THE REPRESENTATIONS OF MUSLIMS ON THE ENGLISH RESTORATION STAGE

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My dissertation proposes that the representations of Islam and its culture in British Restoration drama were strongly connected with domestic politics and religion. This reading offers a counterpoint to reading drama of the period as solely a historically tense relationship between England and the Muslim world. On the surface, the plays under consideration in my study tackle issues about conflicts that appear far removed from English politics. However, Restoration political playwrights skillfully used the characters and events of their plays as allegories of relevant internal crises in England and employed an increasingly complex understanding of Islam to contribute to discourses concerning questions about the Royal court and issues of religion and politics.

Although critics have devoted much scholarship to the study of the depictions of Islam and Muslims in early modern drama, my dissertation tackles the issue from a different perspective. While scholars like Nabil Matar and Jonathan Burton have examined the complex representations of Muslims on the early modern stage by examining the historical encounters between England and the Islamic world, my dissertation examines such representations against the domestic political and religious background of that era that influenced the works of the playwrights under consideration.

The dissertation highlights the interplay between Restoration playwrights' depictions of Islam and their contemporary religious and political allegiances. I will be alluding to topical references in Orrery's *The Tragedy of Mustapha* (1665), Settle's *The Empress of Morocco* (1673) and *Ibrahim the Illustrious Bassa* (1676), Behn's *Abdelazer*, or *the Moors Revenge* (1677), Whitaker's *The Conspiracy*, or, *The Change of Government* (1680), Settle's

The Heir of Morocco (1682), Southerne's *Loyal Brother* (1682), and Dryden's *Don Sebastian* (1689). The plays under study were composed at crucial historical points for Restoration England and as such offer significant ideological commentary on their evolution and resolutions.

The selection of plays under consideration are thematically grouped into three categories in order to examine how their domestic and topical backgrounds are represented through their depiction of Islam and Muslims on the stage. These categories are: the succession question, sexual politics of the court, and religious schism. The aim of such division is to develop a better understanding of how the playwrights' concerns with their own politics and religion affected how and which Muslims characters and themes were represented on the Restoration stage.

My understanding of the relationship between the cultural milieu and the literary works will be developed and analyzed within the framework of New Historicism. I find New Historicism useful for my study as it deals with examining the social, political, and religious factors that participated in shaping the image of the Muslim on the Restoration stage. However, my approach departs from that of Greenblatt in the sense that it avoids the common "arbitrary connectedness" of New Historicists. By including as much as possible of the social practices and events of the period, my dissertation will avoid the "selectiveness" or mechanical matching of New Historicism that selects only texts that serve the purpose or the major argument of its writer.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This study discusses the relationship between the representations of Islam and Islamic culture in British Restoration drama and domestic politics and religion. In other words, the dissertation deals with the playwrights' allegorical use of the Muslim character and setting as a means to comment on British domestic politics. By analyzing a group of representative plays of that era, I argue that, collectively, the image of the Muslim on stage was strongly connected with how Restoration playwrights depicted their own social and political concerns about Britain.

The large body of criticism available on the representations of Muslims in early modern English literature assumes that the negative – often sexually – representations associated with the Muslim is a result of contemporary hostilities against Muslims. In fact, the majority of studies in this field – some of which are discussed later in this section – understand early modern dramatization of Muslim figures only in relation to the historically tense relationship between the East and the West. Such readings provide a misleading understanding of how the West imagined various Muslim people and their culture. While scholars like Nabil Matar and Jonathan Burton interpret the complex representations of Muslims on early modern stage in terms of the historical encounters between England and the Islamic world, my dissertation examines such representations only insofar as they are code for the domestic political and religious crises of that era. Therefore, this work fills the gap in the body of criticism available on the images of Muslims in the Restoration era. It highlights the importance of paying attention to how we can read Early Modern drama in terms of the internal political dimension of British politics.

The study pays special attention to the playwrights' political and religious background that helps in understanding the deeper meanings of literary production. My argument is based

on addressing relevant topical references in plays such as Elkanah Settle's *The Empress of Morocco* (1673), and William Whitaker's *The Conspiracy*, or, *The Change of Government* (1680). The plays I chose were composed at crucial historical points for Restoration England and their content was clearly influenced by the political and religious debates of the period. In fact, the influence of that milieu actively shaped the structure and topics of Restoration plays.

The general term "Muslim" that I use in the dissertation consists of sub-categories like "Moor," "Turk," and "Persian." Unlike many early modern English dramatists who used these terms interchangeably, Restoration playwrights seemed to be more aware of the distinctive characteristics of these Muslim groups. Throughout this dissertation, "Moors" signify Muslim inhabitants of North Africa and parts of Europe, i.e. the Iberian Peninsula. The term "Turk" designates the members of the Ottoman Empire and a variety of ethnic groups who served in its armies, specifically the Ottoman, Anatolian, Arab, or even "Moor" and Muslim. Lastly, the term "Persian" or "Persian Muslim" refers to Muslim inhabitants of the Safavid Empire which, at its height, included modern Iran and parts of Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Parts of Turkey.

Thematically, the dissertation will be arranged according to three main topics that are revealed through the representation of Muslims and the Muslim world in these plays: the succession question, the sexual politics of the court, and the internal religious conflict. The first topic of my dissertation concerns how Restoration playwrights configured the succession question by their use of Muslim characters and plots as allegories in order to reflect the increasing partisanship in the English political nation concerning this question. The second chapter examines the domestic political implications in Roger Boyle's *The Tragedy of Mustapha* (1665), William Whitaker's *The Conspiracy or Change of Government* (1680), Elkanah Settle's *The Heir of Morocco (1682*), and Thomas Southerne's *The Loyal Brother* or *The Persian Prince* (1682). As the study of the plays under consideration shows, Restoration

playwrights skillfully chose plots for their works that reflected the fierce political crises of their time. In fact, the succession was a major political concern from the late 1670s to the death of Charles II in 1685 as Parliament strove to exclude the king's brother and heir, James, from succession to the throne of England because he was Roman Catholic. As an example, Settle's *The Empress of Morocco* (1673) explores the bitter consequences of the lack of a clear political settlement in regards to the succession. Settle produced his play in a time of heated political debates around the country's most likely heir. Birchwood writes:

> Settle's play seems particularly attuned to the vulnerability of the succession to what the queen mother herself describes as 'A Masculine heart linkt with a Female Hand.' (V.i.135); uncannily concurrent with the play's opening run, such fears were substantiated with the announcement of James' marriage to the Catholic princess Mary of Modena. As a spectacular and hugely successful portrayal of intrigue, treason and illegitimate kingship, *The Empress of Morocco* is an early response to the Exclusion Crisis that would gather increasing momentum during the remaining years of the decade. (159)

The topics discussed in the plays written by Boyle, Whitaker, Settle, and Southerne, are key points in understanding the interplay between playwrights' treatment of Muslim characters on stage and the contemporary ideology of the age. In fact, the political unrest that resulted from the debate over the succession issue revealed a general tendency to use more geopolitically distant figures and plots, specifically ones with Oriental Muslim settings, to comment on one of the major crises of the Restoration period. English playwrights employed this coded discourse in their attempts to implicitly deliver advice, criticism, and commentary on the major concerns of the political nation. The second chapter of this study examines how Restoration playwrights used their historical Muslim sources both to heroicize or demonize certain Restoration political figures, and, at the same time, to distance themselves from any

hostile reactions by their political opponents. The complex parallels the playwrights established between the crises in Islamic countries and England's succession crisis were still clear enough to be understood by the majority of Restoration spectators who were used to making connections between dramatic production and the contemporary political scene. As Bridget Orr explains, Restoration audiences "expected heroic poems to be allegorical, offering several layers of meaning," and this supports the view in this dissertation that Restoration theatregoers equally recognized the fact that such works contained more than its surface meaning (11). In fact, English playwrights found in Muslim settings and characters a perfect subject matter that could be compared to contemporary political and religious scenarios. The instability in the Muslim states' ruling institutions that the plays represented served as a good analogy for contemporary English political life.

The second theme in my dissertation is an investigation of how representations of Muslim characters and settings on the stage were used as descriptors of the sexual politics of the English court. This will be illustrated through an analysis of Elkanah Settle's *The Empress of Morocco* (1673), *Ibrahim the Illustrious Bassa* (1676), and Aphra Behn's *Abdelazer, or the Moors Revenge* (1677). The sexually indulgent nature of Restoration court was not a secret. As Susan Owen notes in *Restoration Theatre and Crisis*, the Restoration witnessed a shift of the court's affairs from a private to a public arena (9-10). As a result, the Restoration stage bought the *arcana imperii* of state matters in front of the public. For instance, Settle's *The Empress of Morocco* exposes many aspects of the lascivious nature of the English court. The play stages the conflicts at the court of Morocco that are initiated by the lustful Moroccan empress, Laula, and her lover, Crimalhaz. The plot that Settle chose for his play was very apposite for the political issues of his time. Bulman points out that the play satirizes the sexual life of Charles' court (333). In fact, the king was involved in a number of well- publicized sexual relationships. Jenkinson states that "the king and his more notorious

courtiers indulged in priapic pursuit with a number of mistresses and Charles himself begat a panoply of bastards" (212). In *Libertines and Radicals in Early Modern London: Sexuality, Politics, and Literary Culture*, James Turner points out that Charles was well known for his numerous relationships with women, from a low-birth actress, Nell Gwyn, to the aristocratic Louise de Kerouaille (15). That said, my dissertation sheds light on the circumstances that surrounded the composition of plays such as Settle's in order to explore how the depiction of Muslims and Islam in such plays related to the contemporary debate over the sexualized English court. It is important to note here that English playwrights found in Muslim culture an appropriate subject matter that they could make use of in order to establish many allegorical comparisons that served their own political ends.

A few years into his reign, Charles II's sexuality was becoming one of the reasons behind public dissatisfaction about the behavior of the court. In *Reading with a Difference: Gender, Race, and Cultural Identity*, Arthur Marotti explains that as early as 1663, Samuel Pepys expressed his discontent with the King's sexual relationship with Lady Castlemain (103). However, the Licensing of the Press Act 1662 prevented any possibility of direct attacks on Charles's sexual behavior. In fact, major criticism came from men of letters who found in literary production a safer method to express their concerns about this issue. The coded criticism that the playwrights used in their plays stood a better opportunity to be published than pure political writings like pamphlets. In the second half of the 1660s, many playwrights investigated Charles's sexual excesses with a critical eye. Anne Hermanson observes that the "infatuated" rulers in plays like Edmund Waller's *The Maid's Tragedy* (1664), the anonymous *Irena* (1664), and Roger Boyle's *The Black Prince* (1665) are not capable of performing their duties (37). Such plays reflected the increasing public awareness and uneasiness about how Charles II's sex life impacted public policy. Opposition playwrights tended to reach a consensus in how they criticized the sexuality and amorality of

Charles II and his court. The unfaithfulness and irresponsibility of the King, as well as his endless interest in making relationships with new mistresses, gave ammunition to opposition writers who tried to use allegorical stories and characters from exotic settings to comment on the King's sexual habits.

The third focus point in this study highlights the importance of reading the representations of Muslims in early modern drama in terms of the internal religious dimension of British culture. The disscussion in this chapetr concerns Elkanah Settle's *Ibrahim the Illustrious Bassa* (1676), and John Dryden's *Don Sebastian, King of Portugal* (1689). In fact, Restoration England was marked by fierce religious conflict. Nicoll states that Restoration drama, more than any other literary genre of the time, reflected a nation torn by "bitter struggle between Catholics and Protestants" (242). Although the conflict between Catholicism and Protestantism pervaded the scene, there were numerous tensions between different versions of Protestantism as well. During the early years of Charles II reign, a number of Acts, particularly the Test Act, reinforced the position of the Church of England and persecuted opposing religious groups, specifically Catholics and Protestant dissenters. Parliament initiated such hostile legislation since its members saw the Church dangerously threatened by Catholicism and Protestant dissenters (Gibson118).

As this study seeks a more comprehensive understanding of the political and religious milieu of the English Restorations period coded through representations of Muslims on stage, this part of the study presents a deeper consideration of the internal religious conflicts in England during that period. The chapter discusses the way in which English authors, like Settle and Dryden, employed the religious dimension of Islamic characters / plots as allegories for the internal religious conflict in England. In *Restoration Theatre and Crisis*, Susan Owen argues that even the major crisis of the Restoration period, i.e. the Exclusion Crisis, resulted mainly from accumulating past religious conflicts. Owen adds that dramatic

works as well as the pamphlet literature of the late 1670s recalled the unforgotten sixteenth-century religious wars in Europe (140).

English Protestants responded actively to the increasing Catholic menace during Charles II's reign. Anne Hermanson argues that people, in the early 1670s, responded to such threat by recalling past events that symbolized the victories of Protestantism, and cites the popular celebrations of Queen Elizabeth's coronation anniversaries (40). In *Restoration Theatre and Crisis*, Owen observes that the public emphasis on Queen Elizabeth's accomplishments in the 1670s were an implicit criticism of Charles II, who failed to stand for the Protestant cause as the Queen did earlier (143-4).

It is important to be aware of the fact that such plays do not necessarily reflect the English perception of Islam *per se*; rather, they reflect their writers' involvement in internal religious quarrels of the late seventeenth-century England. In fact, there was something about the representation of religious conflict in Muslim society that allowed an appropriate analogy to be made. The sources that these playwrights used caused them to recall a certain Muslim historical moment precisely because it fit so aptly with their own situation in Britain.

This study highlights the importance of understanding English religious quarrels, especially between Catholics and Protestants, which was reflected in the dramatic production of many writers of the age. For example, in *The Empress of Morocco*, the stereotypes and language associated with the ambitious and lustful title character Empress is similar to those used against Catholics. Bulman argues that the language used to describe Islam in this play is the language itself that was "previously reserved for critiques of Catholics' superstitions and dreams of world dominion" (325). Playwrights, like Settle, found in Islamic culture and characters an appropriate analogy to critique the behavior of the court.

A clear vision of the chronology of the historical period under consideration is crucial to develop the understanding of the significance of the tropes or allegories used in the plays

discussed herein. On April 1660, Charles II issued the Declaration of Breda in which he made promises in relation to his claims of the crown of England. On May 8th of the same year the Conventional Parliament proclaimed that King Charles II was the legitimate successor to his father Charles I, who was executed in 1649 (De Krey 16-17). Despite the political clarity of this proclamation, the social, religious, and political history of the rule of Charles II and his brother James took place against a background of an unsettled relationship between the King, Parliament, and the people during the Restoration period. On the domestic level, the legacy of Puritanism was still a source of controversy in the country. After about 20 years of civil war and a Commonwealth period in England – in which a strict living model was imposed – English people welcomed the revival of theatre, sports, and dancing in the new regime. However, after about a decade of the beginning of Charles's reign, Catholicism had become a renewed reason for uneasiness among the country's Protestant subjects. People saw in the increasing Catholic influence at court a source of danger that could strengthen French hegemony. Moreover, during the latter years of Charles' II rule, the succession was a highly controversial topic in England. As Charles had no legitimate heir, Parliament struggled to exclude his Catholic brother, James, from succession. In addition, the "Popish Plot" which broke out in 1678 spread scares about the menacing Catholic danger. All these complex issues and the intersection between politics and religion can be diagnosed in many Restoration dramas.

In the field of politics there were great tension and dissent. There was a reactionary ideology centered around opposition to the absolutism of monarchs. This feeling came from oppositional dissatisfaction with the policies of the king. Parliamentary ambitions for more power in decision-making and government stubbornness made political polarization something inevitable. In *Country and Court*, J. R. Jones observes that during the early years of the reign of Charles II, "the political nation was becoming divided into irrevocably hostile

factions" (211). One faction supported the king as a supreme ruler of the country while the other faction opposed the king's absolute power. Further, the weaknesses of Charles allowed more dissent among political forces. In fact, the crisis initiated by the Popish Plot in 1678 paved the way for the emergence of the party labels, Whigs and Tories. The Whigs emerged as a well-organized political movement, if not a party, under the leadership of the Earl of Shaftesbury. On the other hand, the Tories showed unbounded respect and loyalty to Church and Court. In her article "Interpreting the Politics of Restoration Drama," Susan Owen points out that the Whigs claimed to protect the rights of the people against the tyranny of the king and showed considerable tolerance towards dissenters. The Tories, on the other hand, expressed their absolute loyalty to the king and called for the continuity of the rule of the "legitimate monarchs." The Tories, as Owen puts it, accused the Whigs of being the new republicans, while the Whigs labeled the Tories as Jacobites as an indication of the latter's support to the deposed James II (91). Our understanding of the Restoration playwrights' political allegiance to either party enables us develop a more convincing understanding of the biases with each play that in turn used certain representations of Islamic culture that would ally with their own ideological position.

My dissertation presents new contributions to scholarship. First, little has been written about how representations of Muslims in Restoration drama served domestic purposes. The few works that addressed the topic are limited in terms of playwrights discussed and the time span covered. As the majority of studies that tackle the depiction of Muslims in early modern drama are concerned with the Renaissance, I feel that Restoration period deserves attention, too, especially in terms of showing how its domestic politics was coded through the depiction of Muslims on English stage. In other words, while early scholarship tended to seek the interpretations of the complex representations of Muslims on early modern stage by examining the historical encounters between England and the Islamic world, my dissertation

examines such representations against the domestic political and religious background of that era. I believe that positive and negative depictions of Muslims run through the playwrights' ideological concerns depending on what kind of domestic crises they are describing and how the setting suits their ideological intentions.

My dissertation adds new understanding to the existing scholarship about representations of Islam and Muslims in Early Modern drama, and Restoration drama in particular by arguing that how we understand the historical relationship between East and West is foregrounded by how English playwrights used largely negative depictions of Muslims to comment on English internal affairs rather than foreign relations. While many studies have focused on the latter, the influence of the former in terms of representation of Islam and Muslims on the London stage in front of a sizeable audience should not be underestimated.

The review provided below explains the way in which my argument is situated in the field of critical scholarship. I feel indebted to the works of those academics mentioned in the review as their works have widened my horizons and enhanced my understanding of the complexity of early modern English culture. In particular, I have benefitted from critics who have highlighted the deep relations between early modern English stage representations of Islam and England's contemporary foreign political concerns. Those critics, among them Nabil Matar and Jonathan Burton, have elucidated how the depiction of Islam and its culture was shaped through contemporary hostilities against Muslims. However, because these critics, in analyzing the image of Muslim characters on English stage, have tended to connect English playwrights' portrayal of Muslims to the historically tense relationship between England and the Muslim world, they have only presented a partial understanding of the relationship since they ignore the domestic political dimensions of the issue. Thus my dissertation is grounded on the belief that it is not foreign political affairs alone that matter in

analyzing these plays. I propose that English playwrights' political allegiances determine, to a great extent, what kind of Muslim personifications are presented on the stage. Moreover, I noticed that the majority of the criticism that tackled the representations of Muslims in early modern English drama is concerned with Renaissance drama. Thus, my dissertation will cover a relatively ignored period, i.e., the Restoration1660-1688, which, I believe, needs more consideration and analysis. Unlike the studies that discussed single plays or authors of the Restoration period, my dissertation looks at the plays of this time period from a broader perspective that considers the impact of the political debates on the general representations of Muslims during the Restoration era.

The scholarship that analyzes the correlation between theater and politics is of primary importance for my dissertation. Susan Owen, for example, in *Restoration Theatre and Crisis* explores the hidden agendas behind theatre in the Restoration period, particularly the staging of Popish Plot and Exclusion Crisis. Owen presents great illuminations about the political partisanship in the theater of that troubled era. The book considers both Whig and Tory theatrical writings and examines the ways in which drama participated actively in the political process. Owen points out that "[f]rom the outbreak of the Popish Plot scare in the autumn of 1678 onwards, the dramatists denounced the plot as a piece of theatre and suggested that there was more truth and less artifice in the theatre than outside it in the 'theatre of news'" (3). This discussion supports my proposal that the political attitude of the playwright towards such events as the Popish plot is a rich and important source that enables us to understand the political implications of the dramas discussed herein and which Muslim history and characters playwrights chose to depict.

Owen's insights into the topic are not limited to the views embedded in her book. I regard her essay "Interpreting the Politics of Restoration Drama" as an important source for my dissertation too. In her article, Owen highlights the need to ground our political history of

the theatre in the specificity of the historical moment. Owen stresses the need to "read the drama politically in terms of themes and tropes. The advantages of this approach lie in relating drama to social process, and in avoiding the twin dangers of over- and under-reading" (68). In addition, the article discusses and corrects many mistaken assumptions. Owen reveals that earlier studies of the politics of Restoration drama used to underestimate Whigs and their dramatic imprint on Restoration theatre. This idea supports my reading of political and religious themes and tropes presented by Whig playwrights like Elkanah Settle, for instance.

The majority of criticism that discusses politics' influence on Restoration drama is confined to limited examples that do not serve to give a comprehensive understanding of the topic. This is particularly true of scholarship in Jessica Munns' *Restoration Politics and Drama: The Plays of Thomas Otway, (1675-1683*). The book presents valuable insights into the drama of Thomas Otway that was written during a period of political crisis and tension. Otway's writings, as Munns puts it, responded to the major political concerns of his time like the Popish Plot and Exclusion Crises. Munns explains how many of Otway's plays depicted monarchs' power as "flawed" by their tyranny in a court of ambitious and treacherous politicians (106). Although the book is limited to one major playwright, the book is important to my study in the sense that it refers to a wide range of contemporary political texts. A careful consideration of such texts suggests that it would be useful to have a more comprehensive understanding of the intersection between Restoration drama and its politics. Therefore, in the body chapters of the dissertation I have included texts such as Elkanah Settle's pamphlet "The Character of a Popish Successor," the anonymous pamphlet "The Earl of Rochester's Verses For Which He Was Banished," the diaries of Samuel Pepys and John Evelyn, and excerpts of some Parliamentary petitions to the King. These texts highlight the

way in which Restoration drama was deeply concerned with contemporary political debates and controversies.

In similar fashion, I utilize Matthew Birchwood's *Staging Islam in England: Drama and Culture 1640-1685* to support my own argument about the importance of considering domestic political and religious aspects in reading drama. Birchwood is concerned with analyzing the representations of Islam in English politics, culture and drama from the Civil War to the end of Charles' II reign. This source is important to my study since it explores the reception and representation of Islam in a wide range of English writings of the period. The novelty of Birchwood's work is that he examines the portrayal of Islamic culture in regards to both the foreign and domestic political concerns of English playwrights. Of high importance to my dissertation is the last chapter entitled "Plotting the Succession: Exclusion, Oates and the News from Vienna." In this chapter Birchwood analyzes political implications in the portrayal of Muslim characters on the plays of Elkanah Settle and Henry Neville Payne. He also traces the sources that Restoration playwrights relied on when they discussed Islam and its culture, highlighting their indebtedness to Richard Knolles' *Generall Historie of the Turkes* (1603). My dissertation builds on Birchwood's work and invites more examples from the time period in order to construct a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that participated in shaping the image of Islam and its culture on the Restoration stage.

Bridget Orr's *Empire on the English Stage: 1660-1714* is undoubtedly of value to my dissertation. The book shows that Restoration and early Eighteenth Century theater was an important arena for debates over England's colonial enterprise. The book sheds light on themes of England's foreign affairs that were represented in the plays of writers like Dryden, Orrery, Southerne, and Settle. I am mostly interested in Chapters III and IV in which Orr discusses a number of plays that are based on Turkish or North African settings and plots. Although the first chapter touches on the idea that plays with exotic settings provided a useful

means for the discussion of such urgent domestic topics as usurpation, tyranny, succession, and "the ruler's enthrallment by luxury" (11), Orr seems to be more interested in presenting her post-colonial reading of the plays throughout the rest of the chapters. Such a reading deprives us of gaining the fruits of considering the domestic political and social factors that influenced Restoration depiction of Muslims. At this point I believe that my dissertation will help bridge such gaps and present an equally compelling understanding of Restoration theatre and culture.

In the same context, Anthony Barthelemy's *Black Face, Maligned Race: The Representation of Blacks in English Drama from Shakespeare to Southerne* (1987) explores the representations of colored people in early modern English drama in relation to England's cultural and religious perception of the *Other*. The book is particularly concerned with dramas that presented Moors on the English stage from 1589 to 1695. In most cases, the blackness of the Moor was associated with lasciviousness, evil, and otherness. Barthelemy considers the stereotypes associated with the Moor as roots of the stereotypical black man in today's world. In fact, I feel indebted to Barthelemy as his book has provided me with clear understanding of the origins of Western perception of blackness which always derived from a sense of strangeness with all of its religious, ethnic, and national dimensions (17). However, following Orr, Barthelemy's reading of plays by Dryden and Settle marginalizes the domestic political aspects that stood behind the representations of Muslim characters on Restoration stage. There are so few references to Restoration playwrights' political alliances and almost no reference to the publications' backgrounds. Thus, my dissertation tests the assumptions of the book after taking into account the complexities of the Restoration culture and its intense involvement in the contemporary politics.

Of great importance to my dissertation is Jonathan Burton's *Traffic and Turning: Islam and English Drama, 1579-1624*. In this book, Burton highlights the ways in which

early modern theatre perceived Islam. Burton also sheds light on the role of theatre in shaping the image of the *Other*. In line with Nabil Matar's views, Burton argues that it is important to reconsider our colonial conceptions of the Renaissance, and understand the position of England in relation to 'global systems dominated by Chinese, Indian, Persian, and Ottoman empires' (38). Burton's analysis of the positions of Muslims in plays like Marlowe's *Tamburlaine the Great*, Shakespeare's *Othello* Massinger's *The Renegado*, Mason's *The Turke*, and Daborne's *A Christian Turn'd Turk* gives me a more detailed historical background about England's national awareness of major Islamic powers of late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Such a background is fruitful to understand the many stereotypes associated with Muslim characters in Restoration drama and beyond.

Not less helpful to me is *Early Modern Encounters with the Islamic East: Performing Cultures* by Schulting, Ralf, and others. The last chapter, "Encounters on Stage" highlights the many ways in which England and Islamic world encountered the other, which then helped to shape England's early conceptions of Islam. The chapter discusses the "double vision of the East" and traces the different representations of Turks and Persians on the early modern English stage. This work has been fruitful in tracing the development of Muslim representations into the Restoration period and in analyzing its underlined meanings.

Daniel Vitkus is one of the main contributors to the field of Renaissance literature and the representations of Islamic culture in this period. His *Turning Turk: English Theater and the Multicultural Mediterranean, 1570-1630* is a fascinating study of the complex representations of cross-cultural contact in late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. From his analysis of plays by playwrights like Shakespeare, Marlowe, Kyd, Heywood, and Daborne, Vitkus underlines the ways in which Western culture perceived Islam and the Middle East. I find Vitkus' reading of the tradition of representing Islam in early modern drama useful in defining the period before the Restoration in terms of the ways in which

interaction with multicultural Mediterranean participated in forming the image of the *Other*. Nevertheless, and in the same fashion of the works of Burton, Barthelemy, and Ralf, the book ignores the important internal political controversies that are, I believe, fundamental in adding to how we understand the early modern representations of Muslim characters on stage.

Of relevance to my dissertation is Nancy Bisaha's *Creating East and West Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks*. The book presents a thorough examination of Renaissance humanist works that tackled issues related to the Ottoman Empire and other Islamic powers of the early modern period. Building on the views of Matar and Viktus, Bisaha investigates the significance of a variety of Renaissance texts in shaping Western views of Islam. Bisaha argues that Renaissance understanding of Islam was more complex than Medieval perceptions. Significantly, Renaissance writers addressed more secular and cultural issues when they tackled Islamic culture, a sign of deeper awareness of both *Self* and *Other*. My dissertation extends Bisaha's insight into the Restoration period as, I argue, dramatists employed an understanding of Islam to shape English self-identification and national recognition. Opportunistically, Restoration playwrights found in Islam relevant tropes and allegories that could be used to define English cultural and historical moments.

After reading a variety of critical texts on the representations of Muslims on the early modern political stage, I found that certain articles provided more specific information even though this meant that their examinations of single or limited cases let many ideas go unobserved. One of the useful articles that helps defining the period before the Restoration is Claire Jowitt's "Political Allegory in Late Elizabethan and Early Jacobean 'Turk' Plays: *Lust's Dominion* and *The Turke*." The article assumes that traditional understanding of the image of the Turk in early modern English drama falls short in giving us a comprehensive and persuasive rationalization of the issue. Jowitt insists that this dominant view of early modern

Turk plays – presented by Matar, Barthelemy, and others – only provides us with a partial understanding of the significance of these cultural documents.

Jowitt provides a very convincing discussion that connects the plot of Thomas Dekker's *Lust's Dominion* and John Mason's *The Turk*e with contemporary English political issues and debates. For instance, Jowitt draws many parallels between the Spanish story of *Lust's Dominion* and actual events in the English Court. Jowitt associates the representation of Philip II in the play with England's own monarch, Queen Elizabeth (419). During the latter years of Elizabeth's role, the succession was a highly controversial topic in England and this is what Dekker alludes to by writing such play. I strongly support her reading of the plot as an allegory of a similar crisis in England. Jowitt's reading of Elizabethan and Jacobean drama provides ammunition for my own study by arguing for the value of reading plays according to the domestic political dimension.

In the same vein, Jeannie Dalporto's "The Succession Crisis and Elkanah Settle's *The Conquest of China by the Tartars"* concerns the political implications in Settle's play. As Settle is one of the major playwrights that my dissertation discusses, the article is useful since it sheds light on Settle's political allegiances. Dalporto claims that in the play, Settle summons the history of the downfall of the Ming dynasty and the rising of the Qing in order to reassures his audience about the stability of the Restoration political system. Dalporto concludes that unlike Settle's earlier plays, *The Conquest of China* does not criticize the institution of monarchy (143). Therefore, the article is an important source that supports my argument since it emphasizes the strong relationship between the domestic political scene and the different possibilities of representing the *Other* on the Restoration stage.

Finally, I have been influenced by Allardyce Nicoll's "Political Plays of the Restoration." Nicoll skillfully examines the strong relationship between Restoration theatre and its politics. The in-depth discussion employed in the article explains that Restoration

theatre is the reflection of an age of fierce struggle between Catholics and Protestants, between Whigs and Tories, for religious and political supremacy (242). My dissertation will narrow Nicoll's commentary to focus on those writers who summoned plots and characters from the Islamic world. This will allow for more in-depth consideration of the issue as well as provide a better understanding of the larger frame in which my study is situated.

In order to situate my discussion in its proper place in criticism that discussed the representations of Islam in early modern English theater, it is essential to review the arguments of those critics who have studied the topic and provided their insights to uncover its hidden indications, such as Samuel Chew, Edward Said, Nabil Matar, Gerald MacLean, Daniel Goffman, and Daniel Vitkus. Most fruitful for my study are those critics who diagnosed the strong relationship between the literary work and its political as well as cultural context. In addition, the principles of New Historicism will be very useful in examining the political and religious factors that participated in shaping the image of the Muslim on Restoration stage.

