guest, Oroonoko, works to further establish this identity.

In Behn's text, the West Indian landscape acts as witness; however, the witness only lessons the chance of violence between the guest and host and cannot prevent it completely. Aboard the Captain's ship, the landscape is shut out, and the host's power remains unchallenged. Once on land, the role of the witness in the guest and host exchange is enacted. The landscape acts as witness in the sense that Oroonoko's royal distinction combined with the Edenic quality of the landscape elevate him in Trefry's and the narrator's eyes. The witness ultimately fails to protect Oroonoko from Byam and the other planters who view Oroonoko as nothing more than a slave.

The hospitable patterns repeat in the prose works of Defoe and Pittis. Unarguably, Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* holds the position as the most widely read work in this study, and paired with the little known *The Jamaica Lady* provides an interesting pair for comparison. Crusoe's singular status on the island for much of the text lead him to an experience of providential grace through his position as guest with both God and the natural environment (a part of God's expression) as hosts. He learns by example, and as a result, attempts to act as a good host to Friday. In contrast, *The Jamaica Lady* presents the tropics as possessing forces of corruption. The hot, Jamaican climate encourages licentious behavior in women rather than a

Christian resolve. Collectively, the works in section one indicate that prose fiction addresses the violence, the loneliness, and the fear associated with the West Indian region in the eighteenth-century, and unlike the drama and poetry that follow, present these issues graphically.

Section two explored how drama presents the colonial experience through an examination of hospitality in the works of Thomas Southerne, Richard Cumberland, and John Gay. Each of these works were well-known to eighteenth-century British public whether on the stage, or as in the case of Gay's *Polly*, initially unperformed. This genre reveals an increasing concern with the view of the West Indies as having loose moral codes while working to establish a counter-narrative against already established stereotypes. Patterns of hospitality that emerge from the works of drama include: the inhospitable British host, the hospitable Other, hospitality as a determinate of marriageability, and the realignment with British identity. The dramatic genre shifts the position of witness to the audiences who simultaneously judge and are implicated by what is presented (or intended to be presented) on the stage.

Southerne's *Oroonoko* distinguishes between hospitality for advantage and that without expectation of advantage. This distinction appears with various levels of subtlety in the *The West Indian* and *Polly*. Additionally, though these works openly critique social issues, the playwrights utilize comedy in their portrayals of the region. Southerne's inclusion of the comedic plot of the Welldon sisters' search for husbands into Behn's tale of the royal prince provides two perspectives of the West Indian region that were clearly a part of the British perception, one which included wealthy widows, available men, and uncouth social manners amidst the backdrop of slavery and plantation life. Unlike Behn, however, Southerne partially conceals the brutality of slavery. Oroonoko dies a clean death by his own hand rather than experiencing the diabolical torture of the colonizers.

Cumberland's comedy, *The West Indian*, targets perceptions of the Creole, and as in Southerne's work, hospitality acts as determinate of character. The stereotype of the West Indian Creole as controlled by passion as opposed to reason becomes an eccentricity to be molded rather than a permanent flaw in character. The Creole, Belcour, gives without expectation of advantage or even acknowledgement and shows himself to be worthy of inclusion thereby removing him from outsider status. In the *The Beggar's Opera*, the prequel to *Polly*, Gay uses humor and irony to present the corruption within London's society and politics. His sequel continues to jab at the contradictions and moral looseness of its characters and by extension the British Empire. The image of the West Indies that emerges from the three representative works in this section is one that despite the wild, abundance of the natural environment, on a human level bears a close resemblance to England.

In section three, I examined three eighteenth-century poems that focus on the Caribbean region through the lens of hospitality. The patterns that appear in the poetry—language of invitation, images of abundance, and the erasure of slave hardships—show a major shift from the way the West Indian region was represented in the other genres. The Caribbean remains the Edenic site created by God's hand; however, the poetry serves a strong, invitational purpose. Weekes brags of the island's excessive beauty and incomparable offerings and negates the climates power to alter the behavior of moral women. In *Barbados*, both the young and the matronly women are chaste and virtuous; they are model wives and morally driven. Most strikingly, Weekes shows the slaves to take pleasure in the reaping of the sugar-cane, and the conditions of slavery are greatly diminished. Grainger portrays the slaves as part of the experience of sugar cultivation similarly, though because of his choice of form and his medical background, he addresses sicknesses both physical and mental. Yet, Grainger encourages



hospitable treatment of slaves and shows the land as bountiful and minimizes slave labor. Even Williams, though he speaks to the condition of the slaves and hopes for change, his images are contained to that of “oppressive weight” and “cruel woes” (lines 14-15) rather than a portrayal of the blatant horrors.

Rather than function as merely poems of entertainment, all three works act to persuade readers to view the West Indies as a necessary component of the British empire and the West Indian character as respectable. Weekes’ preface betrays a lack emotional restraint, but through his pledged commitment to the British empire and his declarations of religious faith, he attempts to show Creoles like himself in a positive light, and Williams and Grainger’s poetic personas as educated and refined appear purposeful. In his ode, Williams offers invitation to Jamaica’s new governor in 46-lines of Latin verse, while Grainger models his 2, 562-line poem after Virgil’s classic *The Georgics*. All three authors called the Caribbean home for all or a portion of their lives; both Weekes and Williams were natives to the tropics, and though Grainger was born in Scotland, he resided in St. Kitts at the time he wrote *The Sugar-Cane*. Certainly, this vantage point affected their perceptions and representations of the region.

My examination of hospitality’s role across genres ultimately reveals a connection between British identity and the social laws of the treatment of the guest/Other. British involvement in the colonial project meant that the British people must consider the effects of increased globalization and the breach in moral codes that partaking in the slave trade demanded. I have shown that the literature that represented the West Indian region actively participated in the shaping of British identity and of the way the Caribbean is still perceived today, one of paradise that coexists with capitalistic desires, labor, and a brutal history.

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