To explore the various Restoration plays included in my dissertation, I shall adopt a New Historicist approach in order to interpret the representations of Islamic culture at that period. New Historicism shall be very useful as my study deals with examining the social, political, and religious factors that participated in shaping the image of the Muslim on the Restoration stage and how dramatists employed Muslim characters to convey certain political messages to their audience. New Historicism stresses the view that writers cannot detach themselves from their own time. As a consequence, the ideological construction of the society becomes an inseparable part of their works.

New Historicists examine a text in the context of its time; therefore, they highlight the need to reconstruct the culture in which the work was written. Thus, the more you know about a culture the more you understand its literary production (Walter and Tally 112). New

Historicism proposes that literature is one form of social construction that is produced by its society. Literature in turn participates in shaping the culture that produced it. Aligning with these presumptions, a better knowledge of the social, political, and religious aspects of the Restoration period is necessary to interpret the literary works of that era. On that basis, the dissertation summons a variety of non-literary texts such as political and religious pamphlets, Parliamentary petitions, letters, and diaries that participate in shaping a better understanding of the context in which a literary work was produced.

In his introduction to *The Forms of Power and the Power of Forms in the Renaissance* Stephen Greenblatt describes New Historicism as a practice that "challenges the assumptions that guarantee a secure distinction between "literary foreground" and "political background" or, more generally, between artistic production and other kinds of social production" (5). Greenblatt considers literary works as "fields of force, places of dissension and shifting interests" rather than "as a fixed set of texts that are set apart from all other forms of expression [...] or as a stable set of reflections of historical facts that lie beyond them" (6).

In this sense, New Historicist views are so useful to my study as they consider literature as a form of social discourse and examine the complex and interwoven relations between literature and culture. Aligning with New Historicist views, my study is based on the inclusion of historical settings in the analysis of literary texts. Therefore, the theatrical analysis of the plays under consideration in my study is tied to the main principles of the culture that produced it, i.e., English Restoration era.

In addition to the historical background of playwrights and their works, I find it so fruitful to consider a chronology of earlier theorists who provided their insights and explanations of the problematic representations of Muslims on early modern English stage. Such consideration situates my analysis of the plays in the larger framework of relevant criticism. In fact, the study of the representations of Islam in English drama has drawn the

attention of scholars since the early decades of the twentieth century. Louis Wann's "The Oriental in Elizabethan Drama" (1915) and Samuel Chew's *The Crescent and the Rose* (1937) presented historical reviews of plays that tackled Islamic plots and settings. Chew's criticism concentrates on gathering as many records as possible to elicit the general patterns of Muslim representations on stage. Chew concludes that the representations of Islamic characters in early modern drama are always connected with evil or negative stereotypes.

Of course, Said's *Orientalism* (1978) is a specter that haunts any study of Islamic representation in the West. Said observes that Western perception of the East purposefully depicts the Orient as an irrational, weak, and feminized Other, while depicting the West as rational, strong, and masculine. Said argues that this binary relation embodied Western desire to subdue the peoples of the East (65-7). Said explains that this binary relationship of strong vs. weak reinforces the numerous stereotypes of Western literary and historical texts that proved to be fictitious. However, the question for those interested in Islamic representations on the early modern English stage was the extent to which Said's thesis was applicable to the early modern period. Nabil Matar and Daniel Vitkus, among others, have explained that the early modern era was a totally different period from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[1] As a consequence, Said's assumptions are not applicable to that period. Vitkus explains that during early modern period the English were no matches to the great empires of the Ottomans, Mughal, and other eastern powers. It was a time of Eastern superiority over the Western world (9). Therefore, a different and more comprehensive reading of the representations of Islam on early modern period is needed. In other words, it is important to

[1]See Nabil Matar, *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery* (New York, 1999); Daniel Vitkus, *Turning Turk: English Theater and the Multicultural Mediterranean 1570-1630* (New York 2003); Linda McJannet, 'Mapping the Ottomans on the Renaissance Stage', *Journal of Theatre and Drama* (1996).

include other dimensions in our reading of the representations of Islam on the English stage. I argue that considering religious and political aspects of contemporary British culture helps us understand the playwrights' allegorical use of the Muslim character and setting as a means to comment on British domestic politics.

A useful discourse can be provided by those critics who have attributed the negative representations of Islam and Muslim peoples on early modern stage to the oppositional and tense relationship between England and Islamic states. Burton's *Traffic and Turning* (2005) highlights the ways in which hostilities towards Islamic states participated in shaping Islamic characters on English stage. Burton bases his study on an understanding of the relatively inferior position of England in relation to a world dominated by great empires of Persians, Ottomans, and others (38). Burton claims that England's national anxieties regarding major Islamic powers of late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries decided, to a great extent, the negative representations of Muslims on stage.

My dissertation builds on these critical views about the issue and adds new dimensions to the topic. I believe that it is time to consider the domestic factors that participated in shaping the image of the Muslim on Restoration stage. The period under consideration in my dissertation, i.e., the Restoration period, is a type of transitional period between the inferiority that the English felt towards Muslims in the Renaissance – discussed by Matar, Viktus, Burton, and others – and the time of the British Empire of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth centuries that Said discussed in his *Orientalism*. As the Restoration was marked by its fevered political controversy that is rarely matched in English history, the consideration of national crises with its complex political, cultural, and religious values is fundamental to understand the purpose behind the representations of Muslims invoked by playwrights.

CHAPTER TWO

PLOTS AND COUNTERPLOTS: MUSLIMS AND THE

SUCCESSION QUESTION ON STAGE

"The Devil take this cursed plotting Age, / 'T has ruin'd all our Plots upon the Stage."

(Aphra Behn, *The Feign'd Curtizans,*Prologue 1-2)

1. Introduction

On the surface, the plays under consideration in this chapter tackle issues about conflicts that seem detached from events happening in Restoration England. The plays were set in various Islamic locations such as Morocco, Africa, the Ottoman territories in Eastern Europe, and Muslim Persia. The plays presented characters like Sultan Solyman, his sons Mustapha and Zanger, Sultana Roxolana, Sultan Ibrahim, Kings of Morocco and Algiers, and the Sophy of Persia. However, Restoration political playwrights skillfully used such characters and events as allegories for relevant internal crises in England. Prominent among these political concerns was the succession question, specifically oriented around the fact that Charles's lack of a legitimate heir meant that his brother James – openly known as a Catholic – was next in line to the throne.

The succession question haunted the politics of the Restoration during the reigns of Charles II (1660-1685) and his brother James II (1685-88). In fact, the restoration of English monarchy in 1660 did not provide a clear settlement in terms of the old claims of power between the king and Parliament. Charles II, who had sought an absolute rule similar to that of his cousin Louis XIV of France, faced a stubborn Parliament which strove to monitor the King's domestic and foreign policies (Bucholz and Key 287).

During the 1660s, the succession was not the major pressing concern for the nation. Instead, the relationship between the Court and Parliament focused on the religious settlement, land settlement, and taxation. However, the second decade of the Restoration

period brought new tensions and more serious concerns to the political nation. In 1673, the king's brother and heir created anxiety when he refused to take Anglican Communion. Parliamentarians and zealous Anglicans feared a disastrous scenario in which England would be ruled by a Catholic king. This fear was bolstered by the fact that the years James spent in France –the prominent fortresses of Catholicism in Western Europe – had introduced him to the beliefs of Catholicism.[2] James made the bold move from Protestantism to Roman Catholicism in 1668 or 1669, although he managed to keep his conversion secret for some time and maintained an Anglican identity during the first half of the 1670s (Callow 144-5).

The growing fears of the increasing Catholic influence at court, in general, led Parliament to introduce the Test Act of 1673. This Act required all civil and military office-holders to take an oath to subscribe to the Anglican liturgy and ceremonies. After he had failed to subscribe, James resigned from his post of Lord High Admiral as his Catholicism was no longer a secret (De Krey 104-6). His marriage to the Catholic Mary of Modena, an Italian princess, only added more fears about the Catholic influence at the English court.

The fears of a potential Catholic monarch were increasing during the second part of the 1670s. As Charles – in his forties at that time – had no legitimate heir, Parliament struggled to exclude James from succession. In addition, the "Popish Plot," which broke out in 1678, spread scares about the menacing Catholic danger. In 1678 Titus Oates, an Anglican clergyman, warned of a Popish conspiracy to kill Charles in order to hasten James's succession. Oates's fabricated plot acquired great national credibility and posed more attention to the sensitivity of the succession issue. The Earl of Shaftesbury, a leading figure in Parliament during the crisis, attempted to ensure the exclusion of any future Catholic heir from succession to the English throne. Shaftesbury was among the prominent architects of the

[2] For more about French influence on James see Miller's *James II* p 58–59.

Exclusion Bill of 1679 that aimed to exclude James from the succession to the throne (De Krey 156). The name of the Protestant Duke of Monmouth, one of Charles's illegitimate sons, was circulated also in the Parliament as a possible alternative to James (Harris 74). In 1679, Charles II dissolved Parliament to prevent the passing of the Bill. The two following Parliaments of 1680 and 1681 faced the same destiny as opposition Parliament members insisted on passing the Bill. The Exclusion Crisis had one major consequence: the emergence of two political parties - the Tories, who supported the king and his supreme authorities, and the Whigs, who supported the Bill, opposed the king, and called for more power for Parliament.[3] Although the Whigs failed to "secure" the throne, James was isolated and deprived of holding his office in the government. Eventually, the Stuart brothers succeeded in securing the "legitimate" heredity of succession as James succeeded to the throne after Charles's death in 1685.

Theoretically, my argument in the dissertation avoids one of the New Historicism shortcomings of selectiveness. Wells explain that some of the criticism that has been leveled at New Historicism suggests that New Historicists "remained mesmerised by Shakespeare to the exclusion of 'lesser' writers." However, my study departs from this charge and introduces a variety of Restoration dramatists. This chapter, for example, tackles the works of playwrights such as Boyle, Whitaker, Settle, and Southerne. My discussion, therefore, avoids the "selectiveness" of New Historicism that excludes lesser writers and selects only texts that serve one particular purpose of its writer.

2. Roger Boyle's *The Tragedy of Mustapha* (1665)

In this tense political atmosphere, many new plays questioned and discussed the issue of succession as a direct response to the nation's worries. As early as 1665, Roger Boyle

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[3] For more about the Exclusion Crisis see Gray De Krey's *Restoration and Revolution in Britain*, Susan Owen's *Restoration Theatre and Crisis*, and John Miller's *James II*.

dramatized such concerns in his *The Tragedy of Mustapha*. Boyle's play was an early response to how the succession crisis became a source of national polarization. What follows is an investigation of Boyle's life, particularly his political allegiances that caused him to address such a sensitive issue. In fact, my indebtedness to New Historicism lies in avoiding reading early modern literary representations of Islam according to its aesthetic merit only. The New Historical approach I employ in the dissertation demonstrates the way in which the representations of Islam and its culture, in the plays under consideration, was strongly tied to the contemporary political and religious discourses of the period.

2.1. Boyle's Life and Works

Roger Boyle, 1st Earl of Orrery (1621 – 1679), was a dramatist, a military leader, and an active politician who was elected in English Parliament during the Commonwealth and Restoration periods. Boyle had a unique political experience that enabled him to be a political adviser of Oliver Cromwell during the Interregnum and then, when Charles II was restored in 1660, to rise as one of the King's favorite courtiers and poets. Boyle was a zealous Protestant politician and, as might be gauged from his role in the Irish Confederate Wars, known for his antagonism towards Catholics (Lynch 72-5). This reputation and attitude encouraged him to speak of his fears and concerns regarding the possibility of having a Catholic king on the English throne.

Boyle's political life and involvement with the major historical events of his time needs to be examined with some detail since his military and political activities are key points to understand the representations of Muslims in his play *The Tragedy of Mustapha.* In point of fact, Boyle had good connections with Charles I's government as his family aided the king against the rebellious Scots during the first Bishops War of 1639. The significant role of Boyle's family in this war enabled the young man to get acquainted with the Stuart's court and its concerns (Lynch 21-4).

Despite his good connections with Cromwell and the Parliament during the Commonwealth period, where he served to subjugate the Irish, Boyle succeeded in building a strong relation with the restored monarchy. His service to Charles I as well as his wide military and political experience made the reconciliation with Charles II possible. In fact, the prominent event that helped reestablish the connections between Boyle and the English monarchy was Boyle's offer to restore the exiled king in Ireland (Uglow 70). The king was about to accept Boyle's invitation when a better alternative was presented to him: the king chose to return to England instead in response to General Monck's offer in 1660. Nonetheless, Charles rewarded Boyle by creating him Earl of Orrery in September of the same year. Moreover, Boyle was appointed Lord President of Munster and Lord Justice of Ireland. This was followed by many other grants from the young king to Boyle and his other loyal subjects (Lynch 109). Charles dealt with Boyle as a trusty advisor and their personal friendship grew as time passed.

Interstingly, politics was not the only subject of the numerous meetings between the two. Both Charles II and Boyle showed interest in literature in general and drama in particular. Boyle knew how to take advantage of that mutual interest. He wrote *The Generall* in 1661 at the king's request (Maguire 34). Charles was so pleased with the play that he wrote to Boyle as follows:

> I will now tell you, that I have read your first play, which I like very well, and do intend to bring it upon the stage as soon as my Company have their new stage in order, that the scenes may be worthy the words they are set forth [. . .] I have no more to say to you at the present, but to assure you I am | Your very affectionate frend | Charles R. (qtd. in Airey 39)

The King's words show the exceptional status that Boyle achieved at the court. Along the same lines as *The Generall*, Boyle's *Black Prince* (1667) was written at the King's request,

too, and Charles and his courtiers attended the first performance of the play (Maguire 180, Lynch 148).

It is obvious that Boyle employed his talents in writing to speak of his political positions. His literary production during the early years of the Restoration period reveals the man's increasing tendency to use plays to comment on the most contemporary topics. Tomlinson observes that the Restoration stage "provided a unique opportunity for a Restoration courtier playwright such as Boyle to examine some of the most pressing political issues of his day in the presence of the king" (560).

In a similar vein, Maguire points out that many of Boyle's plays reassured Restoration audiences that Charles' order and rule had triumphed over the Commonwealth chaos (94). Furthermore, it is noted that in many of his productions, Boyle used his talent to strengthen his political position by flattering Charles and his court. In his Prologue to *The Black Prince* (1667), for instance, Boyle attacks the French and scorns their monarchs who cannot be compared with "great" Charles and his victorious army,

> Their frighted lilies shall confess their Loss,
>
> Wearing the crimson Liv'ry of your Cross;
>
> And all the World shall learn by their Defeat,
>
> Our Charles, not theirs, deserves the name of Great. (Prologue 27-30)

Interestingly, Boyle took a unique stand in which he was loyal to his king but, at the same time, opposed Catholics and Catholicism to whom Charles showed considerable sympathy and indulgence.[4]

2.2. The Play

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[4] For more about Charles's indulgence of Catholicism see Susan Owen's *Restoration Theatre and Crisis* pp. 37-8.

In *The Tragedy of Mustapha* (1665), Boyle addresses one of the prominent political concerns of his time, i.e. the succession question. This crucial political concern gained enormous attention, especially because Charles was still childless after years of his marriage to Catherine of Braganza. Boyle touches on this political issue by using a sophisticated political allegory. The court of Sultan Solyman, the setting for his play, was an astute choice that could convey much of Boyle's views. The plot of the play revolves around Roxolana, Sultan's wife and mother of Prince Zanger, who was second in line of succession. Roxolana plots to murder the rightful heir to the throne, Mustapha, in order to have her son declared the new Sultan. The play is set in Buda, Central Europe, where Turkish court life is the subject of most of the Acts. The use of Buda as a setting of the play holds great significance for the Restoration audience. In fact, Medieval Hungary resisted Ottoman advances and formed an advanced Christian frontier during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. In fact, the Habsburg monarchy realized the importance of having a strong defense system to stop any further Ottoman conquests in Europe. During the early decades of the sixteenth century the Hungarian border defense systems of fortresses were built to protect not only Hungarian territories but also the Austrian lands and the vast German Empire (Palffy 3). The Habsburg Empire was at that time supported by the Holy Roman Empire and Habsburg Spain. [5]

The historical setting and moment that Boyle dramatized in his play require deep understanding of the history of people represented. In 1526, the Ottoman Empire forces, led by Sultan Solyman I, defeated the Hungarian armies under King Louis II at the Battle of Mohacs near the southern borders of Hungary. The fallen king died shortly without a legitimate son; as a result, the kingdom experienced a period of political chaos. Both Janos

[5] The Holy Roman Empire, a loose alliance in central Europe, was established gradually during the Early Middle Ages and survived until 1806. Prominent among the members of the alliance were the Kingdom of Germany, the Kingdom of Bohemia, and the Kingdom of Italy.

Szapolyai, one of the most influential political figures in the aftermath of the Battle of Mohacs, and Ferdinand Habsburg, Louis II brother-in-law, demanded the throne of the kingdom. The Hungarians witnessed a short but destructive civil war in 1527 that ended with the victory of Ferdinand (Curtis 68). Sultan Solyman deepened the wounds of the war-torn kingdom and launched a large military attacked in 1529 that ended with conquering vast territories of Hungary under the rule of King Ferdinand Habsburg. In 1541, Sultan Solyman occupied Buda and absorbed the central areas of the Kingdom of Hungary into the Ottoman Empire. Meanwhile, western and northern parts of Hungary remained under the rule of King Ferdinand I.

It took about 145 years for the Christian forces to expel the Ottomans from Hungary. The first remarkable outcome was the victory at the Battle of Saint Gotthard in 1664, one year before Boyle's play had its debut. The Habsburg army defeated the Ottomans and forced them to negotiate the Peace of Vasvar (Parry and Cook 170). In 1684, Pope Innocent XI established the Holy League that included, in addition to the Holy Roman Empire forces, Poland and Venice with the intention of driving the Ottoman Turks out of Europe. The 15-year war between the Holy League and the Ottoman Empire was known as the Great Turkish War. The Christian League gradually expelled the Ottoman forces from most of the Hungarian territories they captured during the sixteenth century and forced them to cede the rest of the territories to the Habsburg Monarchy in the Treaty of Karlowitz in 1699 (Parry and Cook 170). Beginning in this year, the Ottomans retreated to the south and abandoned more European lands to the Habsburg monarchs.

Boyle does not then present a fancy setting in his play. Instead, he calls a setting that was, to some degree, familiar to the English audiences, who learned about the Ottomans and their history from travelers' accounts and history books. The latter, in particular, supplied the English reader with numerous accounts about the Ottoman Empire. For example, Richard

Knolles's *Generall Historie of the Turkes* (1603) with its several continuations discussed official Anglo–Ottoman diplomatic documents. In addition, the 1631 edition of the *Historie* contained episodes in Anglo–Ottoman trade issues. Also, piracy in the Mediterranean was among the concerns of the fifth edition of Knolles's book that appeared in 1638 (Ingram 96-100). In fact, the unpleasant news about the Ottoman's expansion in Europe during the sixteenth century, the collapse of the Kingdom of Hungary, the subsequent taking of Buda, and the Ottoman siege of Vienna stimulated great interest in continental accounts about Hungary. This country was considered as an anticipated battlefield between Christian Europe and the Ottoman Empire. Thus, the Hungarian front was a source of disquiet for the Holy Roman Empire and led the Pope to call for a new Crusade in Hungary (Ingram 30).

History books supplied Englishmen with numerous accounts about the conflict in Central and Eastern Europe. The fall of Buda and collapse of the kingdom of Hungary initiated "an unprecedented spate of English works" that reported to Englishmen detailed accounts about this part of Europe (Ingram 23). Knolles's work was undoubtedly the most prominent and widely read account of the history of the Turks to be available to early modern English readers. Knolles, in the course of his account of Solyman the Magnificent, presents a thorough account about the fall of Hungary in the face of the Ottoman army (404-428). Many of the historical accounts about the Ottomans and their conquests in Eastern and Central Europe supplied the early modern reader with a considerable level of awareness of the demography as well as the geography of Hungary mixed with a strong anti-Islamic discourse calling for Christian unity and spiritual repentance in the face of "infidel" advance. This anti-Islamic discourse was reflected clearly in seventeenth-century literary works.

Knolles's *Historie* was the first comprehensive work in English on the history of the Turkish Empire. The book is an extended survey based on various sources of what Knolles calls "the present terror of the world" (1). The book explains to the English reader how

Christians, in many parts of Europe, suffered from Turkish conquests. The major part of Knolles's book comprises detailed accounts on the lives of Turkish sultans from the rise of their empire to the time of Mehmed III, who was still in power when Knolles finished the book.

The depiction of Solyman in Knolles's *Historie* is complex, subjective, and at some points paradoxical. In the course of narrating the major events in the Sultan's reign, Knolles recurrently criticizes the Sultan's cruelty with enemies as well as friends. In his preface to the book, Knolles refers, scornfully, to Suleiman I's execution of his son Mustapha,

> As for the kind Law of Nature, what can be thereunto more contrary, than for the Father most unnaturally to embrue his Hands in the Blood of his own Children? And the Brother to become the Bloody Executioner of his own Brother? A common matter among the Othoman Emperors. All which most Execrable and Inhumane Murthers, they cover with the pretended safety of their State [...]. (n.p)

Moreover, in many references to the fourth Turkish Sultan, Knolles associates Solyman I with cruelty, savagery, and above all, tyranny. Descriptions like "the young Tyrant," "the fuming Tyrant," (396) and "Turkish Tyrant," (399) are countlessly recalled in Knolles's chapter on Solyman.

Nevertheless, Knolles's general views in regards to the Sultan's image become troublesome when he, in some parts of his account, reveals his religious bias in narrating historical events. Knolles concludes his account about Solyman I with a long and detailed description of the dying Sultan who was "of Nature ambitious and bountiful, more faithful of his Word and Promise than were for most part the Mahometan Kings his Progenitors, wanting nothing worthy of so great an Empire, but that wherein all happiness is contained,

Faith in Christ Jesus" (556). Knolles shows some respect to the Sultan for his faithfulness but criticizes him for his lack of Christian faith, the only thing found wanting.

Knolles maintains this bias when, in addressing his readers, he seems, in numerous parts of his book, to be agitating Christian zeal against the Turkish threat. When recounting the victories of Solyman over Christian nations of Eastern and Central Europe, Knolles presents his own views of the effects of the Turkish conquests on Christendom. He comments on one of the Sultan's early victories in Eastern Europe stating, "this shameful overthrow at Exek was reported to have exceeded the most grievous overthrows that the Christians had received in any former former time; […] so that many Provinces were filled with heaviness and mourning" (461). In addition, Knolles laments the fall of the City of Belgrade in the hands of Solyman's army as follows:

> How much the loss of that strong City concerned the Christian Common-wealth, the manifold and lamentable miseries which afterwards ensued by the opening of that Gap, not unto the Kingdom of Hungary only, but to all that side of Christendom, did, and yet doth, most manifestly declare. It was won by the Turks the nine and twentieth day of August in the year 1521. (382)

Additionally, Knolles warns all Christian nations of the danger of the Turks as he describes them as the "most barbarous Nation against the Christians" (411). In his "The AUTHOR to the READER" section, Knolles reflects on the inferior state of the Christian Commonwealth in the face of what he calls "infidelity" in an attempt to invoke the deepest feelings of religious enthusiasm against the Turkish threat,

> THE long and still declining state of the Christian Commonweal, with the utter ruin and subversion of the Empire of the East, and many other most glorious Kingdoms and Provinces of the Christians, never to be sufficiently lamented, might, with the due consideration thereof, worthily move even a right stony

> heart to ruth: but therewith also to call to remembrance the dishonour done unto the blessed Name of our Saviour Christ Jesus, the desolation of his Church here militant upon Earth, the dreadful danger daily threatned unto the poor remainder thereof, the millions of Souls cast headlong into eternal Destruction, the infininit number of woful Christians (whose grievous groanings under the heavy yoke of Infidelity no tongue is able to express) with the carelesness of the Great for the redress thereof, might give just cause unto any good Christian to fit down. (n.p)

Knolles subjective comments and notes on the historical events he recounts in his book help in shaping a hostile attitude towards the Turks and their civilization. Obviously, Knolles's approach is to insert numerous authorial judgments – often religiously related – that affect readers' responses to the historical incidents and impact the way in which the western reader understands the relationship between the Ottoman Empire and the Christian nations.

In his book, *Staging Islam in England- Drama and Culture, 1640-1685*, Matthew Birchwood points out that Knolles's *Historie* is more likely to be Boyle's main source in relating the fall of the Kingdom of Hungary in the hands of the Turks (132). Nevertheless, when examining Boyle's version of the story, we can find considerable differences between the play and Knolles's account. It is clear that Boyle departs from Knolles's account which states that,

> The fame of Solymans coming directly from Belgrade to Buda, so terrified the Citizens of Buda, that they almost all forsook the City and fled unto other places further off […] so that at his first coming he entred the City (almost desolate) without any resistance (410).

In addition, Knolles describes, in much detail, the brutal end of those who remained in the city. Knolles writes,

> For whatsoever fell into the Enemies hand, was lost without recure; the old men were slain, the young men led away into Captivity, Women ravished before their Husbands faces, and afterwards slain with their Children, […] with many other incredible Cruelties, which were then by the merciless Enemy committed. (411)

In contrast, the play mentions nothing about the city's citizens fleeing as the Hungarian Queen offers the city to the Sultan in an attempt to obtain good surrender terms. This particular modification in the story enables the playwright to design a glorious portrayal of the Hungarian queen and makes the restoration of her throne something possible and linked to the Sultan's generosity.

From a historical perspective, Boyle departs from Knolles's account in including the story of the infant prince and the Queen Mother of Hungry. The sources Boyle used indicate that the playwright was aware of the importance of building strong parallels between the historical story he chose and the contemporary political concerns he intended to discuss. The negotiations between Queen Mother and the Sultan enable the playwright to present the magnificence of the Sultan/ Charles II. The Muslim setting here is meant to serve as an allegorical setting to deliver certain political messages about succession issues. The components Boyle used for his plot, whether historical facts or an imaginative aesthetic, delivered one clear political message of the playwright, i.e., the infighting among brothers/citizens over succession could only bring about internal strife and miseries.

The only other possible source Boyle might have used was Henry Marsh's *New Survey of the Turkish Empire*, published only in 1663. In fact, I do not believe that Boyle relied on Marsh's book due to its concern in discussing merely religious differences between the

English and the Turks.[6] In contrast, Knolles's *Historie* pays more attention to the political and social aspects of the Turkish Empire. While there is no clear indication that Boyle had the chance to read Marsh's book, Knolles's *Historie* is more likely to be the major source of the play as the book was the main source for readers about Turkish history for many decades after the death of Knolles. Andres Ingram points out that the book appeared with several continuations extending the original work by various authors in the years 1610, 1621, 1631, 1638, and 1687 (95). Undoubtedly, the *Historie* remained an influential basis for future historians of the Turkish Empire. The effect was the same however; new generations were now exposed to the same prejudices against the Turkish empire.

Purposefully, the plot of *The Tragedy of Mustapha* places much emphasis on the English belief – rooted in the accounts of historians like Richard Knolles and Henry Marsh – that when a new Turkish Sultan ascends to the throne of the empire, he has to eliminate all of his brothers. This practice is meant to prevent any possibility of dissent or rebellion in the country. Roxolana foresees such a horrible scenario:

> Oh cruel Empire! That does thus ordain
>
> Of Royal Race the youngest to be slain,
>
> That so the eldest may securely reign;
>
> Making the' Imperial Mother ever mourn
>
> For all her Infants in Succession born. (II.i 72-3) [7]

The play's love plot concerns Mustapha's and Zanger's love for the Queen of Buda whose army was defeated by the Sultan's forces. Roxolana shows her nobility and mercy when she

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[6] See Matar's "Britons and Muslims in the Early Modern Period: From Prejudice to (a theory of) Toleration" (2009).

[7] This text is taken from Early English Books Online edition of the play. All subsequent references to this text will be cited parenthetically by (act, scene, and page number.)

manages to grant the safety of the defeated queen and her infant son. Roxolana, in particular, is one of the most complicated characters in the plays as she plots to murder a prince (Mustapha) and stands firm to protect another (the infant prince of Buda). McJannet claims that much of the criticism of Roxolana and Rustan, the Vizier Bassa at the Sultan's court, is an attempt to find excuses for Solyman as well as to "stabilize the [Ottoman] political situation" after the death of the two princes (145). Eventually in the play, after both sons of the Sultan are killed, Roxolana confesses her part in the royal tragedy. The Sultan forgives her, but sends her into exile.

Boyle starts his play with an image of a victorious leader who is about to conquer his enemies. This can be read as an allegorical representation of Charles II. This is figured through Solyman's address to his generals who wonder about his hesitation to complete the invasion of Buda:

> You both mistake; my glory is the cause
> That in my Conquest I have made this pause;
> Whilst *Hungary* did pow'rful Foes afford,
> I thought her Ruine worthy of my Sword;
> But now the War does seem too low a thing,
> Against a Mourning Queen, and Infant King; (I.i 55)

In fact, this image of Charles as lofty and tolerant is a complex one. It combines both praise and criticism. Owen argues that the praise of Charles's mercy to his enemies in Royalist drama is "often a backhanded way of criticizing him for being 'soft' on the opponents of his royalist supporters" (*Restoration Theatre and Crisis* 7). This was expected from the majority of courtiers who hoped for more rewards for their role in the Restoration process. In the play, Rustan, a vizier Basha, appears to be speaking with an English Royalist's tongue. He expresses his views as he addresses the Sultan: "But he who Conquests wisely has design'd, /

Does never leave an Enemy behind" (I.i 56). This can be understood as a hint to the old Cavaliers' complaints during the 1660s of the King's leniency towards the rebels and his unwillingness to punish them (Owen, *Restoration Theatre and Crisis* 111). Rustan believes that no mercy should be extended to Commonwealth supporters and leaders. Boyle did not push hard in supporting the punishment of Commonwealth supporters because he had supported Cromwell and his regime after the execution of Charles I.

In the play, Boyle makes use of the historical accounts about the political unrest and controversy in matters of succession in the Ottoman Empire. For example, the Turkish "custom" of eliminating all potential successors by the new Sultan spreads distrust among the members of the royal family and occasionally encourages proactive actions. In addition, the interference of court members in some of the most crucial issues like succession creates serious problems. Roxolana intervenes in the succession issues and causes trouble for the Sultan. The play ends with a childless Sultan, a situation very similar to that of Charles II. Boyle compares the instability of the Turkish succession process with that of his own country. This may be regarded as an early prediction of the great English Crisis of Succession during the late 1670s and early 1680s. Boyle, as the advisor of the king and one of the fiercest anti-Catholic courtiers, must have understood the public dissatisfaction with the Catholic influence at Charles's court. To that end, Tomlinson points out, Boyle struggled to strengthen the English presence in Ireland in the face of the Catholic opposition to English rule (560).

Jennifer Uglow points out that *The Tragedy of Mustapha* is a clear attack on Charles II as the play addresses the main obstacles that faced the newly restored king such as the corrupt court and the succession question (402). Accordingly, Boyle highlights the danger of the conspiracies that arose from within the court itself. Boyle uses the character of Sultan Solyman to refer to Charles's court. In the play, the Sultan's court is swarming with many ambitious Bashas who are involved in plots against each other and against the Sultan himself.

For instant, Rustan schemes to use Roxolana's fears regarding the ill consequences of the Sultan's death on her son, Zanger. Rustan explains his intentions to Pyrrhus,

> Her [Roxolana] heightn'd mind and nature much disdain,
>
> That Mustapha should over Zanger raign;
>
> I can assault her only on that side,
>
> Making her vertue vassal to her pride. (II.i 68)

Boyle warns of the dangers of corruption and its disastrous consequences on the court, the succession process, and the whole country. Rustan represents the Machiavellian politician who is able to design complex schemes in order to achieve his goals. He is aware of the defects within the Sultan's court and knows how to manipulate the actions to serve his ends. Early in the play, Mustapha elucidates the corrupt nature of the Sultan's court:

> Councils dare do worse than their Monarchs dare;
>
> For where in evil many bear a share,
>
> They hardly count, when they divide the guilt,
>
> A drop for each, though streams of blood were spilt. (I.i 60)

The importance of Boyle's play is the fact that it very thoughtfully foresees the succession issue at a very early stage. The corrupt nature of Charles's court was among the prominent reasons that urged the opposition groups to interfere in deciding the new heir. The opposition leaders believed that the corrupt court was penetrated by foreign forces and therefore unable to act for the good of the nation. Jennifer Maguire states that by referring to corrupt politicians Boyle hints at the political crisis over Clarendon, Chief Minister 1660-1667. Maguire points out that Clarendon was rumored to be a traitor receiving money from the Dutch (179 *Regicide and Restoration*). As a parallel to that, Boyle creates a cunning advisor who manipulates the Sultan's court and policy. Hayden supports the reading of Maguire and regards the character of Rustan as a reflection of Clarendon, who was viewed as a corrupt and

self-serving Chancellor. What we are sure of is that as time passed, Boyle learned to use the theatre as a means to conduct his political views.

Like many other royalist dramas of the period, the play highlights the enduring danger of rebellion and chaos. The plots over the succession of the Turkish throne endanger the stability of the empire and shake its very existence. Boyle warns of this scenario in more than one place in the play. Plotters try to make Solyman jealous of Mustapha's success and popularity. Rustan plays on the fact that Mustapha's courage and valor eclipse his father's past achievements. Eventually, the Sultan is made jealous, as he acknowledges:

> But if he [Mustapha] shines too fully in my face,
>
> I'le draw a Curtain and his lustre hide;
>
> His glory shall not make me turn aside.
>
> The shining Mustapha must change his Sphear;
>
> He threatens me worse than a Comet here. (III.i 83)

Solyman further expresses his worries of a rebellion breaking out in his empire " […] I hate him [Mustapha] too. / And he, even in my Camp, my pow'r controuls; / I ruling but their Bodies, he their Souls" (IV.i 98).

In the play, the destruction of the succession is associated with rebellion. In fact, rebellion has significant associations in Restoration royalist drama. As Owen explains, rebels or plotters of a rebellion are usually driven by ambition and lust for power (*Restoration Theatre and Crisis* 134). The Restoration audiences that watched the performance of the play held strong and vivid memories of the unforgettable miseries of the Civil War. In the play, Roxolana, Rustan, and Pyrrhus are all looking for more power and dominance at Solyman's court. Roxolana reveals the ambitious agendas of Rustan, and Pyrrhus. When the three meet in Roxolana's tent, the Sultana declares,

My favour to the Sultan you implore

Only for Governments your sought before.

You sue for Egypt, you for Babylon;

If I could these procure you would be gone. (IV.i 103)

Eventually, Rustan, and Pyrrhus's scheme results in the murder of Mustapha. As a result, this bloody act initiates a real rebellion at the Sultan's camp. Haly delivers the unpleasant news to Roxolana,

Madam, the Guards and Train of Mustapha

Assault the Camp with their united Force,

And are assisted by Prince Zanger's Horse.

The Sultan, arm'd against this sudden rage,

Is now advanc'd their fury to asswage. (V.i 118)

Obviously, by presenting the miseries of the in-fighting, Boyle was reflecting on another political issue of his time, namely, the lasting guilt of the Civil War that had destroyed England earlier. The traumas of the Civil War emerged as a direct outcome of interrupting the English succession by executing the king and banishing his heirs. Therefore, Boyle used playwriting to express the ill results of the absence of monarchy. Like many other playwrights, Boyle provoked the emotional associations of the regicide of Charles I among his aristocratic audience. This is perfectly expressed through performing the tragic death of Mustapha and the scene of death and sorrow that followed the fierce in-fighting at Solyman's camp. Achmat explains the situation after the infighting,

Then the Victorious threw their Arms away,

And wept for those whom they did lately slay.

Some, who had kill’d their Sons, more tears did shed

For their own guilt, than that their Sons were dead;

Guilt wrought by Fate, which had the valour mov'd

Against that Prince whom they for valour lov'd. (V.i 119)

The statements over the losses from the in-fighting are very strong in the play. Such feelings would have been so touching especially for the spectators who had experienced the miseries of the Civil Wars. Boyle worked through the traumas of the recent Civil War to prove that any break in the succession line would drive the nation back to a new period of chaos.

The portrayal of Mustapha in the play is worth consideration since it carries many significant insights into England's political life. Mustapha's love for his brother is perfect, and his courage in the battlefield is praised by everyone. In the play, Mustapha submits to his father's commands although he is fully aware of the risks of his decision. Mustapha is portrayed as someone who is moved by honor first and then by loyalty to his father. In the Fifth Act, when the mutes offer Mustapha "a black box with a parchment, the sultan's great seal hanging at it in a black ribbon," he only asks to speak with the Sultan and shows no resistance. When the mutes deny his request, he defends himself and kills two of them. Solyman enters and refuses to listen to his son's claims of innocence. Mustapha subdues, kneels, and "lays his Scemitar at the *Sultan's* feet" (IV.i 111). Mustapha desires in his last moments to be executed by his own servants. One of his servants prefers to stab himself before he is forced to kill his master. Purposefully, the death of the rightful heir, Mustapha, takes place offstage rather than dramatized onstage.

Mustapha's tragic end resembles the regicide of Charles I. The sensitivity of the incident could be one of the reasons why Boyle chose the murder to take place offstage. Boyle was among the royalist playwrights who referred to the "martyred king", Charles I, in their works. In one of his letters, Boyle referred to the "barbarous murther of his late majesty, a sin which no honest man could avoid being sorry for," and he also described "the horridest of murthers" and "the bloody consequences of it" (qtd. in Maguire *Regicide and Restoration*

28). The recurring use of royal martyrs in Boyle's plays can be considered as a strategy to deconstruct the memories of the recent regicide of Charles I and the interruption with the succession line adding to royalty the innocence, nobility, and bravery of a martyr.

In terms of the emphasis on the succession issue in the Turkish court, numerous parallels can be drawn between Knolles's *Historie* and Boyle's plot. For instance, Knolles refers to the story of the two Turkish princes who vow not to involve in any infighting after the Sultan is dead. Knolles writes "for the mercie shewed by Achmet to his brother Mustapha, so much differing from the Ottoman custome" (758). Boyle shapes this comment into an eloquent conversation between the two brothers:

> Mustapha: By our great Prophet solemnly I swear,
> If I the Turkish Crown do ever wear,
> Our bloody Custom I will overthrow;
> That Debt I both to you and Justice owe.
> Zanger: And her I vow by all that good and high;
> I'll not out-live the Day in which you die;
> This which my Friendship makes me promise now,
> My Grief will then enable me to do.
> Mustapha: My vow is seal'd.
> Zanger: Mine Friendship shall make good. [They embrace.]
> Mustapha: Friendship's a stronger tye than that of blood. (I.iii 60)

Boyle uses this image of the two brothers to clarify that the succession question has to be privately settled only by royalty, which meant the Stuart brothers, Charles II and the Duke of York.

In a similar vein, Boyle's portrayal of Roxolan is influenced by Knolles's account of the empress's influence at the Sultan's court. Knolles devotes considerable space to discussing Roxolana's interference in the succession process.

> This woman of late a slave, but now become the greatest empresse of the East, flowing in all worldly felicitie, attended upon with all the pleasures her heart could desire, wanted nothing she could wish, but how to find means that the Turkish empire might after the death of Solyman, be brought to some one of her owne sons. (759)

Elaine McGirr claims that for the Restoration audience, who was skilled in making connections between on-stage characters and public figures, it would be hard not to make a link between the powerful and ambitious Sultana and Charles's favorite mistress in mid-1660s, Barbara Villiers, the Duchess of Cleveland. Historically, the Duchess had a similar strong character as Roxolana combined by a will to interfere in decision-making (44). Roxolana's punishment and exile in the last scene may be read as a call for the king to stop his sexual adventures with his mistresses that would only result in replacing the current succession line with a group of bastards. The nation witnessed the consequences of Charles's irresponsibility only after his death when Monmouth, Charles's eldest illegitimate son, claimed the crown and fought his uncle, King James II in 1685.

To conclude, Boyle's *Mustapha* can be considered as an early alarm that warned of the dangerous consequences of the unresolved succession issue in England. Boyle had a rich political and military experience that made him capable of diagnosing the political dilemmas of the early years of Charles's II reign. His political position, as well as his literary capacities, qualified him to address, advice, and even criticize the practices of Charles's court in front of the King and the aristocracy. In fact, Boyle knew how to make use of Charles's interest in the theatre to deliver certain political messages to the king and the political nation. Boyle, who

witnessed the fall of King Charles I, offered his king the sum of his political experience in the shape of the allegorical story of Sultan Solyman and his sons. Although the character of Solyman – most likely a representation of Charles II – is portrayed as a powerful, victorious, and noble leader, he suffers from some defects that result in the ruin of his family and the rupture of a rebellion against him. On the other hand, the character of Mustapha reminds the audience of the "martyr" Charles I who was murdered by the usurpers of the English crown. Nostalgia for a dead king than a living one may seem ironic, but royalist playwrights used to resort to the model of the "Martyr King" when the defects of Charles II could have weakened their cause. In the same line, Susan Owen explains that while some characteristics were perfectly applicable to the character of Charles I, "it seemed disastrously inapposite to Charles II" (*Restoration Theatre and Crisis* 10). Purposefully, the play ends with a Sultan with no successors, a message that can hardly be missed by the play's audience. The play stresses the importance of having the process of succession performed without foreign interference in order to avoid chaos. Boyle's message was well received by Restoration audience. Cynthia Lowenthal points out that *The Tragedy of Mustapha* received warm compliments by theatergoers for its powerful language and strong central characters (181). Elaine McGirr explains that the plague that emptied London theatres in 1666-67 season did not diminish the interest in the play as the play was the most successful serious play of that season (42).

In a different vein, the modifications Boyle made to the story of Mustapha and the Turkish history in general draws our attention to the idea that the actual lives and history of these people who were allegorized, like Solyman, Mustapha, and the Pashaws disappear in the play. Boyle was not the first English playwright to choose Mustapha's tragic story in dramatic presentation. One of the most popular presentations of the story is Fulke Greville's *The Tragedy of Mustapha* (1609). In his play, Greville demonizes certain characters in the

Turkish court such as Roxolana whom he portrayed as holding an uncontrollable desire for power. Yermolenko observes that Greville's *Mustapha*'s depiction of the Turkish political milieu is deeply influenced by Knolles's *Generall Historie of the Turkes* (30). In addition, Greville's play presents lengthy theological discussions of Islam and attacks its Prophet and his teachings. For example, the Priest, in a conversation with Mustapha declares, "False *Mahomet*, thy lawes Monarchall are, / Vniust, ambitious, full of spoile and blood," (III.v n.p). Nevertheless, Boyle's retelling of Mustapha's fate is obviously different in the sense that it is void, to a great extent, of playing on religious and military animosity between Christian Europe and the Ottoman Empire. Boyle's use of the political polemics of the Restoration period obscures the actual history of the characters in his allegory. This trend of assimilating the other into the self is further expressed in the plays of the playwrights who I will discuss below. Finally, it is important to note that Boyle's *Mustapha* does not represent a clear pre-Whiggish standpoint, nor can it be understood as completely supporting Charles II's politics; instead, the play can be understood as representing a broader range of English political expectations and concerns behind a smokescreen of a modified version of Turkish history.

3. William Whitaker's *The Conspiracy* or *Change of Government* (1680)

Ignored by many researchers in the field of political theatre of the English Restoration period, Whitaker's play shows striking historical and political parallels related to the succession question in England. In fact, it is surprising to discover how little criticism has been written about this important play. *The Conspiracy* presents one of the most complicated political allegories of the Exclusion Crisis period. The play is based on actual accounts of the history of the Ottoman Empire with some modifications in certain aspects of the plot. The actions of *The Conspiracy* concern the dethronement and execution of the Ottoman Sultan Ibrahim (r. 1640- 48) and the subsequent enthronement of his son Mehemd IV. Historically,

Sultan Ibrahim came to power after the death of his father, Sultan Murad IV, in 1639. Ibrahim was the only surviving adult male in the succession line. The period of his short rule turned to be a series of catastrophes and troubles. During Ibrahim's short life as a Sultan, the empire was controlled by a group of corrupt advisors. In fact, corruption and internal uprisings drove the treasury into bankruptcy. In addition, the Sultan's campaign against the Venetians over the island of Crete proved to be catastrophic militarily and financially (White 211). Mass discontent of the Sultan's rule was developed in a revolution in 1648 that ended in the execution of the Sultan and the enthronement of his six-year-old son Mehmed.

Succession-related anxieties are figured in the actions of all the characters in the play. In fact, in the midst of the succession crisis of England, Whitaker's play has to be considered very politically relevant. An audience used to intense use of allegory on stage could hardly miss the many parallels Whitaker establishes between the Ottoman succession crisis and England's own crisis. As Bridget Orr argues, "Contemporary audiences expected heroic poems to be allegorical, offering several layers of meaning, and could be expected to recognize that such texts had multiple significations" (11).

Whitaker's play was performed at the Duke's Theatre in 1680 while England was experiencing significant political controversy and partisanship. During the early 1680s, the fears of a potential Catholic monarch grew as Charles's heir, the Duke of York, was an openly known Catholic. In response, Parliament struggled to exclude the Duke from succession. The Earl of Shaftesbury, among other opposition leaders, attempted to ensure the exclusion of any future Catholic heir from ascending to the English throne. The King dissolved the Parliaments of 1680 and 1681 to prevent the passing of the Bill. The opposition involved the whole nation in a continuous agitation by playing on the strong fears raised by the Popish Plot. Mass demonstrations were organized in London to urge the King to call a

new parliament. Charles ignored such petitions and ruled without a sitting parliament until his death.[8]

The plot of the play revolves around schemes, dissent, and conspiracies at the Ottoman Sultan's court. The play presents the helpless Sultan Ibrahim and Sultana Formiana, who are surrounded by wicked plotters. Among the plotters is the Queen mother, Kiosem, who has already eliminated three sons, and now is plotting to murder the Sultan with the help of an ambitious rebel, Bectas. Flatra, the Sultan's sister, and Melek, the Grand Vizier, conspire to kill the Sultan, too. Flatra pretends to love Melek only for the sake of his assistance in performing her scheme. After the failure of his plan to murder the Sultan in the royal garden, Bectas leads an uprising with the help of other ambitious leaders in the Janissaries. When the news of the rebellion is delivered to the Sultan and Sultana, Oglar Pasha, who served the Sultan for a long time, offers to protect the Sultana in the absence of the Sultan. Oglar turns out to be a traitor too and in vain attempts the Sultana's virtue and honor. Taking advantage of the chaos the rebels caused, Melek stabs the Sultan to win both Flatra and the throne. Flatra is stabbed by Melek who then repents his evil deeds. Eventually, loyal subjects support the legitimate heir, Mahomet, and save the empire. The young Sultan condemns all rebels to their fate, and the Queen mother is imprisoned in a dark dungeon.

In her article, "Restoration Drama and Politics: An Overview," Susan Owen brands Whitaker's play as "the most fervent and wholehearted royalist play of the Exclusion Crisis" (162). Whitaker's royalist sympathies are presented early in the prologue to the play:

> And for the Men of business in the Nation,
>
> Let them begin a Thoro Reformation.

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[8] For detailed historical account on the Exclusion Crisis see De Krey's *Restoration and Revolution in Britain: A Political History of the Era of Charles II and the Glorious Revolution* (pp. 145-182).

Let 'em leave Faction, Jealousies and Fears.

Leave setting us together by the Ears.

Let Corporations leave Petitioning,

And learn all due Allegiance to the King.

Let Politicians too not be so hot

To swear that a Spring-tide's a Popish-Plot. (17-24)

Whitaker's satirical lines are aimed at Whig exaggerations in regards to the truth behind Titus Oates popish plot. The "Popish Plot," which broke out in 1678, engaged in scaremongering tactics over the impending Catholic danger. In 1678 Titus Oates, an Anglican clergyman, warned of a Popish conspiracy to kill Charles designed to hasten James's succession. Oates claimed that he was recruited in a Jesuit plot to kill the unsuspected King. Oates added that all the money needed to carry out the scheme had been raised by foreign Catholics, some of them in relation with Louise XIV of France. Oates's fabricated plot acquired great national credibility and attracted more attention to the sensitivity of the succession issue (De Krey 141). The Popish Plot scare that erupted after 1678 hastened the emergence of the two major political parties that quarreled over the succession issue. By the beginning of the 1680s, the Exclusion Crisis was still dominating the political scene in England. The Crisis resulted in the emergence of the Tory and the Whig parties. From their side, the Whigs tried to exclude the Duke of York from the throne because he was publically known with his Catholic faith as well as his favoring of absolutism. In his book *The First Whigs; the Politics of the Exclusion Crisis, 1678-1683,* Jones states that the Whigs were mostly alarmed against the increasing possibilities that once the Duke ascended to the English throne, English liberties and the Protestant religion would be endangered (4). The leaders of the Whigs attempted to pass the Bill more than once, but were faced by the King, proroguing or dissolving the Parliament. One the other hand, Tories opposed the Whigs and

their endeavors to pass the Bill. Tories supported the Stuart brothers and their right to rule the country. Tories warned of the menacing danger of a new civil war initiated by the Whigs' ambitious attempts to interfere in the succession process. In the prologue of his play, Whitaker calls on people to show their obedience to the King and avoid both factions and exaggerated fear of the Plot. While the play itself is designed to highlight the dangers of rebellion, civil war, and faction by allegorizing the story of the regicide of Sultan Ibrahim, Whitaker modified some historical incidents to allude to certain political incidents specific to his age.

Whitaker's play can be read as an allegorical retelling of the history of English Civil War and the breakdown of the Stuart heredity succession. The English Civil War (1642–1651) that both Boyle and Whitaker referred to was a series of military conflicts between English Parliamentarians and Royalists. The conflict was initiated by what the Parliament considered an absolute tyranny during the King's Personal Rule (1629–40). Between1642–46, the war pitted the supporters of the Long Parliament against the Royalist who fought with King Charles I. After the final defeat of the King, the war was resumed in 1649 between supporters of the young Charles II and supporters of the Rump Parliament. Eventually, the Royalists' defeat at the Battle of Worcester ended the war in September 1651. Some of the direct outcomes of the war were the execution of Charles I, the exile of his sons, and the replacement of the monarchy with the Commonwealth of England and, at a later stage, the Protectorate. The war further strengthened the position of Parliament in English political system.

As an allegorical retelling of the history of English Civil War and the interruption of the notion of English succession, *The Conspiracy* stages the regicide of Sultan Ibrahim at the hands of rebels and the eventual restoration of his son to the throne. Kevin Sharpe argues that Whitaker chose Charles I as a more suitable model for his royalist allegory to avoid the

weaknesses of Charles II (225). In this case, Sultan Ibrahim and the young queen, Formiana, stand for Charles I and Queen Henrietta Maria. This argument can be supported by the parallels that can be drawn between the dramatic characters and the Stuart royal couple. Sultan Ibrahim/ Charles I is represented as an example of nobility and courage, despite the hints at some of the failings of his reign. The Mufti describes Ibrahim as "So pious and so good" (III.i 21).[9] The Sultan is also brave. He stands firm against the advancing rebels and shows no willingness to retreat. When Solyman Aga, the Chief Eunuch, advises the Sultan to leave the court for safety, the Sultan replies,

> Shall the Grand Seignieur e're be said to flie?
>
> No, flight's too mean a thing for Majesty.
>
> On that will all their innocence be built;
>
> So their Rebellion will become my guilt. (III.i 20)

The Sultan is fully aware of his mission and responsibilities towards his nation and decides to defend his throne.

Similar to Boyle's depiction of the legendary traits of Charles I, Whitaker – whose prologue shows zealous Tory attitudes – hints at the Tory's recurring depiction of Charles I as a royal martyr. In her *Restoration Theatre and Crisis*, Susan Owen explains that usually Tory playwrights claimed a superior position over the Whigs through their continuity of their cause with the interrupted role of the "sainted martyr Charles I" (111). In harmony with Owen's observation, the young Sultan Mahomet narrates a dream he had in which the murdered Sultan appears as an angel with wings "upon his shoulders" (V.i 49). Moreover, in harmony with the classic royalist portrayal of Queen Henrietta Maria – a good example is the

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[9] This text is taken from Early English Books Online edition of the play. All subsequent references to this text will be cited parenthetically by (act, scene, and page number.)

characters of Ianthe in Davenant's *The Siege of Rhodes* – Sultana Formiana, is portrayed as the perfection of chastity and virtue (Owen, *Restoration Theatre and Crisis* 126). When Kara asks Oglar about his attempts to seduce the Queen, Oglar admits that the Queen is an unlikely candidate for infidelity:

> Kara. But prithee to the business with the Queen;
>
> Come, come, I know you have succesful been.
>
> Oglar. No faith, she's vertuous obstinate and Chast;
>
> I but in vain my time and spirits waste;
>
> So ignorant she was and Inocent,
>
> She hardly knew what my addresses meant. (I.i 4)

Formiana can be regarded as a virtuous example of Stuart queens. Even during the most dangerous moments in the play, the Queen keeps true to her morals and stays faithful to her lord. She neglects the approaching raging rebels and scorns Oglar's lustful proposal to enjoy her love, saying:

> And if I grant what you expect to have,
>
> I more destroy, than I can hope to save:
>
> I know the Sultan twenty deaths would choose,
>
> Rather than I one vertuous thought should lose:
>
> Nor shall our Annals e're of me record,
>
> She lost her honour to preserve her Lord. (III.i 22)

In fact, lust was one of the recurring traits of rebels in Tory writings. Owen refers to the fact that Tory writings during Exclusion Crisis tended to demonize Whigs by attributing to them characteristics of excess sexual desires and lust (*Restoration Theatre and Crisis* 174). The major motive of Oglar's treachery in the play is his lust for the Sultana.

Whitaker's play copies more royalist tropes of the era in the sequence of its portrayal of the rebels (Owen, *Restoration Theatre and Crisis* 135). All the rebels and conspirators are motivated by uncontrolled ambition for power. Flatra, Kiosem, Melek, Bectas, and other courtiers are driven by a strong ambition to ascend the throne and rule the vast empire. Flatra, in the course of urging Melek to murder the Sultan, expresses the nature and power of ambition:

> Rash, Loving fool go peirce the *Sultans* breast,
> He grows too lazy, and takes too much rest.
> Ambition! what a powerful God art thou?
> To thee the best and mightiest Monarchs bow;
> Thy nature is immense, and knows no bounds,
> Thy unconceivable Idea drowns. (I.i 11)

Usurping the throne and interrupting the succession process is the goal of all the villains in the play. Flatra describes the situations as follows:

> The Janizaries of our party are,
> And Kiosem the Empire hopes to share;
> The discontented Saphees are our friends,
> All plot the Sultans fall for different ends, (I.i 10)

Whitaker places great emphasis on the danger of rebellion against the state, the people, and the succession line. For the Restoration audience, rebellion recalled the bitter memories of the Civil Wars of the 1640s. Owen points out that Tory writers used to accuse Whig politicians of pushing the nation into another 1641 (*Perspectives on Restoration Drama* 130). Similar to Boyle's *The Tragedy of Mustapha*, Whitaker's *The Conspiracy* plays on the national fears that the stubborn political campaign against the legitimate heir would cause more partisanship and

dissent. The unsettled political life of the Restoration period may justify the continuity of the themes that appeared in both early Restoration Exclusion Crisis era plays.

Whitaker presents in his play a group of statesmen who only care for their private interests, ignoring the dangerous outcomes for the state and the people. In the play, the Divan assembles and conspires to crown Solyman, the Chief Eunuch, instead of the legitimate heir, young prince Mahomet. The Divan's interference in the succession process may refer to the Parliament's calls – especially Whig members – during the Exclusion Crisis years to introduce a more politically acceptable heir to the throne. In fact, Whigs considered the names of Mary, Queen of Netherlands and James's daughter, and the Duke of Monmouth, Charles's eldest illegitimate son, as possible substitutes to James (De Krey 164-5). Bectas's dialogue with Kuperli reveals a similar scheme at the Sultan's court:

> To morrow, at a General *Divan*,
>
> We have resolv'd to Crown young *Solyman:*
>
> What with the present Sultan we shall do,
>
> Is not decreed; we leave it, Sir, to you [Kuperli]. (V.i 45)

Interestingly enough, the play follows the Tory tradition of mocking Whig rabble-rousing which started with the early tensions of the 1640s (Owen, *Restoration Theatre and Crisis* 149)**.** Whitaker highlights the dangers of this aspect of Whig behavior throughout the performance. The mob who breaks into the Sultan's court are easily stirred up by the play's villains, Bectas and Kara. By criticizing Whig agitation, Whitaker warns of the disastrous consequences of mob dissatisfaction. The mob scene in Act II highlights the critical outcomes of provoking the masses to protest the state's order and discipline. The angry mob attacks the royal court shouting, "Justice, Justice, Justice" and "His Head, his head, his head" (III.i 25). This scene was not unfamiliar to an audience who were still living with the memories of the

regicide of Charles I in 1649. Struck by the speed and power of the rebellion flames, the Sultan cries,

> Oh horrid Traitors to my Crown and Name!
>
> The City Rages in Rebellious Flame:
>
> The Commons are incourag'd by the Peers,
>
> Vizier and Bectas head the Mutiniers (III.i 20)

The following scene, in which the Sultan is murdered, is worth further investigation for the sensitivity of the act of regicide for Restoration spectators. Whitaker must have had a hard time figuring out a way to perform the execution of the Sultan. While the historical Sultan Ibrahim was executed by a formal Act, as Imber points out (101), Whitaker's Ibrahim was stabbed by the villain Melek. Dramatizing decapitation was a thorny issue, especially in front of Restoration spectators who might have recalled the beheading of their "martyr king." Whitaker chose to avoid such anxieties as his play was prepared to be performed at the Duke Theatre where members of the royal family such as the Duke of York, and the King himself used to attend shows. A beheading scene in front of Charles I's sons could have summoned unpredictable royal responses.

In a similar fashion to Boyle's *Mustapha*, Whitaker's play is not void of some criticism of monarchy. Susan Owen points out in *Restoration Theatre and Crisis* that it was not unexpected from a loyalist writer to express his/her dissatisfaction with the court's inability to reward the service of loyal subjects (75-6). In the play, Kuperli hints at the general royalist anxieties about Charles's ingratitude towards the loyal service of those who stood all the time with their king and his successor,

> My Lords, in States men I've observ'd it oft,
>
> The smooth and oily only swim aloft;

While those who of their Princes safety think,

And not their own; turn solid fools, and sink. (IV.i 41)

Such feelings of anxiety over the court's ingratitude towards loyal subjects are usually combined by a dissatisfaction with the court's indulgence towards former enemies. Ispir warns of the dangers of the double-faced rebels who would turn against the Sultan at the first chance:

Go, Traytors, go! their Visage still retains,

Under that Loyal Paint, Rebellious stains:

When they again a fit occasion find,

You'l see which way the Villains are inclin'd. (IV.i 41)

Susan Owen sets up in her *Restoration Theatre and Crisis* – among lots of articles on the topic –a number of Tory tropes that Restoration Tory playwrights implemented in their writings. Tropes like rebels' ambition, the importance of establishing Protestant religion, rebels' lust, and the theme of national pride were used by Tory playwrights to support their standpoint against their opponents. Owen explains that some of these tropes were used also by Whigs with opposite association (182). Whitaker implements another Tory trope in his play that emphasizes the burdens of kingship (127). In a sense, highlighting the difficult tasks of kings presents their position as undesirable. Thus, this trope, in particular, aroused pity and sympathy among the audience. Succeeding a king or participating in carrying the burdens of kingship would appear as less attractive and, consequently, could deflect attention from the anxieties of the succession question. Owen argues that this trope is found in numerous Restoration royalist works (*Restoration Theatre and Crisis* 127). In Whitaker's play, the young Sultan Mahomet tells his mother of the huge difference between kings' burdens and the common worries of subjects,

Madam, Alas! I find the Dreams of Kings,

And those of Subjects, are far different things;

Before some sport my Childish Soul possest,

Which now I find with manly cares deprest:

Then did I entertain my mind with toys;

But now I dream of things unfit for Boys. (V.i 48)

Kings become victims of their positions as guardians of the people and state. Whitaker reminds his audience that while common people enjoy the peace of mind, their monarch worries about the great issues and concerns of the state. This image serves the cause of royalists in the sense that it presents the position of kings and princes as full of hardships and responsibilities, and as a result, developed a sense of sympathy and respect for their duties.

The sources of Whitaker's play are not known for sure, but apparently, his version of Sultan Ibrahim's regicide was based on a relatively accurate and detailed account of the regicide of the Sultan. Historically speaking, Eli Kohen points out that the Queen Mother, Kosem, gave consent to her son's execution as she considered him responsible for dissent and faction in the empire (142). Perry and Cook refer to the rivalry between Kosem and Walid Turkhan, the mother of the young Sultan Mahomet IV, after the murder of Ibrahim. Each one of the strong Sultanas tried to play a major role in deciding the name of the new Sultan (155). This atmosphere of plots and conspiracies over the succession in the Ottoman Empire summarizes the political scene during the Exclusion Crises period. During that time, the name of the future successor of the English crown was the reason for the majority of political controversy and tensions.

In order to further emphasize his message about the succession issue, Whitaker presents some fictional characters in his play. For example, the third major female character, Flatra, appears to be fictional. There is no mention of any role of any of Ibrahim's sisters in

the contemporary political quarrels of the Ottoman Empire. In fact, this is not the only modification that Whitaker makes in his version of the regicide of Sultan Ibrahim. Whitaker presents nothing about the madness of the Sultan. Sultan Ibrahim, "The Mad," as he was labeled by historians, ruled from 1640 until 1648 and suffered from mental and psychological disorders. In fact, he had been caged for years before he ascended to the throne (Halman and Warner 131). In *The Conspiracy*, such ungraceful characteristics of Sultan Ibrahim are ignored and replaced with almost perfect traits that meet an ideal personification of the martyr king. By praising a former monarch, Whitaker strengthens the legitimacy of the present one. This nostalgic remembrance takes the audience to the tragic past of the kingdom and warns of the catastrophic consequences of interrupting the heredity succession.

In sum, the play comments on the contemporary political controversy over the succession question and reflects on the sources of dissent and faction that endangered the nation. As the bonds between the king and a large part of the political nation were broken during the Exclusion Crisis, the story of Sultan Ibrahim and his court came to reflect the antagonism between those who supported the king and those who plotted against the Stuart brothers and sought to interrupt the succession process. In such a poisonous atmosphere, distrust ruins all bonds between royalty and the subjects. Ironically, the Queen Mother – who is responsible for all the bloodshed and miseries in the court – is the one who refers to the danger of distrust on the individual and the nation. In the course of her dialogue with Formiana, she says, "Distrust, my Child, is the Soul's worst disease" (IV.i 38).

Remarkably, the playwright does not abandon the optimistic spirit of the early Restoration period. Whitaker makes use of the *Restoration* theme; restoring a king to his rightful throne. In the play, the character of Sultan Mahomet can be read as a representation of Charles II. Mahomet is presented as young and brave prince in play. Just like Charles II, Mahomet is restored to the throne after rebellion and regicide. Mahomet restores order and

ends bloodshed and chaos caused by the wicked rebels. Tory polemics considered Charles II as the new hope of the nation and the true defender of the English people.

4. Elkanah Settle's *The Heir of Morocco* (1682)

The political debate over the succession continued into the later years of Charles's II reign and was once again was a discursive topic in the theatres. One example is Elkanah Settle's *The Heir of Morocco* (1682). In fact, Settle was one of the major Whig propagandists who utilized allegorical characters and plots as an indirect way of expressing his views on the complex issue of royal succession. Settle was best known for his two plays *The Conquest of China* and *The Empress of Morocco* between1673 and 1675, the latter play being selected to be acted at Whitehall in the presence of the King and the aristocracy. The great success that Settle achieved inflamed the jealousy of the first-class playwrights like Dryden, Shadwell, and Crowne. In fact, Settle engaged in a long quarrel with John Dryden in particular. Dryden saw him a rival and attacked him in a pamphlet entitled "Notes and Observations on *The Empress of Morocco*." Settle fired back in "Notes and Observations on *The Empress of Morocco* Revised," (Zimbardo, *A Mirror to Nature* 96-7). The attacks of Dryden resulted only in increasing the popularity of the young writer who proved to be no less talented than the masters of the contemporary theatre.

Settle found more opportunities in opposition than in writing for the royalist side. Although his shift to the opposition side deprived him of royal patronage, Settle found new powerful patrons who saw in him a potential ally. During the late 1670s, he moved away from the court to support the Whig party openly. Settle's first tragedy, *Cambyses, King of Persia* (1667) was dedicated to Anne, Duchess of Monmouth, the wife of James Scott, First Duke of Monmouth. The playwright supported Whig polemics that preferred the Protestant Monmouth as a potential substitute for the Catholic Duke of York. His political sympathies were expressed a decade later in *The Female Prelate* (1680) with a dedication to Shaftesbury,

one of the leading figure in the Whig party (Nicoll 232). Shaftesbury knew how to employ Settle's talent to support the opposition campaign during the Exclusion Crisis. In 1681, he urged Settle to write "Character of a Popish Successor and What England May Expect from Such a One" which warned of the consequences of having a Catholic monarch on the English throne. Settle speculates,

> Can it be the duty of either Englishmen or Christians, to have that zeal for a corrupted leprous branch of royalty, that we must ruin both religion, government, and Majesty itself, to support him? How much more consistent would it be with the honest, prudent and lawful means of a nation's preservation, to take out one link of the whole chain of succession, than by preserving that, to break the whole to pieces? (qtd. in Furley 30)

A "Popish King," Settle claimed, would be the worst enemy of England. Interestingly, Settle found other means to express his political beliefs. In addition to playwriting and pamphleteering, Settle was encouraged by Shaftesbury to prepare the ceremonies for the huge pope-burning demonstrations in London (Brown 21-2). Such activities participated in shaping Settle's distinctive political character.

Whig leaders were very satisfied with Settle's performance. Brown points out that they urged Settle to respond to the satire in Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel* that was directed against their activities. Whig leaders' interest in having a professional reply shows that Dryden's work must have aroused great anger among Whigs. Settle's poem *Absalom Senior* or *Achitophel Transposed*, made several political charges against Tory leaders, focusing his hatred on those Catholic activists in the party in particular. After the end of the Exclusion Crisis and the fall of his chief supporter, Shaftesbury, Settle decided to leave the sinking boat of the Whigs and join the Tories again. He published his "A Narrative of the Popish Plot" in1683, exposing the lies of Oates (Brown 22-3). Eventually, Settle proved to be

resourceful again when he changed his political allegiance for the third time as he abandoned the Tory party and welcomed William and Mary in 1688.

4.1. The Play

Settle's deep engagement in writing political pamphlets and organizing pageants in the streets of London did not prevent him from writing new plays. His *The Heir of Morocco* was acted by the King's Company in 1682. The play must have been appealing to the Whig party as it was intended to ridicule the Tories. Settle's play is set at the court of Albuzeiden, King of Algiers. His daughter Artemira loves Altomar, a noble general in the King's army. The villain Meroin, tries to destroy the couple because Artemira rejected his earlier proposal to marry her. The play gets more complicated when King Gayland, the usurper of Morocco throne, falls in love with Artemira, too. The actions of the play reveal the true identity of Altomar who turns out to be the true heir to the Moroccan throne. Meroin tries to murder King Albuzeiden but Altomar saves the king and kills the traitor. This does not change anything as the stubborn Albuzeiden plans to marry his daughter to Gayland. Altomar kills Gayland in a combat and is sentenced to be tortured to death as a result. After his death, Altomar's true heritage is revealed to everyone as his true name is Muly-Mesude, the son of Muly Labas king of Morocco. Artemira stabs herself in mourning for Altomar. Unable to bear his great loss and guilt, Albuzeiden stabs himself, too.

The play is loaded with bitter criticism about Tories and court corruption. The complicated issue of succession is strongly felt in the play's emphasis on usurpers and legitimacy of kingship. Early in the play, Settle presents some hints about the ideal heir. Artemira is presented as the only legitimate heir to Algier's throne. She is portrayed as the perfection of nobility, chastity, and beauty. Albuzeiden promises to marry her to the courageous and noble general of his army, Altomar. Obviously, this couple would form an

exemplary model of monarchical rule. Artemira narrates her father's words as she meets Altomar,

> Daughter, says he, so much this gallant Souldier
> Deserves from Heaven and me, that tho' I ne'r
> Intended less than a Crown'd Head for you,
> Yet my Ambition now shall yield to Justice.
> Daughter, I am resolv'd I will reward
> My Kingdom's Champion with my Kingdoms Heir:
> At his Return prepare to make him yours. (I.i 4)[10]

On the other hand, Settle presents a usurper king, Gayland, who ascends to the throne of Morocco by force. Artemira explains to Altomar the reason behind her father's inability to welcome the victorious general,

> And if there's any thing that can detain him,
> It is the Ceremony that he pays
> To an Imperial Stranger. The Usurper Gayland,
> That great Subverter of the Africk Empire
> Is now my Father's Guest. (I.i 5)

The character of Gayland is more likely to represent the Catholic heir to the English throne, the Duke of York. During the later years of the 1670s, there was an increasing sense of mistrust and hostility against the Duke. The majority of those who opposed a future Catholic monarch looked with suspicion on Charles's inability to act for the good of the nation. In the anonymous *The Earl of Rochester's Verses For Which He Was Banished*, there is a clear

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[10] This text is taken from Early English Books Online edition of the play. All subsequent references to this text will be cited parenthetically by (act, scene, and page number.)

reference to the Stuart brothers' political irresponsibility. One verse ridicules Charles who is "little wiser than his brother" (qtd. in Owen's *Restoration Theatre and Crisis* 9). Further, Miller points out that the criticism was not Whiggish all the time. Even some loyal subjects, like Danby and Bishop Compton, looked at James with distrust, blaming him for much of Charles's political difficulties (80). In the play, the interference of Gayland, James's equivalence, in Albuzeiden's court is the source of the upcoming tragedies. Albuzeiden changes his mind and is now ready to marry his only daughter and heir to the usurper.

> […]. The mighty Gayland,
>
> The long-fam'd Terror of our Africk World,
>
> Is Artemira's Slave, has seen, and loves her.
>
> […….]
>
> And in his name full of a Fathers Joy,
>
> I come to offer as his Advocate,
>
> The Tribute of a Crown; and call her Empress. (I.i 6) [11]

Although some critics have made connections between the character of Altomar and Charles I, I believe that the positive qualities attributed to Altomar in Settle's play have much to do with the Whig pro-Monmouth campaign.[12] James Scott, 1st Duke of Monmouth, was born in Netherlands as the eldest illegitimate son of Charles and his mistress, Lucy Walter.

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[11] This is not the only work in which Settle criticizes the Duke of York. In the same year, Settle's *Absalom Senior: or, Achitophel Transposed* was published anonymously. In the course of mocking Dryden and his heroic poetry, Settle attacks the pope and blames him for major assaults against England like the Spanish Armada, the Gunpowder Plot, and the Popish Plot. Brown points out that after attacking the pope, Settle denounces the Duke of York– Absalom in the poem – for his role in driving the king away from his people. On the other hand, Settle praises the virtues of Shaftesbury and Monmouth – in the characters of Barzillai and Ithream respectively. Brown adds that Settle concludes his attack through a mockery of the glories of James's rule (67).

[12] See Susan Owen's *Restoration Theatre and Crisis* p. 265.

Monmouth's service in the army during the Second Anglo-Dutch War and the Third Anglo-Dutch War, as well as his success in subduing the rebellion of 1679 in Scotland, drew the opposition leaders' attention to the Protestant prince as a potential substitute to the Catholic James. Many Whig leaders urged Charles to legitimize the Duke of Monmouth in order to prepare him to ascend to the throne. De Krey points out that some Whigs even claimed that Monmouth was the offspring of an actual marriage between Charles and Lucy Walter (21).

In *The Heir of Morocco* there are references to Altomar's victory in his campaign against the Venetians that may refer to Monmouth's success in defeating the Scots rebels. The conversation between Artemira and Meroin highlights Altomar's prowess.

> Artemira: Indeed Sir, our late wonderful Success
> Over our proud Venetian Enemies,
> Shews us no little Favorites of Heaven.
> Meroin: Our wonderful Success! where lies the Wonder?
> Could your great Fathers Arms be less victorious,
> When led by Altomar, the Valiant Altomar? (I.i 2)

Monmouth's success in Scotland opened new possibilities for the young Duke. Before 1679, the majority of the exclusionists in the House of Commons assumed that the next in the succession line should be Mary, James's eldest daughter who was Protestant by upbringing. But, with Monmouth as a visible Protestant substitute so close to the events, major opposition leaders considered Monmouth as a more reasonable alternative to James. Consequently, Monmouth was hailed as a potential Protestant successor in London in the same year. It was obvious that James considered Monmouth a serious threat to his position as the successor to the English throne. Shaftesbury, on the other hand, sought to establish connections to the ambitious Monmouth in order to strengthen the cause of the Parliamentary opposition (De Krey 164-5).

For the Whigs, Monmouth was the savior of Protestantism and the country's liberties against the engulfing danger of Catholicism. Settle portrays Altomar as the savior of the Algiers and its people. When the villain Meroin betrays King Albuzeiden and draws his sword to stab him, Altomar appears on time and rescues his king. Altomar's earlier quarrel with the king does not prevent him from doing his duty. The dialogue highlights the patriotic side and nobility of Altomar,

> Altomar. Triumphant Infidel, durst thy black Soul
>
> But think to kill thy King!
>
> What Lunacy inspired thy Frantick Rage,
>
> With the least Hope t' effect the Savage Deed?
>
> [……]
>
> But do I talk? Thy Crimes, and this just Arm
>
> Fall on thee, Traytor.
>
> *They fight, Meroin falls*. (III.i 27)

In his play, Settle highlighted the deep disagreement between the father and his son, i.e., Charles and Monmouth. One of the sources of the increasing lack of harmony between the father and his eldest natural son was the latter's rashness and irresponsibility. When Charles suddenly fell ill in August 1679, Monmouth turned all his endeavors to gather city supporters in secret meetings to support his cause in case the king died. To Monmouth's misfortune, Charles recovered shortly and poured his anger on the disrespectful son. Charles stripped Monmouth of all offices and military responsibilities in both England and Scotland and exiled him to Netherlands (De Krey 165). Monmouth lost everything as a result of his political gamble. His collaboration with James's political enemies aroused the discontent of Charles who saw his son's actions as an offence or even an act of treachery. In *The Heir of Morocco*, King Albuzeiden refers to Altomar's intentions as traitorous in more than one

scene. When Altomar kills the arrogant Gayland in an act of self-defense, the king directs his anger against his noble general,

> But bold Assassinate, thy impious Fury
>
> Could lift thy Hand against the Life of Majesty.
>
> The best of men thou hast traiterously kill'd,
>
> And like a Traytor thou shalt die.
>
> [……]
>
> T' appease the Blood of this great murder'd Monarch;
>
> By all my Hopes th' Assassinate shall die,
>
> With the same solemn Form of Death, our Law
>
> And Custom dooms a Traytor to our Crown. (IV.i 38)

Shortly, after the great London pope-burning of 1680, Monmouth appeared in London in a plain act of disobedience to his father. De Krey points out that the ambitious Duke was encouraged by Shaftesbury and other Whig leaders to return and assist their endeavors in passing the Exclusion Bill. Crowds on London streets greeted the Duke of Monmouth with great enthusiasm. People hailed as his convoy approached, church bells rung, and bonfires were lit to welcome their Protestant prince. The scene of his arrival reminded people of the enthusiasm of 1660 when Charles returned to London (De Krey 168). The next year cries like "No Popish Successor, No York, A Monmouth" and "God bless the Earl of Shaftesbury" reflected the rising support among the political nation towards Monmouth as the true heir (McElligott 161). Similarly, Settle labeled the virtuous Altomar as the "true heir" and "royal heir" in many scenes in the play. This is clear in the scene when the envoy of the Moroccan army arrives, reveals the true identity of Altomar and calls upon him to ascend the throne of Morocco:

Envoy: Great Sir, I come from the Imperial Camp,

To tell you that the mutinous Souldiers, tired

With an Usurper's Yoak, demand a Successor

From the true Royal Line: And by their Threats

And Clamors to the General Abdalla,

Have forced him to discover that Prince Altomar,

A noble Youth residing in your Court,

But Stranger to his own great Quality,

Is the true Heir to th' Empire of Morocco.

And in th' united Peoples Voice I come

To call him to a Throne. (V.i 46)

Settle seems to be attacking the image of the king as a father of the people. Opposition writings reversed the analogy of the king as a good father and replaced it with images of the tyrant or irresponsible father. Thus, Restoration playwrights with Whig sympathies, such as Settle, found no difficulties in highlighting the many weaknesses of their monarch that turned him into a model of a bad father to the nation. Susan Owen argues that bad fatherhood on the family level in a play can refer to bad rule and misuse of power on the national level. Further, Owen adds, Charles's inability to produce legitimate offspring was a proof of his incapability as a leader (*Restoration Theatre and Crisis* 164). Charles's failure in this regard had caused tremendous political turmoil and controversy during the years of his reign.

In *The Heir of Morocco,* Settle combines bad fatherhood with tyranny in his portrayal of Albuzeiden/ Charles's figure. However, Settle starts the play by providing an ideal image of the father king in order to destroy it later. Altomar and Artemira, pleased with Albuzeiden's initial consent of their marriage, describe the king as "Heav'ns nearest Care" and "God-like Father" (I.i 5). As the actions of the play get more complicated, the audience

realize that Albuzeiden is quite the opposite of this description. Artemira refers to her father as "Tyrannick Father" (III.i 39), "Bloody Tyrant Father" (IV.i 40), and "inhumane Father" (V.i 6). Albuzeiden's tyrannical treatment of his daughter further illustrates his weaknesses as a father,

> Prepare, fond Girl, to obey thy Father's Will,
> T' extinguish all thy vaprous wandring Fires,
> And gild thy Brows with an Imperial Diadem.
> Prepare by th' Setting of to morrow's Sun,
> To sleep in Gayland's arms, or sleep for ever, (I.i 7)

Albuzeiden's/ Charles's inability to communicate with offspring/subjects threatens the whole royal family/ nation with destruction and civil wars. Morat, while conducting the final moral lesson of the play, warns of the bad consequences of bad fatherhood. The references he makes to destruction and bitter times can hardly be missed by the majority of the Restoration audience who lived through the hard years of the political crisis of succession. Morat concludes the play explaining,

> See here the dire Effects of unkind Parents;
> Our whole World bleeds for their unhappy Loves.
> How calm a Stream is Love when unoppos'd:
> But stop'd, the impetuous Torrent does o'erturne
> Whole sinking Kingdoms, and makes Empires mourn. (V.i 51)

From a different angle, Settle alludes to the bitter consequences of the loyalty to corrupt fathers at the individual level. As Susan Owen points out, Whig playwrights tended to highlight the destructive consequences of loyalty to a bad father – or to the tyrannical government in the macrocosm– that caused pessimism in or even self-destruction of the subject (*Restoration Theatre and Crisis* 234). In his last breath, Altomar advises Morat to

stay loyal to his king and fight for the good of the kingdom no matter whether the king will reward his loyal servants or not:

> Fight for your Royal Lord; go on till you
> Have won him Trophies numberless as Stars,
> And Glory dazling as the Sun: And then expect
> The brave Reward of all your Noble Toyls:
> For he's a King so just, a King so generous,
> A King so merciful---he can be cruel
> To nothing but to Altomar; unkind
> To nought but Altomar. (VI.i 41)

In more than one scene in the play, Altomar and Meroin express their disappointment with their king's neglect of their loyal service. In fact, this may refer to similar feelings among Restoration politicians. Owen refers to the play's criticism of Charles's inability to reward his subjects' past loyal service. The play's dedication alludes to the unrewarded service of the family of Henrietta Wentworth, Monmouth's mistress, during the Civil Wars. Criticizing Charles's ingratitude to loyal service, especially those who remained faithful to the Stuarts during the Interregnum, was one of the recurring issues raised by opposition writers. Whigs believed that Charles owed a debt of gratitude to his subjects who had supported his restoration to the throne of England (*Restoration Theatre and Crisis* 260-66). In Settle's play, Altomar expresses his dismay concerning Albuzeiden's ingratitude,

> Ungrateful King, is this the black Reward,
> Which you return your Conquering Soldiers Toyls?
> Have I for this, from all the Ports of Fame,
> Past all the Storms of Fate to make you glorious? (I.i 8)

Meroin expresses a similar notion of deep dissatisfaction in the course of his dialogue with Ishmael,

> For twelve long years I was the *Algerine*
> Victorious Admiral,
> Till all my Services, my Toyls and Wounds
> Forgotten, my ungrateful barb'rous King
> Could cloud me in the Noon of all my Glories. (II.i 12)

In *The Heir of Morocco,* Settle addresses more issues concerning the meaning and nature of English monarchy. Settle questions the validity of terms like "divine right of kings" which was a recurring royalist theme used to enforce the power of monarchs in the early modern period. The divine right of kings is a political and religious doctrine that asserts that a king derives his right to rule from divinity and, as a result, he cannot be subject to any kind of human authority. The divine right of kings limited the power of other political institutions like parliament. Opportunistically, Settle attacks this doctrine in the play in order to weaken Charles's unpopular decisions related to the succession and further weaken Stuart claims of divine right to rule. When the king's orders are no longer divine, then it is the right of all subjects to examine and reconsider the policies of the king. In the play, the arrogant King Gayland views himself as a divinity, a god-like king who can never be compared with ordinary humans. He addresses the captive Altomar,

> Arrogant Slave!
> Now by my Imperial Honor,
> I could grow angry with this crawling Insect,
> And crush the hissing feeble stingless Worm;
> But Kings are Gods, and I will calm my Thunder:
> My Lightning is too proud to blast a Shrub. (IV.i 35)

This citation indicates how Settle refuses the Tory model of the king's divine rights. Settle alludes to the fact that divine right doctrine results in tyranny as in the case of Gayland. In fact, Settle touches on this issue more than once in the play. He mocks Albuzeiden's failure to act as a god. The king of Algiers admits his inability to control his own daughter and denies the power of divinity. He explains to Meroin that his daughter's,

> […] hidden Thoughts, her Heart's all Altomar's.
>
> Kings are not Gods: Our Pow'r extends o'r all but Souls.
>
> They like unbridled unsubjected Devils,
>
> Soar in that Air of which themselves are Princes. (III.i 22)

In a similar fashion to Boyle's *The Tragedy of Mustapha* and Whitaker's *The Conspiracy*, the general conspiracy against the succession in *The Heir of Morocco* arises from the ambitions of councilors and courtiers. In Settle's play, Albuzeiden seems to have full confidence in the loyalty of the wicked councilor Meroin. The king seeks the advice of Meroin on how to persuade Artemira to accept Gayland's marriage proposal. The king describes Meroin as, "My friend and Councellor" (II.i 14). But later on, Meroin turns out to be a traitor who only cares for himself. Meroin expresses his plans to interrupt the natural succession process by murdering Artemira,

> No, Ishmael, there's a Spark in all great Souls
>
> Men call Revenge, supplies the dying Fire
>
> Of injured Love. To gratifie that last
>
> Dear pleasure, know this Sorceress must die (II.i 11)

In his tragedy, Settle presents a king who is unable to differentiate friends from foes. This was among the prominent defects of Charles II according to the Whig political discourse. Whigs believed that Charles was favoring the enemies of England over patriotic subjects. Charles's pro-Catholic diplomacy was concluded in the secret clauses of the Treaty of Dover

in 1670. According to the treaty, Charles agreed to participate in any future French attack upon the Dutch. Further, Charles pledged that at a certain moment in the future he would publicly convert to Catholicism in return to Louis's militarily and fanatically assistance (De Krey 95-6). Whig political leaders believed that England was threatened by James, the Catholic successor, and Louis XIV of France with whom Charles had good relations. In contrast, during the years of the Exclusion Crisis, the majority of the political nation considered Monmouth and William III of the Netherlands as better alternatives to the Catholic allies of Charles.

To conclude my discussion of *The Heir of Morocco*, Settle's strong engagement in the political debates of the Restoration period resulted in a tendency to implement more allegory and symbolism in his works. His early successes as a talented playwright encouraged him to become more involved in pamphleteering and playwriting to support his political views. The discussion above has clarified that the representations of Muslim characters in Settle's play were heavily influenced by the contemporary politics of Restoration England. Remarkably, the image of the Muslim character operated in the contemporary political scene as it was employed by a Whig propagandist, like Settle, to convey and code certain political sympathies. Undoubtedly, this strategy enabled Whig polemics to reach a wider range of spectators, evade government censorship, and even to be adopted by major royalist theatre companies like The King's Company.[13]

5. Thomas Southerne's *The Loyal Brother* or *The Persian Prince* (1682)

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[13] It is problematic to explain how a Whig play could have been performed by a theatre company that was connected to Charles II himself. In *Restoration Theatre and Crisis* Susan Owen explains that sometimes "contradiction and doubt persist" in Restoration drama (260). For more about such contradictions see the chapter entitled "Tory Plays: The Contradictions of Royalism in Crisis" in the same book.

Thomas Southerne is another Restoration playwright who used the characters and plot of his plays as an allegory for relevant internal political issues in England. Southerne was so active during a time of high political tension and dispute between different political parties. Consequently, Southerne presented a political discourse in his works that reflected the growing partisanship in the English political nation. In fact, the representations of Muslim characters in Southerne's *The Loyal Brother* were heavily influenced by the contemporary politics of Restoration England.

Thomas Southerne was born in Dublin in the year of the Restoration of Charles II. He attended Trinity College, Dublin University in 1675 but never received a degree. At the age of 20, young Southerne traveled to London to try his fortune as a writer. Southerne quickly found his way to the stage and established connections with James the Duke of York (Dodds 4-5). The elaborate praise Southerne paid to the Duke in *The Loyal Brother* showed the strong relationship between the two. When the Duke of York came to power in 1685, he rewarded Southerne for his faithful efforts and loyalty. Interestingly, Southerne joined the cause of James in arms as in words. He had paused his career in playwriting and enlisted in James's forces that subdued Monmouth's rebellion the same year (Jordan and Love xv). Southerne reached the peak of his success as a dramatist in the late 1690s after producing a number of popular plays like *The Fatal Marriage*, or *The Innocent Adultery* (1694) and *Oroonoko*, or *The Royal Slave* (1696). Unlike the quarrelsome Settle, Southerne gained the respect of Whig and Tory noblemen and writers alike (Dodds 11). John Dryden was a close friend to Southerne and supported the young writer by writing prologues and epilogues to some of his plays. Pope and Swift praised Southerne's talents and paid him compliments on several occasions (Jordan and Love xxxii).

5.1. The Play

Southerne was engaged in the political life of London very early in his life. He was only 21 years old when he produced his first dramatic work, *The Loyal Brother*. The play was not a great success, but it attracted Tories for its praise of the Duke of York. The fierce anti-Whig sentiment in the Prologue and the emphasis on the legitimacy of James's right of the natural succession made the play popular among Tories.

The plot of the play revolves around the conspiracies against Tachmas, the noble brother of Seliman, the Sophy of Persia. Problems start when the royal brothers fall in love with the fair Semanthe, who reciprocates love to Tachmas only. As a result, Seliman grows jealous of his brother. The evil Ismael and Arbanes, who feel threatened by Tachmas successes, plot together to destroy the noble prince. Sunamire, Arbanes's sister, opens a third front against Tachmas when she discovers that the prince favors Semanthe over her. Ismael persuades Seliman to kill his brother in order to win Semanthe's love. Tachmas is saved at the last moment by Semanthe and Begona, the queen mother. However, the conspirators do not give up. They forge a letter that tells of Tachmas's plans to murder the Sophy and usurp the Persian throne. The Sophy imprisons Tachmas as a result. Semanthe joins her lover in prison and chooses to face the same destiny. A faithful friend of Tachmas discovers Sunamire and Arbanes's plan to poison the lovers, and switch the poisoned bowls labels. Therefore, the plotters drink the poison they have prepared for the lovers. Before dying, they confess to Seliman Ismael's role in the plot. Seliman orders Ismael to death, and the play ends with the joyous union of Tachmas and Semanthe.

Political polemics are present early on in the play. In the Prologue to the play, which was prepared by John Dryden, sentiments of political partisanship are obvious. Dryden attacks Whigs by the means of making a comparison between the practices of Whigs and those of critics. Dryden's lines deserve to be quoted at length since they tell much about Tory political themes and tropes used in attacking their Whig rivals.

Poets, like Lawful Monarchs, rul'd the Stage,

Till Criticks, like Damn'd Whiggs, debauch'd our Age.

Mark how they jump: Criticks wou'd regulate

Our Theatres, and Whiggs reform our State:

Both pretend love, and both (Plague rot 'em) hate.

The Critick humbly seems Advice to bring,

The fawning Whigg Petitions to the King:

[……]

Criticks wou'd starve the Poet, Whiggs the Prince.

The Critick all our troops of friends discards;

Just so the Whigg wou'd fain pull down the Guards. (Prologue 1-13)

The prologue satirizes the pope-burning pageants, a Whig favorite political activity during the Exclusion Crisis period. In fact, Dryden mocks the absurdity of Whig pageants per se: "Alas, what's one poor Pope among 'em all!/ He burns; now all true hearts your Triumphs ring:/ And next (for fashion) cry, God save the King" (38-40).

The Epilogue is no less aggressive towards Whigs. It combines anti-Whig ideas with a comment on foreign policy issues. Dryden, also its writer, alludes to the oppression of Protestants in England's Catholic neighbor, France,

Of this damn'd grievance ev'ry Whigg complains;

They grunt like Hogs, till they have got their Grains,

Mean time you see what Trade our Plots advance,

We send each year good Money into *France:*

And they, that know what Merchandise we need,

Send o're true Protestants, to mend our breed. (Epilogue 35-40)

Dryden's lines make it hard to miss the political projections in the play as his lines prepare for bolder political criticism of his rivals in the opposition and in the Whig party. The play itself proves to be politically charged, too. Southerne, unlike Dryden, puts certain political figures under his microscope. For each party, he portrays a model character who shows typical traits of his party or supporters. For example, the character of Tachmas stands as a good example of the Tory's typical depiction of the Duke of York. During the early 1680s, the Duke was deprived of much of his privileges while his brother, the king, was not completely happy with his presence in London. This resulted in further agitating the suspicious Anglican majority in the Parliament. During the late 1670s and early 1680s, many attempts were made to prevent the Duke from ascending to the throne after the death of Charles II. The play reflects such malicious schemes and highlights the eventual triumph of the legitimate heir. For that end, Southerne's play places great emphasis on Tachmas's military prowess and proficiency. Osman, a captain in the Persian army, narrates the good news to the Sophy about the recent victory of Tachmas,

> And when fame calls your Armies to the field,
>
> May *Tachmas* lead 'em out, and still return
>
> As now, triumhant home,
>
> In all the glories of a famous War. (I.i 6) [14]

Loyalty is Tachmas's major characteristic in the Southerne's play. Tachmas stays loyal to his king and brother even when he is sentenced to death. In more than one scene in the play, Tachmas urges his captains and soldiers to keep loyal to their king since loyalty is the key concept in a soldier's code. In fact, Tachmas's instructions to his fellow soldiers when he bids

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[14] This text is taken from Early English Books Online edition of the play. All subsequent references to this text will be cited parenthetically by (act, scene, and page number.)

them farewell can be understood as an embedded request to the audience to remain loyal to the Stuart monarchy. Tachmas declares,

> And now, my friends, part we like Soldiers here;
>
> All to our several fates: fight for the King,
>
> As I have done, and may your services
>
> Be better paid.
>
> [……]
>
> And now a long farewel: live to enjoy
>
> A better fortune in your Princes favour. (III.ii 29)

In *Thomas Southerne: Dramatist* John Dodds points out that Southerne used this picture of perfection and loyalty in order to defy all reports of James's treachery and to present him as a the only trusted candidate to the English throne (38).

Interestingly enough, the phraseology Southerne uses in his play is strongly connected to what James experienced during the tense years of his exile. In the early 1680s, Charles II deprived his brother of the public offices he had held earlier. It is not a mere coincidence that Southerne portrays a similar scene in which the Sophy banishes his brother and deprives him of his offices. The angry Sophy addresses his brother as follows:

> But fly, be gone to death, or banishment;
>
> And all the publick offices you held
>
> By our permission, here we take agen:
>
> The general staff, *Arbanes*, now is thine. (II.iv 23)

The other major character that carries political weight in the play is the character of the villain Ismael. Jordan and Love argue that Southerne alludes to the Whig leader Shaftsbury through the negative portrait of Ismael (4). In harmony with typical Tory allegorical depictions of Shaftesbury, the character of Ismael is an extreme example of treachery and

malice. The parallels between Ismael and Shaftsbury are numerous. One of these parallels is that both of Ismael and Shaftsbury are deposed favorites who recently lost their high ranks. Shaftsbury, like Ismael, was removed from his position as President of the Privy Council in 1679. In addition, Ismael, just like Shaftsbury, shows great ability to control the masses, make plots, and fabricate charges. While doing so, Ismael is always careful not to raise suspicions about his activities. Simultaneously, Ismael expresses his wish to have a fail-proof revenge against Tachmas. In a dialogue with Sunamire and Arbanes he explains,

> Long have, I waited time, and now it comes,
> The Golden minute comes, that offers us
> A safe revenge, but mounted on the wing:
> Say Sunamire, Arbanes, shall it pass
> Unheeded like the common births of time? (I.i 10)

Southerne's play sheds light on many other political activities of Ismael, especially his role in agitating people against their monarch. Ismael proves to be an expert in rabble-rousing, a prominent Whig vice in the Tory political canon as Owen points out (*Restoration Theatre and Crisis* 149-151). Ismael gathers people around him and works his arts on them,

> […] some friends I've made
> Already there, brave factious, gifted Rogues,
> That Cant their Doctrine to their present wants,
> And Zealously, upon a fit of Conscience,
> Sin or Unsin Rebellion to the Croud:
> These are the fittest instruments to gull
> The easie people: hark, the Monster roars!
> [Shoots within]
> The Rable is assembled to my wish;

This is the time, to work 'em. (V.i 45)

Ismael knows that agitating the rabble will enable him to mount the populist wave. He explains to his fellows that "Whilst we, like Sailers tacking for the wind, / Mount on the deck at last, with full blown sails/ Drive onward to our Port […]" (III.iii 31). Obviously, Ismael uses quite a similar terminology to that used by Whig political leaders in the mass demonstrations they organized during the late 1670s and early 1680s. During that period, Susan Owen explains, Whig political propaganda called intensively for protecting the liberty of the English people, their beliefs, and their very Englishness against popery and foreign interference (*Restoration Theatre and Crisis* 111, 273). Ismael, in front of the mob he arouses, calls for quite similar values:

If to defend your Lives, your Liberties,

Your Laws, your Customes, and your ancient dues,

Be to rebel, then this is rank Rebellion:

But sure a just defence may hope a fairer name. (V.ii 49)

Later on, Ismael calls on the people to stand "against this barbarous, inhumane King, / That grows in tyranny" (V.ii 49). The rabble is quickly influenced by Ismael's fiery speech and calls "Rebellion or nothing, Rebellion or nothing" and "No, no; we'r all for Rebellion" (V.ii 49). It is noteworthy here to refer to Owen's argument that Southerne associated the corruption of court with rebel noblemen in an attempt to defy the Whig assertion that the source of corruption at court was always the king himself (*Restoration Theatre and Crisis* 131). Ismael confesses that "The court has been my Sphear,/ Where, with the musick of my tongue in counsel, / I've charmed opinion after me" (I.i 9).

Following the Tory tradition of attacking certain Whig practices and traits, Southerne's play emphasizes the destructive effects of ambition on the individual and the group. In a similar fashion to Whitaker's *The Conspiracy*, characters in *The Loyal Brother*

refer to ambition as a source of rebellion and disloyalty that usually lead individuals to extremes. Ismael declares: "Ambition is our Idol, on whose wings/ Great minds are carried only to extreams;/ To be sublimely great, or to be nothing" (I.i 12). Tachmas highlights the ill effects of ambition on people too,

> O ambition!
>
> How strangely dost thou charm the minds of men!
>
> That they will choose to starve on mountain tops,
>
> Rather than taste the plenty of the Vale. (III.ii 28)

Southerne's play, while paying praise to the Duke of York, shows signs of criticism of his brother, King Charles II. The portrayal of Seliman provides a means of commenting on Charles political practices that sometimes upset all, Tories and Whigs. Southerne exposes Charles's follies by alluding to Seliman's unwise and rash reactions and policy. In the play, the Sophy admits to his lack of good councilors who can help him manage the concerns of his vast empire,

> The Court is in an uproar with my follies
>
> Expos'd in publick; all my Friends stand mute
>
> Before me, not a Counseller that dares
>
> Advise me, even flattery is dumb. (II.iii 17)

The Sophy's words reflect the fact that all the private issues of his court were no longer private. This allegorical representation of Charles's court could be hardly missed by an audience used to the heavy use of stage political allegories. Charles's II reign witnessed an eruption of the private into the public. For instance, news about the king's sexual relations, his mistresses, his illegitimate offspring were topics of conversations at London's coffee-houses. Tachmas also comments on the general situation at court, "the Court seems all a

crowded Wilderness" (IV.i 38). In fact, the Sophy himself is to be blamed for all of the chaos. He proves to be a naïve and narrow-minded ruler. Ismael sees him as,

> […] of a nature hot,
>
> Vain, and ambitious; yet withal most pliant,
>
> And easie for the flatterer to mould
>
> To any form; so Jealous of his glory. (I.i 11)

Nevertheless, the Sophy learns a lesson by the end of the play. The Sophy while blessing the marriage of Tachmas and Semanthe declares,

> Take her, and wear her ever in thy heart:
>
> Whilst I collected in my temper stand,
>
> And may succeeding Monarchs learn from me,
>
> How far to trust a Statesmans policy. (V.ii 58)

Southerne polishes his portrayal of Seliman by the end of the play when he presents the Sophy as generous and noble. The Sophy abandons his jealousy and stubbornness and blesses the reunion of Tachmas and Semanthe.

The modifications that Southern made to his play are worth some consideration. The play is based on a French *turquerie* (Oriental tale) entitled *Tachmas Prince de Perse*. The tale was published in Paris in 1676 and translated into English by Peter Porter the same year (Jordan and Love 4, Dodds 31-2). Nevertheless, Southerne departed widely from the French version of Tachmas's story. While Tachmas and Semanthe are united in Southerne's play, the royal couple faces a tragic end in the source tale. In fact, Southerne made such modifications to his play because he tried to make his characters better matches to the figures he intended to dramatize. The political charged messages that the playwright intended to convey led him to produce a revised version of the story of Tachmas.

Southerne used the Muslim characters and plot of the play as an allegory for relevant internal crises in England. As Southerne's play was published during a time of extreme political tension and controversy, the political discourse the playwright presents in his work reflects the increasing partisanship in the English political nation. In fact, the representations of Muslim characters in Southerne's play were heavily influenced by the contemporary politics of Restoration England. Obviously, a Tory writer like Southerne employed the image of the Muslim character to emphasize certain political ideas.

In conclusion, Restoration playwrights employed Muslim characters and settings in their works mainly to speak of their political positions and beliefs. The contemporary stage served as a perfect arena for both Whigs and Tories who aimed to express and spread certain political ideas and views. The topics discussed in the plays written by Boyle, Whitaker, Settle, and Southerne are key points in understanding the interplay between playwrights' treatment of Muslim characters on stage and the contemporary ideology of the age. In fact, their literary production during the long and fierce controversy over the succession issue revealed the general tendency to use allegorical figures and plots to comment on one of the major crises of the Restoration period. Some Restoration playwrights used complex political allegories that were based on Oriental Muslim settings. This allegorical discourse enabled the playwrights to deliver advice, criticism, and commentary on the major concerns of the political nation. Restoration playwrights used their historical sources both to heroicize or demonize certain Restoration political figures and, at the same time, to distance themselves from any hostile reactions by their political opponents. The many parallels the playwrights established between Islamic states' political crises and England's own crisis were still clear enough to be understood by the majority of Restoration spectators who were used to make connections between dramatic production and the contemporary political scene of their time.

The plays' intense involvement in political negotiations resulted in considerable changes in the way in which Muslim characters and Islam were represented on the English stage. While the literary productions of earlier periods had discussed a variety of cultural and religious aspects of the Islamic world such as apostasy, Christian captivity in Muslim lands, and Oriental sexuality, Restoration drama showed little interest in dramatizing such topics. As a result, the plays under consideration expressed no great interest in highlighting the distinctions between the different Muslim peoples represented - Moors, Ottomans, and Persians. Interestingly enough, unlike Renaissance drama, the plays discussed in this chapter do not show great interest in commenting on the traditional notion of the superiority of Christianity over Islam both spiritually and militarily. Muslim characters occupy natural or common roles that used to be occupied by Christian characters. Undoubtedly, the hostility against Islam is less obvious in these plays as the plots the playwrights created form a unique sense of assimilation of Islam to English audiences. Consequently, one of the direct outcomes of the tendency to assimilate Muslim figures was eliminating much of the cultural and historical specificity of Islamic civilization. The Muslim heroes in the plays under study act in a very similar manner to heroic Christian figures. For the first time in English drama, Muslim characters were presented as capable of serving as tragic heroes. Restoration playwrights preferred to free themselves of the cultural specificity of Islamic culture rather than be involved in the complicated classic dialogues with the "Other" which would drive them away from their political agendas they intended to express in the first place. Among the main concerns of the plays under consideration are good political systems, honest monarchs, and a better practice of politics and religion. Restoration playwrights presented Muslim characters to provide a kind of gauge by which domestic controversy over the succession could be measured.

CHAPTER THREE

RESTORATION SEXUAL POLITICS AND THE MUSLIM ON STAGE

"There is nothing almost but bawdry at court from top to bottom."

(Pepys 249)

1. Introduction

The large body of criticism available on the representations of Muslims in early modern English literature assumes that the negative – often sexually – representations associated with the Muslim is a result of the contemporary hostilities against Muslims. In fact, the majority of studies in this field – some of which are discussed in the introduction to this work – understand early modern dramatization of Muslim figures only in relation to the historically tense relationship between East and West. Such readings provide a misleading understanding of how the West imagined various Muslim people and their culture. These studies understate the complex domestic dimension of the issue. Therefore, this work highlights the importance of reading early modern drama in terms of the internal political dimension of British politics.

By choosing to explore the image of the Muslim in Restoration drama from a New Historicist point of view, I would like to highlight the fact that it was the contemporary sexual-political and religious element more than anything else that shaped the way in which Muslim culture and figures were portrayed on Restoration stage. On the surface, the plays under consideration in this chapter tackle the sexuality of nations geographically located far away from England. Nevertheless, the authors of these plays employ the characters and events of their works as allegories for relevant internal crises in England. This will be exemplified through an analysis of Elkanah Settle's *The Empress of Morocco* (1673), *Ibrahim the Illustrious Bassa* (1676), and Aphra Behn *'s Abdelazer, or the Moors Revenge* (1677).

Sex, as a dramatic theme, was not unique to the Restoration stage of course. In fact, sexual relationships in Jacobean and Caroline drama occurred with "a frankness unprecedented" on the English stage (Wiggins vii). However, as Elizabeth Woodrough points out, the fact that sexual content was marked by the real presence of females on stage contributed to the ability to parallel stage discussions of adultery, cuckolding, and libertine life with court behavior (16).

In part this was a reaction to the disciplined nature of Puritanical ideology of the 1650s. During the Interregnum, many aspects of life were monitored according to the strict regulations of Puritan rule. After the decisive victory of the Parliament in the Civil War, the conservative religious views of the victors were imposed gradually on the whole nation. Puritan leaders wanted to establish a new lifestyle that eliminated all "corruptive" pleasures of monarchical regimes. Under Puritan rule, major holidays such as Christmas were banned. Moreover, restrictions were imposed on "unfruitful" pastime activities such as the theatre and only certain "virtuous" genres of art, such as opera performances, were permitted (Wiseman 1-10). Furthermore, Puritan legislators in the Parliament attempted to suppress what they perceived as deviant sexual behavior. Parliament issued The Adultery Act in 1650 that stated that the penalty for married women who committed adultery was capital punishment. The law was strictly imposed on people to the extent that fear of the punishment was more than enough to restrict sexual freedom within the whole society (Capp 25). Prostitution and excessive use of alcohol were also targeted and people who violated orders were whipped and disgraced in public and later exiled to colonies (Capp 156).

The restoration of Charles II relieved much of the anxieties that the Puritan regime had caused. Maximilian E. Novak argues that the Restoration period witnessed the younger generation's assertion of freedom and selfhood. Sexual freedom was among the major demands that the young individuals in the new society called for. Novak adds that the new

generation expressed a strong will to change the rigid control of the older patriarchal generations (54). After the end of Puritan rule, people found themselves not only attending dramatic performances in theatres, but also watching plays that explicitly discussed themes of adultery, homosexuality, and incest. Comedies, in particular, reflected the life at Court and discussed the aristocratic libertine lifestyle. Thomas Killigrew's *Thomaso*, or *The Wanderer* (performed in 1664) is a case in point here. In the play, the protagonist, Thomaso, defends his libertine relationships:

> All the hony of Marriage, but none of the sting, Ned; I have a Woman without that boundless Folly, of better or worse; there's a kind of Non-sence in that Vow Fools onely swallow; I can now bid my Friends well-come without Jealousie; Our vows are built upon kindness only, they stand & fall together; We neither load, nor enslave the mind with Matrimony; No laws, nor tyes, but what good Nature makes, binds us; we are sure to meet without false well-comes, or dissembling smiles, to hide the Sallary of a sin, or blinde the Fornication of a Platonique Friendship; Our knots hold no longer then we love; No sooner wish a liberty but we take it. (346)

Similar examples include Celadon and Florimell's *Secret Love*, or *The Maiden Queen* (1667) whose plot is based on love and sex incidents, Dryden's *An Evening's Love* or *The Mock Astrologer*, in which the characters are always in a continual search for sexual and libertine pleasures, and Thomas Betterton's *The Amorous Widow* (1670) in which some characters are involved in an endless pursuit of sensual desires.

In fact, Charles II and his rakish courtiers were involved in a number of well-publicized sexual relationships. In *Culture and Politics at the Court of Charles II*, Matthew Jenkinson states that "[t]he king and his more notorious courtiers indulged in priapic pursuit with a number of mistresses and Charles himself begat a panoply of bastards" (212). James

Turner, in *Libertines and Radicals in Early Modern London: Sexuality, Politics, and Literary Culture,* points out that Charles was known for his numerous relationships with women, from a low-birth actress, Nell Gwyn, to the aristocratic Louise de Kerouaille (15). The publically open and continual pursuit of sexual relationships ended with a king fathering a dozen illegitimate children by his seven mistresses (Fraser 411). Thus, discontent increased among the political nation as people were not happy to see Charles spending much of his wealth on his mistresses. Hutton points out that many English subjects questioned paying taxes that, in fact, were spent on their monarch's pleasures (338).

A few years into his reign, Charles's sexual behavior was creating considerable public anxiety. For example, as early as 1663, Samuel Pepys – an administrator of the English navy and a Member of Parliament – expressed his discontent of the King's sexual relationship with Lady Castlemain (Marotti 103). Nevertheless, the Licensing of the Press Act 1662 prevented any possibility of direct attacks on Charles's sexual behavior. In fact, major criticism came from men of letters who found in literary production a safe method to express their concerns about this issue. In the second half of the 1660s, many playwrights investigated Charles's sexual excesses with a critical eye. Plays like Edmund Waller's *The Maid's Tragedy* (1664), the anonymous *Irena* (1664), and Roger Boyle's *The Black Prince* (1666) reflected the increasing public awareness and uneasiness about Charles II's sex life. Hermanson observes that the "infatuated" rulers in these plays are not capable of performing their duties (37). Poetry was not more lenient with the King's sexual habits. Many poets considered Charles II responsible for the declining and miserable state of the nation. Poets criticized the King, who preferred to spend his time with his mistresses instead of attending the urgent issues in the country. Poets, like Andrew Marvell, versified their unconventional ideas on kings and kingship in such an environment. Marvell's *The History of the Insipids* (1674) is a clear attack on monarchs and their excesses,

Of kings curs'd be the power and name,

Let all the earth henceforth abhor 'em;

Monsters which knaves sacred proclaim

And then like slaves fall down before 'em.

What can there be in kings divine?

The most are wolves, goats, sheep, or swine. (qtd. in Chernaik 58)

In fact, Charles's luxurious and effeminate lifestyle was often seen as irresponsible as the King paid less attention to many crucial issues such as producing a legitimate successor. After a few years of his marriage to Catherine of Braganza, it became clear that the royal couple were facing serious problems in producing a legitimate successor to the throne. Barry Coward points out that many Parliament members tried to convince Charles to divorce the Queen in an attempt to remarry him and secure the nation with a legitimate Protestant heir (319). Another solution that was offered to the King was making Charles's eldest son a legitimate son in preparation for making him the only legitimate heir (Webb 95). James Scott, the 1st Duke of Monmouth, was born in Netherlands as the eldest illegitimate son of Charles and his mistress Lucy Walter. The young James proved himself as a leader during the Second and Third Anglo-Dutch Wars. In addition, his role in subduing the rebellion of 1679 in Scotland made of him a potential substitute to the Catholic Duke of York in the Whig propaganda. Many Whig leaders urged Charles to legitimize the Duke of Monmouth in order to prepare him to ascend to the throne (De Krey 21). Charles ignored all these suggestions, and at the same time, continued his sexual adventures, producing more and more illegitimate offspring with his numerous mistresses.

At the same time, the new manners of the court caused widespread unease. In the early 1670s, dissatisfaction was increasing with the news about the King's sexual indulgence. Charles's famous relationships with his numerous mistresses became something well known

to the majority of his subjects. In one famous occasion, an angry mob stopped Nell Gwyn's coach – one of Charles's mistresses – at Oxford, having mistaken her for Louise de Kerouaille – Charles's French mistress. Nell escaped after shouting "Pray, good people, be civil - I am the Protestant whore" (Linnane 15). In fact, Charles II's relationship with de Kerouaille was one of his most controversial sexual relationships. De Kerouaille's strong ties to Louis XIV of France fueled public distrust and fear of foreign hegemony (Masters 77). Most of the criticism came from politicians who saw the relationship both morally and politically dangerous. Loyalist writers tried to defend their King's position in their writings. One of the major trends in this defensive policy was an emphasis on the sophistication of the court and glorifying the luxurious way of life that required different standards to those practiced by ordinary people. In Dryden's *All for Love*, an imitation of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, Charles and Kerouaille were viewed as the models for the lovers of Shakespeare's tragedy (Braverman 139).

Towards the middle of the decade, more and more works discussed the collapse of the old, conservative manners that had been replaced by the new libertine and indulgent way of life. The tremendous shift in the sexual freedom that people called for exceeded all expectations. For example, the anonymous author of *The Character of a Town-Gallant: Exposing the Extravagant Fopperies of some vain Self-conceited Pretenders of Gentility, and Good Breeding* criticizes some of the new patterns of behaviors in London. The author describes the gallants of London as,

> *Town-Gallant* is a Bundle of *Vanity*, composed of *Ignorance* and *Pride*, *Folly*, and *Debauchery*; a filly *Huffing* thing, three parts *fop*, and the rest *Hector*: A kind of *Walking Mercers shop*, that shews one stuff to day, and another to morrow, and is valuable just according to the price of his *Suit*, and the merits of his *Taylor*: A spawn of *Gentility*, that inherits only the *Vices* of his

Ancestors, and is like to entail nothing but Infamy and Diseases on Posterity. (1)

The advocates of the new way of life fired back in many subsequent works such as *Gallantry A-la-mode: A Satyrical Poem in III Parts, Representing the Vanity of Several Humours of This Present Age* – a long poem in couplets that appeared in 1674. The anonymous poet presents a bold expression of the new libertine way of life as he,

Oppress with cares, involved with nights,
I went to seek a new Delight.
My clouded Eyes could scarcely show
My treach'rous Feet which way to go. (1)

The poet goes out into the streets of London in search of a lover. The poet then meets a woman whom she "can give him ease,"

Then with a *smile* she *kisses* me,
And off falls *vizard Modesty*:
If I (says she) *can give you ease*,
I will be kind, *and what you please*;
Make no delay, *but strait fulfill*
Your own Desire: do what you will. (11)

The author, then, explicitly idealizes sexual intercourse outside marriage and calls for more freedom for men and women in pursuing sensual pleasures.

This debate about sexual liberty found its way into the theaters in the form of highly sexualized performances that involved bold libertine scenes. George Etherege's *The Man of Mode* (1676) is a case in point here. In the play, Dorimant is a model of the young gentleman who is constantly searching for new sensual pleasures. After concluding a long affair with Mrs. Loveit, Dorimant pursues a new relationship with Mrs. Loveit's younger friend,

Bellinda. The new relationship does not last for a long time as Dorimant is now attracted to the young and rich Harriet. Dorimant shows a strong desire to win Harriet, and the latter takes advantage of that to control the young man. Etherege presents the characters of Dorimant and Harriet as modern, completely open, and willing to embrace new concepts and values in regards to marriage and sexual behavior.

The obscene and indulgent theatre of the Restoration period reflected the spirit of the English court. During his reign, Charles II spent much of his time and wealth on pursuing enjoyment and sexual relationships. Charles had relationships with all sorts of women coming from different social classes. For years Charles had sexual relationships with Barbara Palmer; actress Nell Gwyn; Frances Stuart; Hortense Mancini; and the French Louise de Kérouaille. Similarly, his court shared his obsession with sex. For instant, both the Duke of Buckingham and Earl of Danby were known for their sexual adventures. Venereal diseases were common at Charles's court. In 1674, Charles himself was infected transmitting the infection to at least one of his mistresses, Louise de Kéroualle (Masters 144).

There were political consequences for these royal liasons. Some of the King's mistresses interfered actively in the political life of early Restoration period. Barbara Palmer, the wife of the courtier Roger Palmer, had had an intimate relationship with Charles as early as 1660, two years before Charles married Catherine of Braganza, the daughter of the king of Portugal. While Charles official marriage did not succeed in providing a legitimate heir, Charles and Barbara's relationship produced many children. In fact, Barbara gave birth to a boy in June 1662 while the royal couple were still on their honeymoon. Charles was generous to Barbra; he made her a countess and then a duchess. Barbara interfered in the contemporary political scene to the extent that Clarendon, the Lord Chancellor, tried to warn the King of her influence in Whitehall (Bliss 119). In *The King's Bed: Sex, Power and the Court of Charles II*, Jordan and Walsh state that Barbra persuaded the king to grant her all the high trappings of

rank. In addition, Barbra held an alternative court and used her power to promote her favorites to high positions that could, in turn, benefit her (73).

Similarly, many politicians were suspicious of the role of Louise de Kéroualle at court and her influence on the king and the country's general policy. Many of them believed that she was a spy for Louise XIV. She successfully resisted the huge public anti-Catholic and anti-French sentiments that called for a more aggressive policy against France and its expansionist project in the Continent's mainland (Stedman 100). De Kéroualle's influence on the King was so strong to the extent that the biographer Henri Forneron wrote about her: "During 15 years she was holding Great Britain in her delicate little hand, and manipulated its king and statesmen as dexterously as she might have done her fan" (2).

While Charles II was pursuing love affairs with his favorites, England witnessed one of the most humiliating episodes in its history. In 1667 the Dutch, who were still at war with England, decided to attack the English ships which were docked in the Medway River. The Dutch sailed up the river and attacked the helpless English ships. The English fleet endured massive casualties. London itself was endangered with the unexpected Dutch attack to the extent that many people fled the city. After the Dutch had retreated to the sea, angry mobs organized massive demonstrations against the king and his irresponsible policy (De Krey 74). People saw their king living in his own world of fantasies and sexual pleasures paying no attention to the good of the country. The Medway Raid put Charles's private life under the spotlight. People found themselves ruled by a king who was detached from reality by his desire to fulfill his sensual desires. As a direct political response, Parliament attempted to investigate the royal finances. Sexual pleasure was then the core of many problems for England during Charles's reign. His court's libertine nature shaped the dynamics of his political regime, affected the life of the whole nation, and defined, to a certain extent, the broad lines of his foreign policy.

2. Elkanah Settle's *The Empress of Morocco* (1673)

The sexually indulgent nature of Restoration court was not a secret. As Susan Owen notes, the Restoration witnessed a shift of the private into the public in relation to court's affairs (*Restoration Theatre and Crisis* 9-10). As a public forum for the expression of courtly intrigue, the Restoration stage was ready to bring the *arcana imperii* in front of the public. What is apposite for my study is the extent to which British playwrights used the supposed libertine nature of the Muslim court as an allegory for the sexual excess of the court in England. For instance, Elkanah Settle's *The Empress of Morocco* (1673) depicts the conflicts at the Moroccan court that are initiated by the lustful Moroccan empress and her lover, Crimalhaz as a means through which he could suggest a similar British environment in which libertinism and pursuit of sensual pleasures were the norm.

In *The Horror Plays of the English Restoration* Anne Hermanson points out that when *The Empress of Morocco* was first performed at court in 1671, Settle was well acquainted with the court milieu and had a clear understanding of its manners (76). Settle, who was also attached to some leading political figures, understood the nature of the dangers within the English court. In the early 1670s, it was clear that Charles's mistresses were competing for more influence at court in an attempt to drive the King's policy to serve their ends. Charles's mistresses were seen to be increasingly threatening the gains of the Restoration settlement which included the preservation of English liberties, property, and Protestant faith. The anti-Catholic propaganda played on the fears of the political nation in terms of the increasing influence of Catholicism and popery in the court – as the case of Charles's most hated mistress Louise de Kerouaille that I discussed above. Catholic female influence in court initiated the fear of a loss of true English sovereignty by the means of spreading of foreign hegemony. In opposition canon, Catholicism was always associated with sexual excess,

debauchery, and lust that are combined with a desire to control the political affairs of the country against the Protestant majority.

In his article "Publicity and Popery on the Restoration Stage: Elkanah Settle's *The Empress of Morocco* in Context," William Bulman diagnoses the hidden threads between the plot and the contemporary affairs that Settle intended to highlight:

> Settle offered his audience a stern critique of absolutist court culture. He endorsed public scrutiny of the monarchy, condemned sleepy, uncritical forms of loyalty, and summoned the most biting libels and satires about the notorious sexual maladies of Charles II's court that were circulating in this period. (333)

Settle's play is a clear example on how Restoration drama discussed and satirized the elite's sexual behavior with witty dialogues. The close study of the circumstances that surrounded the composition of the play suggests that the depiction of the sexualization of Muslims was heavily influenced by the lascivious nature of the English court.

The Empress of Morocco deals with the fierce conflict over power in the Moroccan court. The play opens with Muly Labas, son of the emperor of Morocco, imprisoned alongside Morena, daughter of King Taffalet. It is discovered then that the reason behind the prince and princess' misery is that they challenged their fathers' wishes and decided to get married. The lovers are condemned to death by the Emperor, and as a result, King Taffalet declares war and marches with his forces to Morocco. The playwright then introduces the major evil force in his play, the "Queen Mother," Laula. The Queen plots with her lover, Crimalhaz, to murder the old emperor. The plot works well, and Muly Labas is freed and is declared emperor of Morocco while Taffalet's forces withdraw. The Queen Mother proves to have a Machiavellian character and explains to Crimalhaz that her ambition does not stop at that point. The Queen plans to murder her own son in order to offer her lover the Moroccan throne. She decides first to eliminate the noble and loyal prince, Muly Hamet, the general of

the Moroccan army. The Queen's plot endangers the love between Muly Hamet and the Queen's daughter, the virtuous princess, Mariamne.

Muly Hamet returns home from one of his campaigns and accidentally discovers the adulterous relationship between the Queen Mother and Crimalhaz. Muly Hamet tells the young King of the shocking news, but the Queen Mother manages to reverse the charge and accuses Muly Hamet of attempting her virtue. The King sentences his general to be banished from the kingdom forever. The Queen Mother has Morena mistakenly kill her husband, and pronounces Crimalhaz the new king. Crimalhaz turns against the Queen Mother and forgives Morena. In order to secure his rule, he sends the Queen Mother to prison. Before she is taken out, the wicked queen stabs Morena and commits suicide. Eventually, Muly Hamet returns, with the help of Taffalet, and enters the city without resistance as the soldiers of the Moroccan army accept him as the rightful emperor. The play ends with the reunion of Muly Hamet and Mariamne and with the death of the villain, Crimalhaz.

Settle satirizes the irresponsible nature of the English court in various ways. His play is replete with references to male characters obsessed with beautiful women. When Muly Hamet returns from one of his campaigns, he expresses his deep feelings to his lover, Mariamne,

> I am here more blest —
>
> Than if I an Imperial Seat possest.
>
> Whilst in your Breast an Empire I obtain,
>
> [*to Mariamne.*
>
> Not only Kings, but Gods unenvied reign.
>
> Beauty would almost Infidels create,

Who, beyond Love, can wish a higher state? (II.ii 14)[15]

At this point, Settle clarifies the danger of the uncontrolled passions on statesmen. Settle shows how easily leaders are distracted by women and neglect their political duties. The consequences of this dangerous obsession can affect the present status of the whole country and determines, to a great extent, its future. In the play, the brave and powerful leader is completely conquered by the beauty of princess Mariamne. Later on, Abdelcador, a friend to Muly Hamet, notices the effects of the charming princess on Muly Hamet,

Oh Charming Sex! —

How vast a Circle does thy Magick take?

The highest Spirits humblest Lovers make.

All that Heroick Greatness, which but now

Made haughty Foes and stubborn Nations bow,

Turns Vassal to a Smile, a Looks disguise:

Who conquer Thousands are one Woman's Prize.

Fate sets Commanding Beauty in their way,

Beauty that has more God-like Pow'r than they:

Love o're the Hearts of yielding Heroes sports;

Who're Conquerours in Camps, are Slaves in Courts. (II.ii 14)

Abdelcador notices the effects of this strong passion on his leader. The emphasis on this particular subject throughout Settle's play draws the attention to a similar contemporary

[15] This text is taken from Early English Books Online edition of the play. All subsequent references to this text will be cited parenthetically by (act, scene, and page number.)

dimension that concerned the playwright as well as the nation, namely the court's sexuality. In his play, Settle satirizes the increasing trend of effeminacy at the English royal court.

Opposition writers, in particular, were deeply concerned with their King's supposed effeminate behavior. In fact, their worries were deeply connected with Restoration ideas about effeminacy. In *Zero Point: Discourse, Culture, and Satire in Restoration England*, Rose A. Zimbardo points out that Restoration writers believed that excessive heterosexual relationships could make a man effeminate. In Restoration sexuality, the unrestrained desire for a woman increased the risk of feminization (104-5). In the same vein, in *Making Sex: Body and Gender form the Greeks to Freud*, Thomas Laqueur explains that in early modern England effeminacy was considered "as a condition of instability, a state of men who through excessive devotion to women became more like them" (123). According to this belief, Laqueur argues, "men who associated too extensively with women could lose the hardness and definition of their more perfect bodies and regress into effeminacy" (7). Restoration thought considered the excessive contact with women dangerous to masculinity. In a sense, this was one of the reasons behind Restoration playwrights' concern with Charles's sexual behavior. In the Restoration public's mind, masculinity was one of the basic characteristics of the successful leader, a trait that was always the opposite of effeminacy. Therefore, Restoration writers found their monarch's masculine identity endangered by his unruly and excessive contact with females.

Charles II was known for his effeminate behavior as early as the period of exile in the Continent. The wandering prince and other exiled royalists were associated with licentious and scandalous behavior. It was not surprising that the young prince's frivolous and irresponsible behavior became a source of discontent to some of the wiser advisors (Smith 154, Staves 20). In 1658 James Butler, 1st Duke of Ormonde, expressed his worries about

Charles's behavior in a letter to Edward Hyde, 1st Earl of Clarendon, one of Charles's most trusted advisors. Ormonde wrote,

> I must now freely confess to you that what you have written of the King's unreasonable impatience at his stay at Bruges is a greater danger to my hopes of his recovery than the strength of his enemies, or the weaknesse and backwardnesse of those that professe him friendship. Modesty, courage, and many accidents may overcome those enemies, and unite and fix those friends, but I fear his immoderate delight in empty, effeminate, and vulgar conversation is become an irresistible part of his nature, and will never suffer him to animate his own designs and others' actions with that spirit which is requisite for his quality and much more to his fortune. This, to any but to you or him, or from any unlesse very few but from mee, or from mee at any other time, were too bold a lamentation, for so, God knows, it is. But God bless him and fit him for his work (qtd. in Ollard 117)

As early as the years of his exile, Charles's sexual adventures and effeminate behavior were a major source of worry for those who sought to restore the monarchy in England. Ormonde's observation provides us with a holistic understanding of Charles's behavior in exile which was, shortly, transferred to England after the restoration of the monarchy in 1660. Ormonde was able, based on his observations, to predict the impact of the irresponsible and effeminate behavior of Charles on the political state. The young prince kept women around him all the time and put himself under their influence. Instead of gathering support to his cause, Charles spent his exile years playing games, gambling, and seeking pleasure. Carolly Erickson points out that during his exile period, Charles "sought oblivion in sexual excess, spending his time in bathhouses and brothels, seeking new mistresses, ceasing to care what anyone thought" (206). It was not surprising then that this lifestyle was transported with him to England.

Settle referred to the infatuated character of Charles in more than one place in the course of commenting on the character of the young king of Morocco, Muly Labas. In Act III, the Queen Mother observes openly one of the flaws of Muly Labas,

> You see the Fates do their Allegiance know.
>
> And to my pow'rful Breath their Conduct ow.
>
> 'Tis pity Monarchs are so scarce —
>
> Such gen'rous, easie, kind, good natured things,
>
> That one feign'd Tear can rule the Faith of Kings. (III.i 25)

In a sense, the play extends the Queen Mother's observation to include all monarchs of this style. Settle wanted his message to be clear and direct. The Queen Mother establishes her perception about the weaknesses of her son and applies it to all monarchs. Her argument carries significant implications for the Restoration audience, who were annoyed by the excessively libertine and lecherous courtiers. Settle's play highlights the fact that sexual drives can sometimes be used as an agency to win dominion over politicians or the king himself in order to interfere in the country's decision-making. Thus, Settle's message is clear: sexual passion in a very politically sensitive milieu, like the court, can be destructive and harmful to the royal family as well as the whole nation.

Settle skillfully designed the plot and the Muslim setting of *The Empress of Morocco* to highlight the drastic effects of sexual effeminacy and libertine behavior in the court. When characters replace the more serious issues with sexual and sensual desires, corruption and anarchy spread everywhere. The weak Muly Labas, who falls prey to his leniency towards women, hastens his death and the tragic end of his reign. He obeys all the instructions of the evil Queen Mother and trusts the naïve young Queen that, in turn, leads to his destruction. When Muly Labas is fatally stabbed by the young Queen, he seems to realize the follies of his reign:

Have I for this a too fair Saint admir'd?

And with a more than common Love inspir'd,

Rais'd my bold Thoughts so high t'engross your Charms;

And bounded my Ambition in your Arms?

And must I die as depos'd Angels fell;

'Cause they aspir'd, and lov'd their Heav'n too well?

[…….]

Dyes (IV.ii 49)

Muly Labas showed unbounded trust for women around him. He did not suspect his mother's activities and enabled his naïve wife to end his life. The young Moroccan king, foolishly, asks the advice of his mother and never doubts her intentions. When the Queen Mother tells him that Muly Hamet attempted her virtue, he innocently believes her because "her blood does run within my Veins, / By instinct I know she all that's base disdains" (III.i 23). The king shows traits of a naïve ruler and unwise judge who counts only on his emotions to make decisions. The Young Queen realizes that and asks him to abandon his "unmanly fears" and "shew your Courage equal to your Love" (I.i 3). Even when he discovers Crimalhaz's plot, the king passively wonders if there is "no Policy nor Art that may / Prevent his Treason?" (IV.iii 42). The Queen Mother considers him as an "easie Fool," and a king who is so "gen'rous, easie, kind, good-natur'd" (III.i 25).

In a similar sense, Charles was surrounded by women to the extent that his court was, sometimes, likened to a seraglio. In fact, as Stephen Bardle points out, Charles was not criticized not only by playwrights, but also by poets. Andrew Marvell, for instant, criticized Charles's sexual behavior and described Charles's court as a seraglio in one of his poems.[16] In

[16] See Andrew Marvell's "The Mower Against Gardens" and "The Last Instructions".

The Literary Underground in the 1660s, Bardle suggests that Marvell paid particular attention to Charles's "sexual depravity" in some of his poems (150). Similarly, an anonymous poem that appeared in 1668 attacked Charles's irresponsible foreign policy and accused Charles of establishing a new seraglio. The poet wonders, in the course of attacking the sale of Dunkirk wonders, "but why, we do not know, / Unless t'erect a new Seraglio" (qtd. in Bardle 150). In Settle's play, King Muly Labas holds a large seraglio where he strictly protects and cares for. When he meets Muly Hamet at the gate of the seraglio, the King wonders about the way in which Crimalhaz obtained access to the secured royal seraglio,

> How Crimalhaz! Are you [Muly Hamet] not newly from
> Th' apartment of my Royal Mother come?
> In what defenceless Garb did you surprise
> Him there, that you disarm'd him with such ease?
> We o're our Womens Honours set such Eies,
> That the Seraglio all access denies.
> Who enters there without my Signet dies. (III.i 16)

The seraglio of King Muly Labas is the place of his harem, his pleasures, and his weaknesses too. The seeds of the decline of Morocco Kingdom hide in the seraglio. The scandalous behavior of the Queen Mother and her adulterous relationship with Crimalhaz takes place in the harem and leads the actions of the play to the climax. The sensual desires of the Queen Mother result in the tragic death of two kings; her husband and her son. The Morocco Kingdom mourns because of the harmful consequences of the deadly mixture of sex and politics.

The courtly life Settle dramatizes in his play resembles, to a large degree, the manners and lifestyle of Charles's court. *The Empress of Morocco* presents members of the royal family who pursue sexual pleasures and ignore their responsibilities in that course. In

addition, the play highlights the hidden roles of lusty and ambitious courtiers and their interference in the political sphere and decision-making arena. The Queen Mother seems to have her own philosophical views about sexual pleasures. She considers pursuing sensual passions a god that is superior to all other gods,

> Great Spirits Rivals are to Gods, and can,
> Were all the World like me, their Heav'n unman:
> We'd antidate our Bliss, not stay to move,
> like Pageant-Saints, to airy Seats above:
> We'd here below enjoy our Chiefest Good,
> And reap Delights which they ne're understood. (III.i 18)

The Queen Mother is also critical of Law and Religion. She considers them to be so over-good to be implemented on human beings, who hold deep in their inner souls a tendency to err and fulfill their desires. When the Queen Mother realizes that her relationship with Crimalhaz is discovered, she satirizes the authority of Law and Religion on their sexual freedom, which will bring their doom. She addresses Crimalhaz,

> You must your Ruine meet, and I my Shame:
> And yet we must not at our Dooms repine;
> Because Law and Religion are Divine.
> Yes, they're Divine; for they're so over-good,
> I'm sure, they ne're were made by Flesh and Blood. (III.i 19)

The Queen Mother also shows resistance to the traditional norms of the society and seems to be developing her own set of values in relation to her personal freedom,

> 'Tis not the blood of Sons nor Monarchs shakes
> Those resolutions which my Courage takes.
> O'er fear and vertue too, I have this odds:

My will's my King, my pleasures are my Gods. (IV.iii 52)

In addition, she defies the old values of the patriarchal social system in an attempt to satisfy her sensual desires. She challenges the "natural hierarchical order" by stepping outside the strict sexual norms of the Muslim society she lives in.

Settle's play highlights the danger of using sex (female sexuality) as an agency toward power, which is personified in the characters of Queen Mother. This strange mixture ends with more effeminate and passive male dependents, a situation similar to Charles and his court. The play has no strong or active male figures who can stop the Queen Mother's ambitions. Even the father figure, who usually stands for the superior authority and patriarchy in the house, is never present in the play. The audience knows only about his mysterious death in the first act. The absence of the dominant male figure in the play leaves the ambitious and lustful female figure free to perform her influence on the people around her. Without men of equal influence to face her schemes at court, the Queen Mother finds it easy to manipulate the policy of the whole country. Her evil influence leads to chaos and infighting as well as troubles with foreign policy issues that prove to have severe consequences on both the royal family and the state. The Queen Mother's schemes and interruption in the political sphere endangered the whole nation, caused dissent, and encouraged foreign powers to invade the kingdom. Crimalhaz's rebellion and King Taffalet's invasion of Morocco are among the direct outcomes of the Queen's interference in the politics of her country. In a similar way, the mistresses around Charles II participated in shaping the general policies of England. For example, the influence of his Catholic mistresses ended with more pro-French preferences. As a result, the King neglected the wide hopes of his people in alliance with the Protestant Dutch. In fact, Charles adopted the opposite direction by waging two destructive and unpopular wars against the Dutch while aligning himself with Europe's rising Catholic force, France. Therefore, by the means of using this allegorical setting, Settle

warned of the destructive outcomes of the unrestricted involvement of women in national politics. In a hint of Charles's complex court life, Settle presents a court milieu in which power relations are reversed as domination and authority lie mainly in the hands of a few females.

In the play, Settle highlights how the sexual libertinism of the court is determined by the power that this institution holds. Crimalhaz summarizes the relationship between power and sexual libertinism as he addresses the eunuch, Achmat,

> Fall, and in Death all hopes of Mercy lose,
> Who durst the Secrets of your Queen disclose:
> Closets of Princes should be held Divine,
> As a Saints presence Consecrates his Shrine:
> And Princes Pleasures should Alliance hold
> With their great Pow'r, be free and uncontrou'ld. (III.i 18)

Crimalhaz understands the dynamics between power and sex in his time. He stresses the importance of keeping the passions of royalty inside the walls of their castles away from curious eyes. Knowledge of the sexual adventures of powerful people should be as inscrutable as the mind of God and need to find free expression. Crimalhaz is aware that the power he enjoys from his relationship with the Queen Mother enables him to pursue his passions and sexual desires freely. Settle's application of Crimalhaz's opinions to Charles II's court is clear: the monarch and his courtiers can take advantage of their political and social status to supply themselves with all necessary means of fulfilling their pleasures and luxurious living. Settle projects the libertine court behavior onto the stage and presents his audience, who hail from different social classes, with an insight into the secretive world of court life. In the scene description, the audience discovers all elements of sex and power that enable Crimalhaz and the Queen Mother to fulfill their desires. The scene description

reads, "*Crimalhaz and Queen Mother sleeping on a Couch, a Table standing by, with Crimalhaz's Plume of Feathers, and his Drawn Sword upon it*" (III.i 15). The feathers signify the aesthetic pleasure of the encounter while the discarded sword implies the defenseless martial male, seduced by the desires of the liaison. Settle also designs a separate scene in which bold signals for adulatory and sexual intercourse take place. A witness – Muly Hamet – is summoned to comment on the incident and further illustrate the ugliness of the action. Muly Hamet wonders,

> Laula in Crimalhaz his Arms asleep!
>
> Ha! Does she thus for her dead Husband weep?
>
> Oh fond and amorous Queen! has Lust such Charms,
>
> Can make Her fly to an Adulterers Arms?
>
> His Sword drawn for his Guard.
>
> *Spies the Sword.*
>
> But he shall die […]. (III.i 16)

Muly Hamet's long monolog that follows this excerpt expands the period of the sexual scene and further exposes the couple to the gaze of the audience. Muly Hamet comments on the immoral behavior of the court and suggests a way to "right its wrongs,"

> […] No, He shall Wake, and Know
>
> The Justice and the Hand that gives the Blow:
>
> Should I descend to a Revenge so base,
>
> His Death unarm'd my Glory would deface:
>
> I will restore the Traytors Sword; for still
>
> I have been taught to conquer those I kill.
>
> Well, as a Witness of his Crime, his Sword
>
> I'le take, which when we meet shall be restor'd.

Then secretly, but honourably too,

My Hand shall Act what to his Guilt is due.

For, lest I should my Queens Disgrace proclaime,

I'le right her Wrongs, but I'le conceal her Shame. (III.i 16)

This long monolog gives more time for the audience to consider and reflect on this particular action and think of its implications for Charles's immoral court.

Furthermore, Settle uses strong sexual language that emphasizes the obscene practices of the court. When the Queen Mother forges charges of sexual assault against Muly Hamet, she uses language that produces sympathy for her on the one hand and disgust for the assaulter on the other:

Queen Mother: Your [Muly Hamet] Soul and Person Nature did ill match.

Such savage Passions and unruly Heat,

Lodg'd in Your Breast, hold a too glorious Seat.

King: What did he do?

Queen Mother: Attempt to ravish me. His alter'd Brow

Wore such fierce Looks, as had more proper been

To lead an Army with, than Court a Queen.

And, as a Ravisher, I abhorr'd him more

In that black form, than I admir'd before.

But whilst my Virtue a Resistance made

My Shrieks and Cries brought Achmat to my aid (III.i 21)

The phraseology the playwright uses in this scene and other similar scenes reflects his critique of the English court milieu that was filled with continuous sexual desires. Phrases like "savage passions," "unruly Heat," and "ravish" are all strong indicators of the sexual

charges directed against Muly Hamet. The sensuous language and setting underline the sexual violence of court life.

In fact, in numerous scenes in the play, characters charge each other with sexual and moral charges rather than political ones. For instant, Muly Hamet describes Queen Mother and Crimalhaz as lying in "Adulterer's arms" (III.i 15), and each are described as "this Adulterer" (III.i 21). King Muly Labas, Queen Mother, and Crimalhaz accuse Muly Hamet of being a ravisher who has uncontrollable sexual passions and heat, using expressions like, "a Ravisher" and someone who "ravish Queens, and injure Kings" (III.i 25).

Not surprisingly, Settle employs sexual imagery and language in *The Empress of Morocco* in order to serve his own political ends i.e., attacking the English court's immorality and exposing its sexual excesses. The sexual immorality at court is exposed to the audience as the playwright portrays an environment filled with many different sexual relationships. In addition to the illegitimate relationship between Queen Mother and Crimalhaz, characters pay considerable attention to other sexual assaults such as rape. In more than one scene, some characters either mention sexual violence or use threats of rape. In order to convince the Young Queen of the impending danger of Crimalhaz's ambitions, the Queen Mother plays on the Young Queen's fears of being raped by the lustful Crimalhaz,

> Then will he rudely snatch you from the place,
> And basely force You to his foul Embrace.
> And at that instant, Your dear Lord shall Bleed
> By Murderers appointed for the Deed.
> Whil'st with the noyse of Drums, and Trumpets sound,
> Your Out-cryes, and his Dying Groans are drown'd. (IV.ii 44)

The Moroccan court becomes a dangerous place for the Young Queen. Her status as a queen and, most importantly, as a woman is threatened by the sexual drive of courtiers. Crimalhaz

himself uses his masculine sexual passion for Mariamne to force Muly Hamet to withdraw his forces and declare him a legitimate king of Morocco. Crimalhaz, while trapped at the top of the tower, addresses Muly Hamet with this threat:

> I'le Ravish her [Mariamne]—
>
> Then throw my self and her into the Fire,
>
> And arm in arm together wee'll Expire.
>
> Burn, Burn the Tower. (V.i 67)

Settle presents royal figures and courtiers as barbarous beasts, who find delight in both rape and murder. Hametalhaz, one of the Queen Mother's confidents, violently kidnaps Mariamne. Then, in Act IV, Abdelcador warns Muly Hamet that Mariamne will be sexually abused if he tries to pursue her kidnappers. Susan Owen points out that dramatists with opposition sympathies used the "long-standing" tropes of sexual excess to attack the manifestations of tyranny and misrule at court (*Restoration Theatre and Crisis* 4). Owen adds that English playwrights used rape as a trope to attack royal and court libertinism drawing on the public discontent and dissatisfaction with court sexuality which had its roots as early as 1660 (*Restoration Theatre and Crisis* 176).

Very similar to his *Empress of Morocco*, there are more references in Settle's dramatic productions to evil lascivious females who rise to power through fraud and deceit. Towards the end of the 1670s, Settle became a very zealous writer for the Whig Exclusionists and a member of the radical Green Ribbon Club (Brown 24). Whig Exclusionists produced and supported the Exclusion Bill that sought to exclude the King's brother, Duke of York, from the throne of England because he was a Roman Catholic. At the same time, the Green Ribbon Club was the most notorious group in the Whig faction. In *Radical Whigs* Melinda Zook explains that they were responsible for anti-popery and anti-duke of York activities, effigy-burning processions, and providing Whigs with a place to meet and discuss political issues

(7). Settle supported the views of the Whig party in many of his literary productions during the late 1670s and early 1680s. In *The Female Prelate being the history of the life and death of Pope Joan* (1680), Settle connects women's uncontrolled sexual lust and ambition for power with contemporary Catholic threats that were, as he believed, engulfing the nation. Settle personifies such threats in his portrayal of the character of Pope Joan who is eventually described as,

> A Whore, a Poysoner! nay, a Fathers Whore,
>
> And Fathers Poysoner! Oh my bloated Soul!
>
> O most unnatural doubly damn'd *Hyena*,
>
> Mixt in my Fathers shame! Oh horrour, horrour! (V.i 59)[17]

Similar to *The Empress of Morocco, The Female Prelate* plays on the wide-spread fears of the danger of foreign hegemony and domination in the court represented by the influence of some of Charles's Catholic mistresses. Settle warns of the female evil "whores" who use their political power to manipulate the politics of the nation to serve earthly desires and lusts. In a sense, *The Female Prelate* highlights this type of hideous feminine monstrosity. The major female characters in both plays commit regicide and, subsequently, pursue the destruction of their heirs. Settle blames lustful females for the destruction and miseries of whole families and kingdoms. The playwright employs the device of the lustful woman on more than one level. First, the female figure is presented as a corrupt court member who is capable of interfering, decisively, in the state's political sphere. Second, these females are dangerous because they have hostile and destructive foreign agendas, a clear reference to Charles's

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[17] This text is taken from Early English Books Online edition of the play. All subsequent references to this text will be cited parenthetically by (act, scene, and page number.)

Catholic mistresses. Finally, they serve as an enemy within the nation's most influential political institutions, the court.

3. Elkanah Settle's *Ibrahim the Illustrious Bassa* (1676)

Just like *The Empress of Morocco*, Settle's *Ibrahim the Illustrious Bassa* serves as a coded representation of the increasing political influence of Charles II's mistresses that they maintained through their sexual power (Hayden 78). In the play, the Sultan's sexuality offers an opportunity to explore contemporary concerns about Charles II's court. Restoration playwrights, especially those who showed sympathy to opposition views, were irked by Charles II's free sexual life. Plays like *Ibrahim* served as a mean to present public concerns and anxieties in regards to the King's sexual habits as well as the political influence of his numerous mistresses.

In 1676, Settle dramatized the character of Suleiman the Magnificent in his *Ibrahim the Illustrious Bassa* for the Duke's Company. In the play, Settle focuses upon the conflicts of lust and honor in the story of Sultan Suleiman's desire for a fair Christian woman. The play opens with a glorious representation of the Sultan who is portrayed as a perfect monarch. Sultan Solyman treats the captured Persian prince, Ulama, a respected guest at his court.[18] As a sign of gratitude, the Sultan offers to marry his own daughter, Asteria, to the noble and victorious Ibrahim, his Vizier Bassa. Ibrahim refuses this generous offer and reveals to the Sultan that he is in love with the Christian princess Isabella. Ibrahim's rejection of the Sultan's daughter does not change the relationship between the Sultan and his general. On the contrary, the Sultan vows to preserve the life of Ibrahim: "Whilst Solyman Lives, his Ibrahim

18 Ulama is the Sophy's son. In the play, the prince is captured after the defeat of the Sophy's armies at the hands of Solyman's forces.

shall not dye/ By any violent death" (I.i 223–4).[19] After the end of one of the Ottoman army's battles, Princess Isabella is taken captive and delivered to the Ottoman court. Solyman helps reunite the couple despite Asteria's disappointment and lost hope in marrying Ibrahim.

The Sultan is quickly conquered by the beauty of the fair Isabella and turns his respect into a passionate desire for her. Solyman denounces his earlier promises to the couple and plans to stop the marriage of Isabella and Ibrahim. The tragedy of the Ottoman royal family starts with the Sultan's uncontrolled desires. Unable to bear the unfaithful Sultan, Sultana Roxolana poisons herself. Before she dies, the Sultan realizes his error and reconciles with his dying wife. Princess Asteria is killed by the wicked Morat, who later is killed by Ibrahim. The play ends with the Sultan's permission to Ibrahim and Isabella to return to their homeland.

The image of the passionate and unfaithful monarch in the play sheds light on the contemporary anxieties in regards to King Charles II's sexuality. Towards the second half of the 1670s, the political nation developed more concerns about the influence of the mistresses of Charles II on the nation's future. Yermolenko observes that Restoration heroic drama, in a sense, was a response to the worries of writers in regards to their king's unpopular and illegitimate relationships with his mistresses (37). De Krey states that in the eyes of the opposition writers, Charles's court was considered a type of a Harem (21). Playwrights, among other literary figures, noticed the threat that a female influence posed to the male-dominated political sphere. Yermolenko adds that in Settle's *Ibrahim the Illustrious Bassa*, the unfaithful Solyman is more likely to represent the character of Charles II. It is obvious

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[19] This text is taken from Early English Books Online edition of the play. All subsequent references to this text will be cited parenthetically by (act, scene, and page number.)

that both monarchs show uncontrollable sexual desires that discourage them from establishing a normal relationship with their wives and encourage them to pursue more active relations with mistresses (37).

Charles II's sexuality offered opposition playwrights ammunition for more aggressive attacks on the royal institution. Hayden argues that Restoration playwrights purposefully associated Charles II with Sultan Suleiman I and his harem, depicting him as a rakish monarch (75). Some of Charles's mistresses, like Barbara Palmer the Countess of Castlemaine, developed considerable concern in state affairs (Jordan and Walsh 73). Just like the enamored Sultan, whose sexual indulgence paves the way for women to interfere in the empire's politics, many women in Charles's court showed a similar influence over the King and the country's policies.

The play is loaded with references and allusions to Charles's sexual habits. After he shows his first passionate responses to the fair Isabella, characters around Sultan Solyman remind him of his position as a monarch of a vast empire which dictates that he ought to possess higher levels of moral behavior than his subjects. Ulama, the Persian prince in the Sultan's court, frankly advises Solyman to

> Recall your wandering thoughts from such false dreams,
> And free your self from all these wil'd extreams:
> This low desire and humble thought surmount,
> And your own happier Scenes of Love recount:
> Think of that dazling form, so far above
> Natures less lights, your Roxolana's Love. (II.i 20)

Ulama reminds Solyman that the 'low desires' of the Sultan that the female captive inflames are a kind of false dream that are not worth space in the Sultan's heart. Ulama reminds the

fond Sultan of the importance of paying more attention to Sultana Roxolana's love which is more legitimate and worthy of his status.

The Sultan ignores all calls for both responsible behavior and more respect towards his reputation and political status. The Sultan is then turned into a cruel and unfaithful man in the eyes of his subjects. The direct criticism from various characters in the play reminds the audience of the criticism of the similar behavior of their monarch, Charles II. In fact, Settle's play was performed in a period that witnessed a public mixture, as Hutton puts it, "of disgust and ribaldry" that resulted from the King's irresponsible and unrestrained sexual behavior that led to the lack of national confidence in his rule and his government too (338). Ulama shows similar "disgust" when he reports to Roxolana the news of the Sultan's capture of Isabella after she had tried to flee. Ulama addresses Roxolana: "Your cruel Lord (but oh that Fate shou'd joyn / With Cruelty!) by his wild passion led, / Has seiz'd the Christian Princess as she fled" (III.i 40). Similar to Charles II, the representation of the Ottoman Sultan shifts from the excellent model of kingship to a mere cruel and unfaithful ruler who is solely interested in pursuing his wild passions.

Sultan Solyman tries to defend his passions and involves himself in a long dialogue with Ibrahim, his rival for Isabella's love. The Sultan shows a degree of indulgence and effeminacy that does not fit the expectations of his strong political position. He wonders,

> Is it so humble to adore that Face?
>
> [……]
>
> By Nature she's ordeyn'd to be Obey'd:
>
> All Beauteous things for Soveraignty were made.
>
> Is not Love Kingly then, when thus my Breast it fils? (IV.i 48)

Unlike his image at the beginning of the play, the Sultan here does not speak about conquests, wars, and victories; rather he becomes ready to abandon much of his empire only to fulfill his

sexual desires. He offers Ibrahim to "Take all my Forces, half my World be thine: / And in exchange, let that one Prize be mine" (IV.i 48). The Sultan's irresponsibility here may hint at King Charles II's similar irresponsible behavior in terms of his continual pursuit of sensual desires while paying less attention for the general good of the nation.[20] The Sultan's concern, in Settle's tragedy, turns from expanding the empire's borders into a less grand business. As a result of his passionate love for Isabella, the Sultan becomes willing to sacrifice half of his empire only to enjoy the fair princess.

Roxolana is one of the major characters who reflects upon the Sultan's unruly sexual desires. Throughout the last two acts in the play, she tries desperately to help him reconsider his decisions and listen to what his royal position dictates for him. When she realizes that all her attempts are in vain, she openly criticizes the Sultan's desires and laments her love that was "Sacrific'd to please a Tyrants Lust" (IV.i 55). Roxolana, on her death-bed, summarizes the Sultan's defects and the consequences of his weaknesses,

> Oh *Sultan!* what reward does falsehood bring;
> What judgments persecute a Perjur'd King?
> Your Empress dyes; your Friend and Daughter bleed,
> To pull down Vengeance on your guilty head.
> Of th'unjust torments I have undergone,
> Heav'n has a sence, though *Solyman* has none. (V.i 70)

Eventually, and very similar to Charles's case, the Sultan's irresponsible sexual behavior destroys his family and threatens the stability of the whole empire. Settle's tragedy warns of the dangerous consequences of the King's sexual life and the "Inhumane Court" (III.i 31) that threatened the stability of the political settlement of the Restoration period i.e., the need to

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[20] Settle, here, may refer to the infamous sale of Dunkirk that took place back in 1662 when Charles II sold English possessions in Dunkirk to Louis XIV of France.

preserve English liberties, property, and Protestant faith. The general discontent of the political nation in regards to Charles II's mistresses' influence on the court was always a serious topic in streets and coffeehouses. Judy Hayden states that Charles II's mistresses stimulated hatred, anxiety, and fear. During her stay at the royal court, Lady Castlemaine used sexual tricks to increase her influence over the King. Refusing to comply had the same result. Women like Francis Stuart developed her political influence through "refusing to submit sexually to the King" (87).

As the discussion of Settle's plays reveal, unfaithfulness and passion can endanger the existence of the whole empire, destroy a royal family, and shake the image of the king as a magnificent ruler. Far from being representatives of some of Muslim States' affairs, the plays embody British anxieties and fears of the wild manners of the court. Settle dramatizes Parliament's view that the potential source of danger comes not from outsiders but, rather, from those, particularly women, at the very center of power at court.

4. Aphra Behn's *Abdelazer, or the Moors Revenge* (1677)

Aphra Behn's *Abdelazer, or the Moors Revenge* reflects the increasing complaints about the wild manners of the royal court of Charles II. The play presents an attempt of a loyalist dramatist to find a way out of the charges made by opposition writers who exposed the rakish nature of the king and his accompanying court. Behn, who admitted the moral defects of the English court, displayed considerable loyalty to the King and tried to exclude his association with the libertine manners of the courtiers.

Behn's loyalism to Charles originated during the later years of the 1670s when the crisis over the exclusion of the Duke of York was taking shape. Controversy over the Exclusion issue had its roots in 1673 when the Duke of York and heir to the crown converted openly to Catholicism and married the Italian Catholic princess Mary of Modena. This marriage fueled the public fears that a male Catholic heir, by upbringing, would rule the

country and impose Catholicism on the Protestant majority. Therefore, Parliament decided to introduce a bill that would exclude James from the succession to prevent any possibility of a future Catholic heir to the English throne. In the midst of this political turmoil, Behn became more involved in contemporary domestic politics. She satirized the rising opposition political party that was later named the "Whig" party. Mary O'Donnell observes that in the majority of her literary productions, Behn attacked Whigs and portrayed them as "sexist 'cits'" and greedy in plays such as *The Roundheads* (1681) and *The City-Heiress* (1682). In these plays, Behn portrays lustful and libertine villains who seek to block a rightful heir from ascending to the throne (6). In sum, Behn was deeply involved in the political controversies of her time, and therefore, employed her talents in enunciating her political sympathies.

4.1 The play

In general, Behn's tragedy warned of the destructive outcomes of the moral corruption and sexual excess in the political arena in England. Behn directed her criticism at Charles's amoral courtiers who were led by their sensual desires and corrupt intentions. Behn maintained an image of Charles in which he was always immune to such charges. The playwright, as a devoted royalist, left some space for hope and optimism in her address of this issue at the English court. The discussion that follows traces the relationship between Behn's political allegiances and the sexual portrayal of Muslim figures in her tragedy *Abdelazer or the Moors Revenge* (1677).

During the second half of the 1670s, Behn was increasingly involved in the political field till, by the end of the decade, she became a prominent propagandist for the newly established Tory party. Anne Hermanson points out that "*Abdelazer* is an early indicator of Behn's deepest political concerns" (78). As the Earl of Shaftesbury and other opposition leaders were organizing Parliament's endeavors to interfere in the decision making of their

country's policies, Behn, like the majority of royalist writers, stood on the Stuart's side and supported their cause.

Abdelazer or the Moors Revenge is set in Morocco, North Africa. After a few scenes, we are told that the old King of Spain, Philip, having conquered Morocco, killed its king, Abdela, and took the Moroccan prince, Abdelazer, a prisoner. During his stay in Spain, young Abdelazer proves his courage and prowess on the battlefield, and therefore, is appointed a general in the army. Although he becomes one of the King's favorites, Abdelazer does not forget the wounds of the past and decides to avenge the destruction of his kingdom and the death of his father. He became the Queen's lover only to gain more influence at the Spanish court. The character of the Queen in Behn's plays is close to that of Queen Mother in Settle's *The Empress of Morocco*, as both females are villainous creatures who hold an excessive desire for illicit sexual relationships with courtiers. Isabella, the Queen in Behn's play, helps Abdelazer murder her husband, King Philip. As the young Prince Ferdinand ascends to the throne, his younger brother, Prince Philip, returns from one of his expeditions. Shortly thereafter, Prince Philip accuses his mother of being adulterous and unfaithful because of her relationship with Abdelazer, which is no longer a secret. Isabella uses her influence over King Ferdinand to save her lover's life. The young King Ferdinand, however, forgives the Moor only because he loves the Moor's wife, Florella. Abdelazer persuades the King that Philip is a traitor, who is plotting with the Cardinal to take over the throne. Philip and the Cardinal escape to the army's camp while Isabella succeeds in murdering her rival, Florella. Abdelazer discovers the dead body of his wife and accuses the King of the murder. Abdelazer then slays the King in a short combat. To prevent the accession of Philip, Abdelazer and Isabella announces that the potential king is a mere bastard of the Cardinal. In consequence, Abdelazer declares himself Protector of Spain.

Abdelazer, having eliminated his major enemies, orders his old ally, Isabella, to be murdered. The chance is ready now for Abdelazer to announce his love for Leonora, Philip's sister, Alonzo's fiancé, and the future queen of the country. Osman, one of Abdelazer's officers, regrets his service of the wicked Moor and frees Philip, the Cardinal, and Alonzo. The three gather their supporters and attack Abdelazer and eventually eliminate him and his followers for good. The play ends with the reunion of Leonora and Alonzo and the restoration of Philip, a legitimate king of Spain.

The intentions of Behn in writing such a play were paradoxical or at least complex at the first glance. During the 1670s, there was increasing national dissatisfaction with Charles II's political practices. Reasons for such feeling included the increasing Catholic influence on the court, the disastrous Third Dutch War (1672–4), the alliance with France against the Dutch, and not least importantly the King's amoral and libertine lifestyle. In his article "Aphra Behn and the Restoration Theatre", Derek Hughes observes that during the second decade of the Restoration period "[k]ings in serious drama were now rarely restored heroes, and sometimes sexually voracious and oppressive tyrants" (32-3). In fact, Behn's play presents a transitional episode between early Restoration royalist drama and those of pre-Exclusion Crisis productions. In her play, Behn presents two models of kingship; one is weak, indulgent, and mainly driven by his passionate love of a married woman (King Ferdinand); while the second is more masculine and energetic (young King Philip). In other words, in *Abdelazer* Behn is still loyal to the traditional custom of dramatizing restored kings at the end of the play, but at the same time, she alludes to some of the defects of Charles II's libertine court by the portrayal of the corrupt Spanish court life.

During the 'Tory Reaction' period,[21] Behn seemed to be more lenient to the behaviors of the royal court. In fact, Behn resorted to the traditional political tropes of royalist drama that associated royalism with virtue on one hand and rebellion with lust and sexual libertinism on the other. Susan Owen, in her "Behn's Dramatic Response to Restoration Politics," points out that Behn's play *The Roundheads or, The Good Old Cause* (1681) is a typical Tory piece in its tackling of sexual politics. In her discussion, Owen refers to the fact that Behn recurrently employed many Tory tropes that highlighted royal virtuousness and condemned Whig ambition and sexuality (68). *The Roundheads* ridiculed the Puritans and Parliamentarians of the Republican period and accused them of lust and obscenity. In the play, Lady Desbro links loyalty to the king with virtue, "No, I'm true to my Allegiance still, true to my King and Honour. Suspect my Loyalty when I lose my Virtue" (IV.i 33).[22] Although there are no references to Muslim figures in *The Roundheads*, the play helps us understand the way in which sexual politics of the Restoration dramatic works was heavily influenced by the particularity of the needs of the historical moment. The contradictions between the two plays, *Abdelazer* and *The Roundheads*, show the evolution of Tory ideological discourse through the most, politically, critical years of the Restoration period.

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[21] According to Susan Owen, the "Tory Reaction" period started from Autumn 1681 and continue into the reign of James II. After the dissolution of the Oxford Parliament in 1681 and the ultimate failure of the attempts to pass the Exclusion Bill, Tories took advantage of the defeat of their rivals, the Whigs, and went on the offensive. Tories tried Whig leaders for treason – especially after the Rye House Plot in 1683. Shaftesbury and few Whig leaders found no alternative other than flying to the Continent. Owen points out that during this period, the Tory party flourished as "[t]he court pursued a policy of ruining Whigs through a variety of civil suits" (*Restoration Theatre and Crisis* 43).

[22] This text is taken from Early English Books Online edition of the play. All subsequent references to this text will be cited parenthetically by (act, scene, and page number.)

While opposition playwrights employed the strong card of court obscenity in their criticism of the King and his policy, loyalist writers found no other alternative than being somewhat indulgent towards court sexuality. In fact, this was the only choice for Behn in *Abdelazer*. The lustful King Ferdinand acts less aggressively towards the helpless female figures than the lustful barbarous rebels in *The Roundheads.*

Behn's attitudes towards Charles II were complex for many reasons. Charles II's ignorance of Behn's services in the spying mission during the Second Dutch War left the young woman penniless in London. Behn tried in vain to gain access to the court for her wartime services. In "The Political Poetry of Aphra Behn" Melinda S. Zook observes that there is no doubt of Behn's royalist commitment, but it is not always the King who is idealized in her works. On many occasions, it is "the grandees around the King" that are really celebrated in Behn's views (49).

When the play was first produced, the major crisis of the Restoration period was taking shape, and the controversy and dissatisfaction about the King's libertine court was increasing. In his book *The Theatre of Aphra Behn*, Derek Hughes claims that in *Abdelazer* Behn intended to air out some of the domestic political tensions of her age. Hughes explains that the play does not over emphasize King Ferdinand's lust after Florella. Also, the murder of the King is not carried out by one of his subjects, but by the hands of an outsider villain. Hughes supports his argument with the fact that the play concludes with restoration of the monarchy, a typical theme of the early 1660s (65). In various scenes in the play, characters argue about the value of restoring the legitimate royal line. The Cardinal, in the course of his pleas for forgiveness, addresses the crowned King Philip,

> And shall this joyfull day, that has restor'd you
> To all the Glories of your Birth and merits,
> That has restor'd all *Spain* the greatest Treasure

That ever happy Monarchy possess'd,

Leave only me unhappy? (V.i 71)[23]

Behn's treatment of the character of the Moor in her play is remarkably different from the presentation of the Moor in its source, Thomas Dekker's *Lust's Dominion*. Behn's play, as Derek Hughes observes, rejects the traditional stereotypical treatment of the Moor on English stage. Hughes adds that while the Moor in *Abdelazer* is a true villain, references to blackness and "sexual transgressiveness" differs from what *Lust's Dominion* had presented earlier (*The Theatre of Aphra Behn* 60). Moreover, Behn shows no interest in reflecting on the Muslim presence in Spain and the long historical conflict between the Spanish and Moors. Rather, the emphasis in Behn's dramatization of her Moor is on his wicked character and his unlimited will to avenge himself more than the emphasis on his blackness or lasciviousness. The only objection Alonzo raises against Abdelazer is "his habit, which he still retains" (I.ii 9). Remarkably, there are no references to color or race in most of the Spanish characters' arguments about the Moor.

Along the same lines, Janet Todd explains, in "Tragedy and Tragicomedy," that Behn departs from her sources and the general traditional portrayal of the Moor in English drama in the sense that she highlights Abdelazer's *otherness* and "destructive masculinity rather than his blackness." In addition, Behn presents an example of a good Moor, Osmin, who helps in saving Princess Leonora from Abdelazer's danger. Osmin's nobility and courage prove that Abdelazer's wicked and revengeful character is an isolated case and does not reflect the norm of an entire race (90). From a different perspective, Behn, in order to convey certain political

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[23] This text is taken from Early English Books Online edition of the play. All subsequent references to this text will be cited parenthetically by (act, scene, and page number.)

messages, downplays the traditional emphasis on the Moor's lust in order to make it more less comparable with Charles and his court.

Interestingly enough, Abdelazer is the one who is pursued by the lustful Queen in Behn's play. The play opens with an unusual situation where the white European female courts an outsider, a Moor. The spectators are introduced to a queen who spends her time trying to fulfill her sensual desires, paying no attention to her status nor the good of her country. She considers Abdelazer a god and begs him for more attention. When the Queen meets the frown of Abdelazer, she tries to please him calling him "My Moor" (I.i 2).[24] When Abdelazer shows no interest in the conversation, she further explains her feeling toward her lover,

> To me!—it cannot be;—to me, sweet Moor!—
> No, no, it cannot;—prithee smile upon me;—
> Smile whilst a thousand Cupids shall descend
> And call thee Jove, and wait upon thy smiles,
> Deck thy smooth brow with flowers;
> Whilst in my Eyes, needing no other Glass,
> Thou shalt behold and wonder at thy beauty. (I.i 2)

In the beginning, Abdelazer hesitates and feels uneasy with his relationship with the Queen for the Queen's passion for him had become a subject of the city's daily conversations. Similar to the critiques of Charles II and his rakish courtiers, Abdelazer blames the Queen for the way people treat him in the streets:

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[24] This text is taken from Early English Books Online edition of the play. All subsequent references to this text will be cited parenthetically by (act, scene, and page number.)

I cannot ride through the *Castilian* Streets,

But thousand eyes

Throw killing looks at me;—

And cry,—That's he that does abuse our King;—

There goes the Minion of the *Spanish* Queen,

Who, on the lazie pleasures of his Love,

Spends the Revenues of the King of *Spain:*—

This many-headed-beast your Lust has arm'd,.— (I.i 3)

Behn, here, refers to the libertine and sexually indulgent royal court that was clearly situated in the Restoration period culture. The playwright presents the Spanish court members as involving in well-publicized sexual relationships. Even the young Prince Philip is aware of his mother's illegitimate relationship with Abdelazer. Upon his return from a military expedition, he tells his mother of her crime stating that while she,

[…] lull'd in soft peace at home,—betray'd

His [the King] name to everlasting Infamy;

Suffer'd his Bed to be defil'd with Lust,

Gave up your self, your honour, and your vows,

To wanton in yon Sooty Leacher's arms.

(*points to* Abd.

That Dog you mean, that has dishonour'd you,

Dishonour'd me, these Lords, nay and all *Spain;* (I.ii 8)

Behn refers here to the sensitivity of the position of royal figures and the effects of their decisions – both personal and formal – on the whole nation. Philip considers his mother's sexual freedom as a betrayal not only for his father but a betrayal of the entire nation. Behn, here, seems to be asking members of the court to fulfill their obligations to the nation and

take political responsibility. In her emphasis on the bad influence of women Behn, in a way, is protecting Charles by placing all the blame on others. In this case, Charles is depicted as the victim whereas the true villain is a woman.

As the actions of the play progress, the audience forms a more detailed understanding of the wickedness of the Queen's character. Similar to the Queen Mother in Settle's *The Empress of Morocco*, the Queen in Behn's tragedy proves to be a murderer of her own offspring. After she mercilessly murders her old husband with poison, she tries to convince the new king, her son Ferdinand, of Philip's treachery and suggests that Abdelazer is to be sent to attack Philip and the Cardinal at their camp,

> The Ambition of the one, infects the other,
> And they are both too dangerous to live.—
> But might a Mothers counsel be obey'd,
> I wou'd advise you, send the valiant Moor
> To fetch 'em back, e're they can reach the Camp:
> For thither they are fled,—where they will find
> A welcome fatal to us all. (III.i 26)

The Queen's evil nature and her passion for Abdelazer also drive her to proclaim her own son, Philip, a bastard of the Cardinal. In order to prevent Philip from ascending to the throne, she claims that she "Chose rather to proclaim my Infamy, / Than an Ambitious Bastard should be Crown'd" (III.iii 38). The relationship between the mother and her son is destroyed as the unrestricted sexual passions of the Queen exceed all natural limits.

It is obvious that the play exposes the danger of the combination of sex and power in the Spanish court that results in many catastrophic consequences on the whole kingdom. The Queen's lust for sex leads her to wage war against all those who may challenge her desires. While the majority of the political nation prepared for the worst scenario due to the

increasing political unrest, Behn warned of a slide into a new civil war that would destroy everyone. The Queen, terrified of the unexpected rebellion of those who remained loyal to Prince Philip, rushes for safety in Abdelazer's arms. She addresses the Moor saying,

> Oh my dear Moor!
>
> The rude, exclaiming, ill-affected Multitude.
>
> (Tempestuous as the Sea) run up and down,
>
> Some crying, kill the Bastard,—some the Moor;
>
> These for King *Philip*,—those for *Abdelazer*. (IV.i 39)

The involvement of sexual relations in the political arena of the Kingdom of Spain leads to chaos and infighting among friends and brothers. Unfaithfulness and passionate love, in the Spanish court, prove to have bad consequences on both the royal family and the state. Behn's tragedy warns of the destructive outcomes of the unrestricted involvement of sexuality in the political field in England. In a hint to Charles's rakish courtiers, Behn creates a court milieu in which power and sex are deeply intertwined as the royal authority is heavily influenced by the sensual desires of a corrupt group.

Obviously, Behn made significant modifications in her portrayal of the Moor that is remarkably different from Dekker's Moor in *Lust's Dominion*. When designing her perceptions about the character of Abdelazer, Behn had her own political preoccupations in mind that needed to be dramatized in front of audiences trained for allegorical dramatizations of political figures. Unlike Dekker's Eleazar, Abdelazer is not driven by lust in Behn's tragedy. Abdelazer is mainly driven by his determination to avenge the old wounds of the past. Behn is more likely to be sympathetic with Abdelazer's story as she presents many justifications for his hatred of Spain in general and the royal family in particular. In the play, love occupies only a minor share of his interests. He clearly expresses his priorities to the Queen who begs him to return her love and passion,

How dear those mighty graces I have purchas'd!

My blooming Youth, my healthful vigorous Youth,

Which Nature gave me for more Noble Actions

Then to lie fawning at a womans feet,

And pass my hours in idleness and Love.—

If I cou'd blush, I shou'd through all this Cloud

Send forth my sence of shame into my Cheeks. (I.i 3)

Although a villain who is deeply determined to destroy the royal family of Spain, Abdelazer shows solidity of great spirits in his personality that leaves no room for idleness and love. The reason behind that change in Abdelazer's characters from Behn's source is that the playwright was concerned in highlighting the racial or religious alienation of Abdelazer less than emphasizing her domestic political messages.

Apparently, Abdelazer is not to be blamed for all the chaos, bloodshed, and sexuality in the Spanish court. In a sense, the Moor is a victim of the desires of the lascivious Queen. His affair with the Queen is marked with the female social superiority over him. Unlike the stereotypical representation of the Moor as lustful and rapist, the Moor in Behn's play becomes a victim of white female sexuality. When the Queen realizes that Abdelazer is not interested in her love, she retains to her wicked ways to force him to fulfill her desires. She orders her women to "Cry murder, murder, help, help" (I.i 4), and she falls as if Abdelazer is trying to rape her. Abdelazer, frightened of being accused of rape, finds no other solution but submitting to the Queen's will,

Hell, what's this!—peace Bawd,—'sdeath,

They'le raise the Court upon me, and then I'me lost.—

My Queen,—my Goddess,—Oh raise your lovely eyes,

I have dissembled coldness all this while;

And that deceit was but to try thy Faith.—

takes her up, sets her in a Chair, then kneels.

Look up,—by Heav'n 'twas Jealousie,—

Pardon your Slave,—pardon your poor Adorer. (I.i 4)

After this point, Abdelazer becomes a slave of the evil Queen, an assistant in her plots, and a mere sexual object for her passions.

Remarkably, the only character to whom Abdelazer shows love is his wife, Florella. Although undeveloped in the play, Abdelazer shows respect and intimacy to his wife. He never speaks ill of her when she is absent. When the Cardinal tries to get the King to banish Abdelazer, the Moor asks his wife to leave him alone in order to think of a solution. His words to his wife reveal sincere love and respect for her,

Leave me, *Florella*,—prithee do not weep;

I love thee,—love thee wondrously;—go, leave me,—

I am not now at leisure to be fond;—

Go to your Chamber,—go.— (I.ii 10)

Still, Prince Philip notices Abdelazer's love for Florella and tries to stir the Moor's jealousy. To further insult him, Philip tells Abdelazer that King Ferdinand is in love with Florella and he, the King, is trying to enjoy her,

Thy wife! thy wife! proud Moor, whom thou'rt content

To sell (for Honour) to eternal Infamy.—

Does't make thee snarle!—bite on, whilst thou shalt see,

I go for Vengeance, and 'twill come with me. (II.i 14)

Whether out of love or as a desire of possession, Abdelazer reacts immediately to such news that gives him a new reason for revenge. He decides to protect his wife against the King's lust that would stain the Moor's honor with disgrace and shame. Again, in this incident, the play

refers to adverse outcomes of the interference of sex in political affairs. The King's uncontrollable desire for sex increases the political threats in the court that prove to be devastating to his rule and his whole kingdom. In a way, the playwright is more concerned with royal members' sexuality than the activities of the alien Moor. King Ferdinand's passion for Florella as well as the Queen's lust for Abdelazer are major factors of the ruin of the Spanish court and the miseries that the major characters face.

It is not the Moor but Spanish characters – in particular members of the court and royal family – who show libertine behavior and passionate desires in *Abdelazer*. In the final Act of the play, Abdelazer explains frankly to his rival, Prince Philip, that the main reason of his sexual relationship with the Queen is to take revenge,

> Thou'st reason, Prince! nor can they wound my body,
> More then I've done thy Fame; for my first step
> To my Revenge, I whor'd the Queen thy Mother.
> [……]
> Know Prince, I made thy amorous Mother
> Proclaim thee Bastard, when I miss'd of killing thee. (V.i 69-70)

Behn lessens the emphasis on the stereotypical conception of the Moorish figure as libidinous and presents him as wicked and revengeful. This change in the representation of the Moor, even not a positive or radical one, sheds light on the political message the stands behind the production of the play. Behn blames the court members for their sexual indulgence that enables an outsider to interrupt their peaceful life and drive the whole country into chaos and civil war.

Behn, as a devoted royalist, leaves some space for hope and optimism in her address of the *crisis* of libertinism at the English court. In her play, she presents a reliable royal prince who is able to detect the defects in his environment and act decisively to save the

nation. Young Prince Philip, most likely to represent Charles II, stands against the evil plots that are aimed to destroy the country, changes its political system, and agitates rebels and plotters against its stability. Before the battle between Prince Philip and Abdelazer, Sebastian, an officer of the Prince, flies to the Cardinal and asks him to unite his forces with the Prince in order to defeat the usurper Moor. Sebastian encourages the Cardinal to advance,

> Or else the Prince and Victory is lost,
> Which now depends upon his single Valour;
> Who like some Ancient *Hero,* or some God,
> Thunders amongst the thickest of his Enemies,
> Destroying all before him in such numbers,
> That Piles of dead obstruct his passage to the living.—
> Relieve him straight, my Lord, with our last Cavalry and hopes. (IV.i 43)

Philip is the *hero* or *god* who will save the day for the Spanish people. Battlefields speak of his courage and valor in the face of his enemies. In addition, Philip's references to "The justice of [his] Quarrel," his "Fathers wrongs," and "*Spains* misery," are all references to the restored monarch, Charles II. On the other hand, evil powers in the play are associated with the rebellious leaders of the Protectorate. Abdelazer, in a hint to Oliver Cromwell, asks the Lords to appoint him a "Protector of the Crown of *Spain,*/ Till we agree about a lawful Successor" (III.iii 38).

Purposefully, Behn's tragedy follows the traditional royalist style of the 1660s and early 1670s, which concludes the play with a glorious restoration of the rightful king. The play's emphasis on the joy and merits of restoring a prince to the throne is obvious in many places. The Cardinal, at the end of the play, welcomes the victorious Prince and asks for reconciliation with him,

> And shall this joyfull day, that has restor'd you
> To all the Glories of your Birth and merits,
> That has restor'd all *Spain* the greatest Treasure
> That ever happy Monarchy possess'd,
> Leave only me unhappy? when, Sir, my crime
> Was only too much Faith […]. (V.i 71)

Behn's play restores the royalist hero who, despite all the challenges he faces, proves his courage and resourcefulness that enables him to save the nation. In the same vein, Hermanson explains that *Abdelazer* is one of the gauges of Behn's early political concerns in a period in which Charles's "much-hated mistresses," maintained a considerable political influence over the King (77-8).

To conclude, the negative image of the Moor/Turk was used by Settle and Behn to diagnose the fermented sexual-political tensions during the Restoration period. The traditional reading of the hostile representations of the Muslim in Restoration drama, which claims that such representations are logical outcomes of the contemporary hostility against Muslims, eclipses a large part of the truth. Such perceptions of this complex issue present an insufficient understanding of the political and social milieu in which the plays were written. As the above discussion reveals, it is crucial to take into our consideration the fact that such plays reflected many contemporary issues in the political life of early modern England. Settle and Behn used Muslim characters and settings as allegories of relevant sexual-political issues in Charles II's court. The plays discussed in this chapter reveal the extensive use of allegorical characters on stage that are meant to convey certain political messages in regards to court libertinism.

Opposition playwrights tended to reach a consensus in how they criticized the sexuality and amorality of Charles II and his court. The unfaithfulness and irresponsibility of

the King, as well as his endless interest in making relationships with new mistresses, gave ammunition to opposition writers who tried to use allegorical stories and characters from exotic settings to comment on the King's sexual habits. Playwrights like Elkanah Settle found in the lascivious Moorish characters a perfect fit to the contemporary courtier who openly brags of his sexual relationships. In addition, Settle found in the Ottoman harem and stories about the Sultans' sexual excesses other allegorical images that could be easily projected on Charles II and his many mistresses and illegitimate offspring.

On the other hand, the sexual life of Charles II was a serious dilemma for royalist playwrights. In fact, writers like Aphra Behn found themselves on the defensive as Charles II's sexual life and his generosity to a number of ambitious mistresses agitated the hatred and suspicions of opposition leaders. While Behn slightly referred to the libertine behavior of the court, she retained the traditional royalist portrayal of Charles II and revisited the theme of restoring legitimate monarchy, which was a popular theme during early years of King Charles II's reign. That said, one of the obvious aspects of the Restoration depiction of Islam and Muslims is that wither writing in the favor of the opposition or the court, Restoration playwrights were more concerned with the contemporary sexual politics at Charles II's court than merely reflecting about the international relationships between England and the Muslim countries. The depiction of Muslims in the selected plays in this chapter serves as a smokescreen of the deep contemporary dynamics between sex and power in the English court.

CHAPTER FOUR

MUSLIMS AND RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSIES IN RESTORATION DRAMA

"If to maintain and defend our Religion be any more than a Name, it is impossible for any man to act the true Defensive Part, without the Offensive too."

(Settle, *The Character* 677)

1. Introduction

Religious controversies in Restoration England represent the third dimension of this study. Although the plays under consideration in this chapter dramatize religious figures from different Muslim countries, the authors of these plays employ the religious dimension of their works as allegories for the internal religious disputes in England. Following the New Historicist theory, my reading of the plays under consideration avoids reading early modern literary representations of Islam based on their aesthetic merits only. Instead, I utilize the contemporary political and religious discourses in my analysis of the representations of Islam and its culture in Restoration drama. This will be exemplified by the analysis of Elkanah Settle's *Ibrahim the Illustrious Bassa* (1676), and John Dryden's *Don Sebastian, King of Portugal* (1689).

It is important to understand that religion was at the heart of most of the political controversies since the beginning of the English Reformation in the sixteenth century. Each monarch's reign was characterized by specific religious crises, most often representing divisions between Anglicanism and Catholicism. The fault lines of the Civil War of the 1640s and 1650s that preceded the period of this study were rooted in fundamental disagreements between Episcopacy and Presbyterianism and other more radical belief systems such as Quakerism and the Fifth Monarchists. In fact, when King Charles II was restored in 1660, there was already a political turmoil around Protestant dissenters and Roman Catholic groups in the country. In *Restoration Theatre and Crisis*, Susan Owen argues that even the major

crisis of the Restoration period, i.e. the Exclusion Crisis, resulted mainly from accumulating past religious conflicts. Owen adds that plays like *The Duke of Guise*, *The Coronation of Queen Elizabeth*, *The Unhappy Favourite*, as well as the pamphlet literature of the late 1670s recalled the unforgotten sixteenth-century religious wars in Europe (140). In other words, the long history of religious conflicts in England was well situated in Restoration dramatic production.

After a few years of the Restoration of Charles II, it became apparent enough for many people that the settlement that Charles had established was threatened by the increasing influence of Catholicism.[25] Such fears were not limited to the elite politicians, but were also situated in the public sphere as well. In *Algernon Sidney and the Restoration Crisis: 1677-1683*, Jonathan Scott states that the Restoration of Charles II "restored not only the structures of early Stuart government, but subsequently its fears, divisions and crises" (8). During the 1660s, the Cavalier Parliament strove to maintain the superiority of Anglicanism over the Catholic and other dissenting voices.

It is obvious that the many acts issued during the decade reflected a strong will to guard a specific religious denomination, one associated with the status quo prior to the Civil War. A good example of such legislative efforts is the Corporation Act. The Act, which was issued in 1661, was designed to limit the holding of public offices in the country to members of the Church of England. The Act was aimed against the increasing influence of Catholicism in the government. Similarly, in 1662, the Licensing Act or what was known then as "An Act for preventing the frequent Abuses in printing seditious treasonable and unlicensed Bookes and Pamphlets and for regulating of Printing and Printing Presses," strengthened the

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[25] According to this settlement, the Church of England was restored again as the major Church in England. The Settlement was enforced by a severe penal code and the Act of Uniformity of 1662 (Harris 52-3).

authorities of the Church of England over the increasing flood of press publications. In fact, the Act prohibited the publication of all materials that was "considered heretical seditious or schismatical, or any doctrine or opinion contrary to the Christian faith or the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England" (Hermanson 35-6). Further, the Act of Uniformity of 1662 made it mandatory for all clergymen to adopt the liturgy of the Book of Common Prayer, which is considered as one of the certified religious texts in the Church of England. The King expressed his dissatisfaction with the Cavalier Parliament that showed no willingness to coexist with dissenters and Catholics.

In *England's Troubles: Seventeenth-Century English Political Instability in European Context*, Jonathan Scott points out that the several penal legislation affecting Catholic and Protestant dissenters initiated serious tensions between Charles II and the Parliament. The King reacted to Parliament's objections to penal legislations by referring to the fact that Catholics were among those who showed loyalty to his father during the Civil Wars (170-1). The Parliament ignored such excuses and expressed serious concerns about that issue to the King. One of the Parliament's petitions reads,

> [Y]et, by the great resort of Jesuits and Romish Priests into this kingdom, your good subjects are generally much affected with jealousy and apprehension, That the Popish Religion may much increase in this kingdom, which your majesty hath most piously desired be prevented; and so the peace of both church and state may be insensibly disturbed, to the great danger of both (263).[26]

[26] This excerpt is reported in *The Parliamentary History of England from the Earliest Period to the Year 1803*. The book contains more details about the correspondences between the Parliament and the King.

The growing public mistrust and fears of Catholicism were fueled by the disastrous Great Fire of London in 1666. Hermanson observes that the public found no difficulty to blame Catholics for the disaster. In his diaries, Samuel Pepys accused French papist agents for starting the fire. The government's attempts to refute the conspiracy scenario failed to assuage the public concerns regarding the Catholic danger. The crowds poured their anger on a Frenchman who was hanged for his assumed participation in fire plot (36). Before the end of the year, the House of Commons insisted that Penal Laws should be enforced against the activities of dissenters and papists. The King yielded to the Commons and issued a new proclamation banishing all priests and Jesuits from the country and authorizing the lords lieutenant to arrest all suspected subjects who failed to take the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy (Childs 25).[27] By the end of the first decade of Charles II's reign, the gap between the Church of England and the Catholic population was far from being bridged.

During the early 1670s, the Parliament continued to challenge the King's preferences of a moderate approach towards Catholics and Protestant dissenters. As a result, Anne Hermanson states, Charles II sought financial independence of the Parliament by the means of building a complex relationship with the rising European superpower of Catholic France. Charles even built a friendship with the French King Louis XIV. In contrast, Protestants in England regarded the French absolutist King as an enemy of European Protestantism (40). In his *An Account of the Growth of Popery and Arbitrary Government in England,* Andrew Marvell expressed the public opinion about the French King,

> [h]e is the Master of Absolute Dominion, the Presumptive Monarch of Christendom, the declared Champion of Popery, and the hereditary, natural,

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[27] Following many similar formal oaths in post-reformation England, the Oath of Supremacy required the concerned subject to swear full allegiance to the King as Supreme Governor of the Church of England.

> inveterate Enemy of our King and Nation, he was in all respects the most likely (of all Earthly Powers) to reward and support them in a Project every way suitable to his one Inclination and Interest. (17)

Regardless of the opposition, the "harmony" between both monarchs was manifested in the Treaty of Dover of 1670. In fact, the infamous secret clauses of the treaty – which was discovered in late 1670s – enflamed the public suspicions of the King's religious preferences. The treaty signed between England and France required France to assist England financially while the latter, in turn, was required to assist France in its war of conquest against the Protestant Dutch Republic. Two years later, Charles II fulfilled his promise and joined the French in their war against the Dutch. It was clear that Charles had aligned himself and his country with the old rival of Protestantism rather than supporting the Protestant Dutch Republic. Furthermore, one of the secret clauses of the treaty revealed that Charles had pledged to support a more tolerated policy towards Catholics in England. In March 1672, Charles issued the Declaration of Indulgence, taking advantage of the fact that there was no sitting Parliament at that time. The declaration was designed to guarantee the freedom of religious practices to Protestant nonconformists and Roman Catholics in England. As a consequence, the Penal Laws that were established in the early 1660s by Parliament were suspended (Carsten 311). In 1673, Bishop Gilbert Burnet wrote of the public's religious concerns in the aftermath of these events:

> The proceedings of the former year had opened all mens eyes. The king's own religion was suspected, as his brother's was declared: and the whole conduct shewed a design to govern by the French model. A French general was brought over to command our armies. Count Schomberg, who was a German by birth [...] was sent over [...] and at any other time of his life he would have been very acceptable to the English; but now he was looked on as one sent

from France, to bring our army under a French discipline; and so he was hated by the nation, and not much loved by the court. (228)

Such observations reflected the nation's anxiety regarding the religious conflict with Catholicism as well as with Charles's suspicious relationship with France.

As the public found Charles II following the patterns of James I and Charles I in neglecting to represent the majority of Protestant people, people in the streets responded actively to that neglect. Anne Hermanson argues that people, in early 1670s, reacted by recalling past events that symbolized the victories of Protestantism, such as the popular celebrations of Queen Elizabeth's coronation anniversaries (40). In *Restoration Theatre and Crisis,* Susan Owen observes that the public emphasis on Queen Elizabeth's accomplishments in the 1670s were a sort of implicit criticism of Charles II, who failed to stand for the Protestant cause as the Queen did earlier (143-4). Charles's Declaration of Indulgence did not last for a long time. Charles yielded to the pressure of the Parliament and the public and withdrew the "unpopular" Declaration in March 1673.

Further tension between the King and his Parliament occurred when Parliament, that had been prorogued in the previous two years, decided to fire back and put the King on the defensive. To that end, they replaced the Declaration of Indulgence with the Test Act in 1673. This Act required all office-holders in England, civil or military, to take the oaths of supremacy and allegiance to the Church of England and renounce the Catholic beliefs about transubstantiation (De Krey 104).[28] As a direct consequence of the Test Act, James the Duke of York and heir to the throne abandoned his office as Lord High Admiral because he chose not to comply with the Act (Gibson 60). James's zealous opposition to the Act drew the

[28] Transubstantiation is a Catholic teaching that states that during the Lord's Supper the elements of the Eucharist, bread and wine, becomes the actual Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. (Whalen 12)

attention of the political nation to a more serious dilemma than their King's sympathy towards Catholics. The English discovered that the only legitimate heir to the English throne was at that point a newly converted Catholic.

The public was further alerted to this fact in September of 1673 when James confirmed the suspicions around his faith by his marriage to the Catholic princess, Mary of Modena. The Italian Princess was the daughter of a political client of France, and her dowry was paid by the French King to build stronger ties with England. The marriage proved to be extremely unpopular as "James's conversion changed everything and the new match was regarded as another stage in England's betrayal to Rome" (Hutton 309). The Parliament was aware of the dangerous consequences of the marriage and acted to stop it. Gilbert Burnet wrote that the House of Commons made an "address to the King, to stop the Princess of Modena's coming to England, till she should change her religion. Upon this the duke moved the king to prorogue the parliament for a week: and a commission was ordered for it" (239). It became apparent to many people that Catholicism would ultimately find a place in the line of succession. Anne Hermanson explains that during 1670s there were numerous calls in Parliament for the King to divorce the Catholic Queen and remarry. Charles was not willing to listen to such petitions. On the contrary, he brought a new Catholic mistress to his court. The young lady was called Louise de Keroualle and was believed to be on a spying mission for Louis XIV. De Keroualle was created a duchess by Charles and held a position of a great power at his court (42).

Fears of France, the Catholic superpower of Western Europe, had deep roots and sprang from the fact that French monarchy was considered as a symbol of political absolutism and a fierce advocate of Counter-Reformation in Europe (Sommerville 233). With great concern, the English witnessed Louis XIV's expansionist foreign policy that started with the invasion of the Spanish Netherlands in 1667. The English saw the French hostile policies

in the 1670s as part of a larger project to enforce Catholic religious hegemony in Europe. This led to England forming the Triple Alliance.[29] Protestants in England were worried that a powerful Catholic neighbor like France would attempt another Armada against England in order to impose Catholicism on the English people. In *Restoration Theatre and Crisis*, Susan Owen explains that Catholic rule represented to those opposed to it the loss of their freedom, property, and their Englishness itself (122-3). French danger was always cited in order to recall the bitter memories of Protestant persecution at the hands of Catholic regimes.

Catholicism within was the source of greater concern for the English political nation. The Parliament expressed the growing fears about the influence of Catholics at the English court in the early 1670's. The major concern of the Parliament was the fact that court Catholics were seen as taking advantage of their influential positions close to the King to weaken the restrictions imposed on Catholics and to support pro-Catholic policies in the country (Miller 69–71).[30] Everything in the political ideology of Charles II was confirming these worries. The developing political and military alliance with France was looked at as another victory for the court Catholics. In fact, the anti-Catholicism of 1670s England was fueled by the public fears of French hegemony combined with the ever increasing Catholic influence at the Stuart court (Asch 128-9). These concerns, eventually, developed in the shape of national hysteria that made the English people well-prepared to believe the Popish Plot in 1678.

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[29] In 1668, England, Netherland, and Sweden formed a defensive alliance to face the danger of the expansionist French policies under Louise XIV. For more about the Triple Alliance and the English religious anxiety of French Catholicism, see David Ogg, *England in the Reign of Charles II* (pp.332-34).

[30] Court Catholics were a small but an influential group in the court of Charles II. Prominent among them are The Duke of York, Queen Catherine of Braganza, and some of Charles II's mistresses.

In the first decade of the Restoration period, the estimated number of the Catholic population in England ranged from 60,000 to 260,000 people out of a total population size of 5,500,000; this represented, at the largest number cited here, about 5 percent of the country's population (Kenyon 27). During the Restoration period, Catholics in England lived under penal laws issued by the English Parliament. This set of laws aimed to put more pressure on English Catholics to abandon their faith and embrace the Protestant religion. For instance, there was a fine imposed upon those who refuse to join weekly Anglican services. According to the penal laws, the distribution of any Catholic printed materials and establishing Catholic schools in England was treason to the country (Kenyon 5). Many other restrictions were imposed on Catholics in regards to holding political or military office, as well as property and arms issues.

During the second decade of Charles II's reign, English Protestants were alerted about the increasing influence of Catholics at the Stuart court. The English were more annoyed and angry with the Catholics at the court – especially those close to the Stuart brothers – than the rest of Catholic population in the English countryside. In a way, the court Catholics of the early 1670's recalled the better memories of the court Catholicism during Charles I's latter years (Haley 107-08). The English saw in the court Catholics agents of foreign powers who employed their influential positions to promote counter-reformation policies.

For the angry Protestant politicians, it was easy to summon numerous examples of Charles II's court Catholics. First, Queen Catherine of Braganza, Charles II's mother, was a devoted Portuguese Catholic. Although there are no accurate records indicating that the Queen promoted Catholicism at court, she was surrounded by Catholics. For example, Sir George Wakeman, the Queen's physician, and Sir Richard Bellings, her private secretary, were both Catholics (Haley 109). In addition, the Stuart court included two strong Catholic mistresses of Charles II: Barbara Villiers, the Countess of Castlemaine, who was the King's

favorite mistress in the 1660's, and Louise de Keroualle, the Duchess of Portsmouth, who gained the King's heart from 1670-85. The King met De Keroualle for the first time during the negotiations of Dover in 1670. Harris points out that both mistresses were deeply hated by the English public (71-4). In the diary of John Evelyn, Barbara Villiers is described as "the curse of the nation" for the political influence she had (qtd. in Parker 30). On the other hand, for the public, De Keroualle was "more hated than any of Charles's mistresses", obviously because she was a French Catholic (Bevan 49). The public were concerned with the possible influence of these women on the King and his decisions that could be directed to serve Catholic interests.

The most important of the court Catholics was James, the Duke of York. First, rumors spread in the early 1670s that the Duke had converted to Catholicism. Then, the rumors gained great credibility when the public noticed that the Prince had stopped attending Anglican services since 1671. Charles and Lord Clifford spoke to the Duke about the need to attend Anglican ceremonies with them, but the Duke ignored their requests (Evelyn 449). The Duke's conversion was of great importance to the public because he was the only legitimate heir to the throne. People saw in James a new version of Catholic monarchs who would try to enforce the Catholic faith in the whole country.

The first organized public reactions to the growing fears of Catholicism were embodied in the public opposition to the second Dutch War, the pope-burning pageants, and the street celebrations of Queen Elizabeth I's coronation anniversaries of the late 1660s and early 1670s. Before the end of the second Dutch War in 1667, the Dutch fleet stealthily sailed up the Thames River and attacked the Chatham naval base, burning many English ships. The Dutch added more to the humiliation of the English navy by towing away the flagship, The Royal Charles. Blame was directly put on the Duke of York, as a leader of the army. Moreover, the Duke, as a result of his Catholic sympathies that time, was suspected to be

trying to establish a Catholic absolute monarchy following the French model (Miller 105). The Parliament considered the government's mismanagement and ill decisions during the war as resulting from the "debauchery and drunkenness at court," because "no better can be expected when the popish and profane party are in such credit" (qtd. in Harris, *London Crowds in the Reign of Charles II* 80). In his diary, Samuel Pepys comments on the national dissatisfaction and discontent in regards to this unprecedented humiliating episode in English history:

> That the people make nothing of talking treason in the streets openly; as that they are bought and sold and governed by Papists and that we are betrayed by people around the king and shall be delivered up to the French and I know not what. (269)

The examination of the indications of these public manifestations gives us more detailed understanding about the "hysteric" fear of the Catholic danger in England during late 1660's and the 1670's.

The Bawdy House Riots, which occurred during Easter week in 1668, reflected the development of anti-Catholicism in Restoration England. During that week, hundreds of angry people attacked and destroyed numerous bawdy houses in London. In *London Crowds in the Reign of Charles II*, Tim Harris points out that the majority of these rioters were Protestant dissenters, who were protesting against the King's proclamation regarding stricter enforcement of the penal laws against them. The riots, in a sense, reflected the strong anti-Catholic feelings in the country. The angry people chose to attack the Bawdy houses in particular because of the traditional connection between debauchery and Catholicism in Protestant beliefs (82-5). The dissenters reacted against their religious persecution which they considered as a stark contrast to the court's more tolerant treatment of Catholicism. Samuel Pepys states that people sympathized with the actions of the dissenters because many people,

> found no fault with the rioters but rather of the soldiers for hindering them. And we heard a Justice of Peace this morning say to the King that he had been endeavouring to suppress this tumult, but could not; and that imprisoning some in the new prison at Clerkenwell, the rest did come and break open the prison and release them. (130)

After the end of the riots, an anonymous satirical letter, entitled *The Poor-Whores Petition: To the Most Splendid, Serene, and Eminent Lady of Pleasure, the Countess of Castlemaine*, was distributed in London. The letter conveyed the appeals of prostitutes and brothel owners, whose business and properties were affected by riots to the Countess of Castlemaine, mistress of King Charles II. The letter asked Castlemaine to relief her prostitute "sisters" and help them rebuilding their destroyed property. The Countess was attacked because of her Catholicism and influence at the royal court. In the letter, prostitutes and brothel owners asked the Countess to,

> consider how highly it concerns you [The Countess]to restore us to our former practice with honor, freedom and safety; for which we shall oblige ourselves by as many oaths as you please, to contribute to your ladyship (as our sisters do at Rome and Venice to His Holiness the Pope) that we may have your protection in the exercise of all our Venereal pleasures. And we shall endeavor, as our bounden duty, the promoting of your great name and the preservation of your honor, safety and interest, with the hazard of our lives, fortunes and honesty. (qtd. in Melville 59-60)

Harris explains that the letter's reference to the Pope is related to the fact that the Catholic Church in Rome received annual taxes from Italian brothels (84). It is obvious that the letter reflected the growing fears of the Catholic influence at the English court. In fact, these events and the public opposition to the second Dutch War in 1667, marked the beginnings of the

first remarkable evidences of the real national opposition to the court's open toleration of Catholicism.

There was also a remarkable revival of pope-burnings – a public activity which was first established during similar tensions in 1630's – that reflected the increasing anti-Catholic sentiments in the 1670's. The pope-burnings acquired more public interest during this period due to the national worries about the French expansionist policies in Europe, the discontent with Charles II's pro-Catholic preferences, and James's conversion to Catholicism. In his *Popular Cultures in England 1550-1750*, Barry Reay explains that during these ceremonies, the burning effigies of the Pope were filled with live cats and people walked through streets in devils' and Catholic priests' disguises (142). An Englishman described the scene in a letter to his brother,

> Last Saturday the coronation of Queen Elizabeth was solemnized in the city with mighty bonfires and the burning of a most costly pope, carried by four persons in diverse habits, and the effigies of two devils whispering in his ears, his belly filled with live cats who squalled most hideously as soon as they felt fire; the commons saying all the while it was the language of the pope and the devil in a dialogue betwist them. A tierce of claret was set before the Temple gate for the common people. Mr. Langhorne saith he is very confident the pagaentry cost forty pounds. (qtd. in James Sharp 98)

In *Bonfires and Bells*, David Cressy states that among the major public Protestant celebrations in the 1670's were November celebrations that included various sermons and bonfires in the memory of the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot,[31] and the celebrations of

[31] The Gunpowder Plot was an unsuccessful assassination attempt against King James I of England in the hands of a group of English Catholics. The plotters planned to blow up the House of Lords while the King was attending one of the Parliament's sessions on 5 November 1605.

Queen Elizabeth I succession day (190). In fact, the angry crowds of London found in street celebrations a mean to further illustrate their discontent and worries in matters related to the continuity of the Protestant faith in England.

As the discussion above illustrates, religion was a major source of many political controversies during the Restoration period. The Restoration of King Charles II in 1660 did not end the political turmoil around dissenter churches and Roman Catholicism in the country. In fact, the many acts issued by the Cavalier Parliament reflected a strong will to restore the religious establishment of the pre-Civil War era. People in the streets supported Parliament's cause and reacted against Charles II's negligence in representing the majority of Protestant people. The English reacted by organizing street celebrations of past events that symbolized the victories of Protestantism over its enemies. Thus, it was not a surprise that this extensive political and religious turmoil found its way to Restoration dramatic productions. What follows is a discussion of two plays that represent religious figures from different Muslim countries that serve as smokescreens to the religious conflict in Restoration England. This will be illustrated through the analysis of Elkanah Settle's *Ibrahim the Illustrious Bassa* (1676), and John Dryden's *Don Sebastian, King of Portugal* (1689). Interestingly, some of the plays discussed in my dissertation – like *Ibrahim the Illustrious Bassa* – address multiple themes and such themes oftentimes overlap due to their writers' comprehensive view of the Restoration major concerns and due to the complexity of a changing political and religious life. For example, the public dissatisfaction of the irresponsible sexual behavior of the King is strongly connected to the sensitivity of the succession question and, also, to the religious animosity toward dissent and Catholicism. Despite their unequal visibility in each text, one can find more than one theme (succession, king's sexuality, and religious controversy) in each play discussed in my study. In fact, this helps me avoid the common "arbitrary connectedness" of New Historicists. My argument,

therefore, avoids the "selectiveness" or mechanical matching of New Historicism that selects only texts that serve one particular purpose of its writer. My study shows that the plays were connected to the Restoration political and religious debates in various ways. In other words, the plays reflect multiple layers of their writers' political and religious concerns.

2. Elkanah Settle's *Ibrahim the Illustrious Bassa* (1676)

In addition to the criticism of the court's libertinism, Elkanah Settle's *Ibrahim* highlighted other dimensions of the contemporary political life of the Restoration period. In fact, Settle wrote his play in a time marked by increasing anxiety about the influence of Catholicism on the King. People saw in the court Catholics a serious source of danger to Protestantism and the reformation of the English Church. The play sheds light on the corrupt religious practices and hypocrisy at the Stuart court. In the play, the character of the Mufti, Sultan Solyman's religious advisor, reflects the contemporary concerns about Charles II's religious preferences. Restoration playwrights, especially those who showed sympathy to opposition views like Settle, were extremely anxious about Charles II's toleration towards English Catholics. Therefore, Settle embedded his dissatisfaction and discontent about religious issues in his plays, and *Ibrahim* is a case in point here.

Settle announced his religious affiliations early in his career. He orchestrated the crowds in London's pope-burning ceremonies of the mid-1670s and wrote his famous anti-Catholic tragedy, *The Female Prelate* in 1680. In this play, Settle highlights the contemporary Catholic threats that were, as many Anglicans believed, engulfing the nation. Settle personified such threats in his portrayal of the character of Pope Joan who is eventually described as a "whore" and "poisoner." Settle, led by his religious views, published anonymously his *The Character of a Popish Successor, and What England may Expect from Such a One* (1680). In his *Catholicism in the English Protestant Imagination*, Raymond D. Tumbleson regards *The Character* as one of the most controversial pamphlets of the

Exclusion Crisis. The pamphlet, Tumbleson adds, expressed the public worries about the threat of a Catholic becoming a king of the nation (133). Settle's pamphlet addressed the public with a language that combined both reasoning and emotions,

> A very pretty *Chimaera!* Which is as much as to make this Popish King the greatest Barbarian in the Creation; a Barbarian that shall cherish and maintain the Dissenters from Truth, and punish and condemn the Pillars of Christianity, and Proselytes of Heaven: Which is no other than to speak him the basest of Men, and little less than a Monster. Besides, at the same time that we suppose that King that dares not uphold nor encourage his own Religion, we render him the most deplorable of Cowards; a Coward so abject, that he dares not be a Champion even for his God. And how consistent this is with the Glory of a Crowned Head, and what hope *England* has of such a Successour, I leave all Men of Sense to judge. (679)

One of the fears of Protestants revolved around the presence of Catholics in the administration of Charles II. During the early 1670s, a number of government ministers were Catholics or suspected Catholics. For an instant, Thomas Clifford, Lord High Treasurer from November 1672 to June 1673, was a Roman Catholic. In 1673, Clifford resigned as he refused to comply with the Test Act. Clifford, who was one of the five Counsellors of the Cabal, opposed the peace treaty that followed the Second Dutch War, preferring to stand with the French against the Dutch. In addition, he supported religious freedom of Nonconformists and Roman Catholics (White 100). Even Edward Hyde, 1st Earl of Clarendon, the Chief Minister in the restored regime in the early 1660s showed a tendency to include Catholics in the political life in Restoration England. Morover, Lord Arlington, the Secretary of State from 1662 to 1674, was a suspected Catholic till he announced his Catholicism on his deathbed (Appleby 100). Also, the Catholic Edward Coleman was one of

the most influential courtiers. Coleman served as a secretary to the Duke of York in the 1670's and was accused of being part of the Popish Plot in 1678 (Haley 111). Finally, Queen Catherine of Braganza had about her a host of Catholic advisors (Herr 212). So, the court was roaming with Catholic ministers, courtiers, and advisors. As a consequence, the religion of the court was a source of disquiet for the kingdom. This fact did not please the majority of the Anglican Protestant population in England. Politicians and writers found themselves forced to take sides in order to protect the religion and liberty of the country.

Settle's *Ibrahim* comments on the contemporary questions concerning the religion of the court. In addition, the play sheds light on those ill advisors who hold dangerous religious agendas that may be used against the good of the country. In the play, the Sultan is surrounded with false advisors and hypocritical clergymen. When the beautiful Isabella is delivered to the Ottoman court, the Sultan immediately falls in love with her. The Sultan realizes that he has to remove Isabell's lover, Ibrahim, from his way. Unfortunately, Solyman made a public pledge earlier that Ibrahim would not die as long as the Sultan lives. The evil councilor, Morat, tries to find a solution to satisfy the Sultan. He advises Solyman to ask the help of the Mufti,[32]

> Perhaps those tyes are less than what they seem,
> Send for the *Musil,* Sir, consult with him:
> He may repeal that Vow your rashness past;
> And find your promise does not bind so fast:

[32] A Mufti is an Islamic scholar who is able to interpret Islamic law to people. Being a Mufti means reaching the highest level of academic credentials in Islamic religious tradition.

Or shew at least some safe, though distant means,

To gain your quiet, and remove your pains. (IV.i 47) [33]

At this point hypocritical clergymen are asked to find a way to escape the pledge. Solyman explains the problem to the Mufti,

Priest, for thy Councel, and thy Aid I send.

A Ravisher has rob'd me of my Peace,

And I want power to make my torment cease.

[……..]

My Faith, my Vows, and my Religion can:

By *Alla* bound, I've made this solemn tye,

Whilst *Solyman* Lives, my Vizier shall not dye.

And by his Death, I must my Peace retrieve. (IV.i 50)

The Sultan is torn between the commitment he made earlier and his passion for the beautiful lady, Isabella. Here, Settle presents detailed diagnoses of the flaws of kingship and arbitrary government. The alliance between political and religious powers produces corruption and injustice, two traits of absolutism. The Sultan, unwilling to submit to the declaration he made earlier, finds relief in a hypocritical clergyman who is able to employ religious texts to suit his monarch's passions. The Mufti, scandalously, uses his wit and cunning nature to support the Sultan's argument:

To Sence and Reason man his Life does owe;

And when Sleep dams them up, they cease to flow.

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[33] This text is taken from Early English Books Online edition of the play. All subsequent references to this text will be cited parenthetically by (act, scene, and page number.)

The soul deserts the body when it dyes,

What does it less in sleep? it useless lyes.

Death's its retreat, and sleep is its disguise.

Sleep equals Kings, and Shepheards; Rich and Poor;

Nor can the pow'r of Death it self do more.

And where's their difference?

Both give one stroke, only one strikes more deep;

Sleep's a short Death—Death an Eternal sleep:

If then whilst you are sleeping, he receives

The blow, he does not dye whilst *Solyman* lives. (V.i 51)

The casuistry the Mufti employs assures the Sultan that there is no harm in killing Ibrahim while the Sultan is sleeping because when asleep human beings are in a state of death. So, when the Sultan is "dead" at night, the murder of Ibrahim can take place, and the pledge of the Sultan would not be challenged.

The Sultan, then, needs clearer confirmation from the hypocritical Mufti. Solyman asks, "And will our Prophet this Revenge maintain, / And the Immortal Name take off all stain?" (V.i 51). The Mufti immediately replies, "So just a cause he does, and must defend" (V.i 51). The Mufti's character represents a perfect example of the Protestant assumptions about hypocritical Catholic priests. In *Restoration Theatre and Crisis,* Susan Owen points out that Settle followed the example of anti-papist pamphlets – that was widely distributed in the mid-1670s – in criticizing Rome and Catholic hypocrisy (142). Owen also adds that in the English opposition canon, hypocrisy, among a number of other vices, is in the heart of the libertine behavior of the court (159). In this case, the hypocritical priest works hand in hand with the hypocritical statesman to serve the selfish desires of both. The Sultan realizes that

this version of religious beliefs – that the Mufti introduces – works well in serving his desires. The Sultan happily declares,

> Then dear Religion, thou'rt a Lovers Friend:
> Kind Priest, my judgment does with thine conspire:
> 'Tis easie to believe what we desire.
> But if his Death's a sin; the Crime be yours:
> When our Guides stray, the Errour is not ours.
> Send him the Mourning Robe: He dies to Night. (V.i 51)

The Sultan decides that the Mufti's resolution is the only way by which he can win the beautiful Isabella. The Sultan frees himself from any possible future blame since this "conspiracy" was facilitated by the Mufti. The playwright wittily refers to the corrupt alliance between religion and the state as they make it "easie to believe what we desire." (V.i 51).

On the other hand, the captive princess, Isabella, represents the faithful believer of religion who does not make religious decisions according to personal passions. Unlike the hypocritical Mufti, Isabella defends the true values of her religion no matter the cost. She boldly criticizes Solyman's "irreligous thoughts" (IV.i 45) that exceed all limits. Solyman, on the other hand, pays no respect to his religious commitments and finds no problem in disposing of his wife, Roxolana, in order to marry Isabella. The Sultan wonders,

> Is Religion then my Foe?
> And does my Marry'd state my hopes o'rethrow?
> That shall not cloud the glories of your life.
> You shall be mine, a Christian, and a Wife. (IV.i 45)

The Sultan is totally subdued by his passion for Isabella. In fact, this interfaith marriage may have served as a model of a controversial contemporary marriage in Restoration England, i.e. King Charles II and Catherine of Braganza marriage in 1662. Although believing in

Christianity, Charles and Catharine followed two different Churches that had a long history of antagonism. Their marriage was considered as an unsuccessful marriage between a couple professing two different religions. In the play, the Sultan ignores the general interests of his empire and people and sacrifices the stability of his regime as a result of his ignorance of his religious commitments.

From one point of view, Elkanah Settle's *The Empress of Morocco* (1673) addresses similar pressing questions about the religion of the Stuart court. During the Restoration, the English held strong memories about the past persecution of Protestants at the hands of Catholics. These memories were also rekindled by the increasing suspicions surrounding Charles II's Catholic preferences at his court. Public discontent of the Stuarts was increasing during the time *The Empress* was performed in London stages particularly because of the unpopular marriage of James to a Catholic princess, and Charles's decision to award his mistress, Louise de Karouille, the title of a duchess. Both events helped only in agitating the fears of the influence of the court Catholics on the general policies of the country. In her book, *The Horror Plays of the English Restoration,* Anne Hermanson declares that starting from that year "anti-Catholic/ misogynistic tracts" reappeared aided by the new Protestant propaganda that strove to establish a connection between the contemporary Catholic influence at court with the historical prejudices of the past. Hermanson adds that Protestant propaganda published and distributed widely new tracts for that purpose such as *The History of the Bloody Massacres of the Protestants in France in the Year of our Lord, 1572*, that appeared in 1674. The tract was republished later under the title *The Histories of the Gunpowder-Treason and the Massacre at Paris: Together with a Discourse concerning the Original of the Powder Plot* (62). In a similar vein, writers like Settle summoned plots from the history of the East and West (such as his adaptation of Pope Joan's tale in *The Female*

Prelate as well as the stories of his Morocco plays) in order to emphasize the need to guard against further Catholic atrocities.

It is obvious that Settle made use of his encyclopedic knowledge of history in his political campaigns against Catholicism. As an obvious example of using Islam in his propagandist writings, Settle made connections between some of the old stereotypes about Prophet Mohammed and the hypocrisy of the Jesuits around the Duke of York. In his famous pamphlet, *The Character of a Popish Successor, and What England may Expect from Such a One*, Settle writes,

> Besides, What mismatched incongruous Ingredients must go to make up this Composition of a King! His Hand and Heart must be of no Kin to one another. He must be so inhuman to those very darling jesuits that like *Mahomet's* Pidgeon infused and whispered all his Heavenly Dreams into his Ears, that he must not only clip their Wings, but fairly Cage them too, even for the charming Oracles they breathed him. (679-80)

In fact, Settle refers to a popular belief in early modern England which claims that Prophet Mohammed deceived his followers in order to win their support. In his book, *Islam in Britain, 1558-1685*, Nabil Matar explains that this belief was popular enough to the extent that it was the material of some religious pamphlets in seventeenth-century England (46). The anonymous pamphlet entitled *A Discovery of 29 Sects Here in London* (1641) summarizes the stereotypical image of Islam that would feature in many Restoration works,

> This sect is led along with a certaine foolish beliefe of *Mahomet*, which professed himselfe to be a *Prophet*, and this was his manner of deceiving: He taught a pigeon to pecke a pease from forth his eare, bearing the ignorant in hand that the *Holy Ghost* brought him *newes* from Heaven. (4)

That said, Settle engaged some of his knowledge about Islam, as a religion and culture, in his complex discussions of the political scene in Restoration England.

After reading *The Empress of Morocco*, many parallels can be drawn between Settle's tragedy and contemporary politics. In his book *Staging Islam in England, Drama and Culture, 1640–1685*, Matthew Birchwood observes that the splendid scene of the returning Moroccan ships at the beginning of Act II of Settle's tragedy reflects events in the Dutch war and "suggestively alluding to an ambiguous enemy which, by the end of the play, is itself pitted against the invidious factions of the Moroccan court" (159). On these grounds, Settle implies that England's enemies during the war can make a reliable ally in the future. Therefore, the playwright pushes towards a more reliable solution against the French expansionist policies, i.e. considering the Protestant Dutch as the potential supporter of England.

The year 1673, in which the *Empress* was produced, was remarkable for other reasons. Ann Hermanson notes that the play was staged after about one month of York's non-compliance with the Test Act. Hermanson adds that the play marked a new trend in representing Catholicism on the London stage. That is, Settle made use of past events to build a connection between the Catholic church and the dangerous Queen Mother of his play. Settle's allegorical Queen Mother can be easily connected with the French Queen Catherine de'Medici, and more obviously with Charles II's mother, Henrietta Maria (42-3). It was not hard for Restoration audiences who were used to political allegories to view the evil and power-hungry Queen Mother in Settle's tragedy as representative of these most-hated royal Catholic figures. In her book *The Politics of Rape: Sexual Atrocity, Propaganda Wars, and the Restoration Stage*, Jennifer L Airey supports Hermanson's argument that links the Queen Mother's character with the court Catholics. Airey argues that Settle implicitly links this poisonous queen with the King's mother as well as his unpopular Catholic

mistresses. Such a connection indicates that the playwright was particularly warning of the drastic influence of Catholic females around the King (90). In fact, criticizing the influence of court Catholics was among the most efficient weapons in anti-Catholic propaganda and the campaign against popery and French hegemony in England.

Similar to numerous Whig propagandists, Elkanah Settle plays on the increasing fears of the danger of Catholicism and Protestant dissent churches in Restoration England. Settle's *The Empress of Morocco* and *Ibrahim the Illustrious Bassa* warns of the impending danger of English Catholics who seek to manipulate the politics of the nation. The major religious figures in both plays, who are more likely to represent Catholic priests, are portrayed as hypocrites and corrupt clergymen. Settle blames these characters for the chaos and miseries of the protagonists of his plays. Skillfully, Settle employs the Muslim characters and settings in the internal religious quarrels of his time.

3. John Dryden's *Don Sebastian*

John Dryden was an English poet, literary critic, and playwright whose poetry and plays were among the most influential literary texts of the Restoration period to the extent that his age is also known as the Age of Dryden. In fact, adding the works of Dryden to my study was challenging due to the complexity of his writings and religious views. At certain points in my study, I was thinking that Dryden deserved a separate research topic that explored his portrayal of Islam and Muslim characters in relation to his changing political and religious views. Nevertheless, I decided to have just one of Dryden's plays in my study as a first step towards more in-depth exploration of his case that I find very challenging and, at the same time, promising.

The poetry and plays of Dryden contained numerous political and religious insights that were, in general, supporting the cause of the Stuart monarchs. In fact, the dramatically unstable nature of the political sphere in Restoration England made him pessimistic about

the future of his country, leading him to express his political and religious views through his literary works. Dryden's *Don Sebastian, King of Portugal* (1689) demonstrates how he used drama to highlight the nation's religious instability and uncertainty. In the play under discussion, the playwright uses episodes of Islamic-European history to tackle the nature of the religious conflict within England.

Don Sebastian was composed shortly after The Glorious Revolution of 1688. The Glorious Revolution was the overthrow of King James II of England by a union of English Parliamentarians led by the Dutch king, William of Orange (William III). William launched a successful campaign against James's forces and succeeded in ascending to the English throne as William III of England and ruled jointly with his wife Mary II of England. Dryden remained loyal to the deposed King James II and refused to take the oaths of allegiance to the new monarchs. This decision left him out of favor at court as he was dismissed as Poet Laureate of England (Palmer 196). After the arrival of the new monarch, Dryden expressed his ideas clearly as he lamented James's dethronement and criticized William's invasion. *Don Sebastian* alludes caustically to the recent revolution; it represents James as the noble Sebastian, and it sharply criticizes the Anglican clergy and all English people who deserted him (Fujimura 97-8).

Don Sebastian was the first of Dryden's works to be printed after the end of James's rule. It is considered as his first dramatic reaction to the events that had deprived him of office. In the Dedication, Preface, and Prologue of the play, Dryden carefully expresses his unchanged views about the legitimacy of the Catholic James II as the only monarch of England (Bywaters 34). Similar to his techniques in *The Conquest of Granada,* Dryden summons classical precedents to employ their figures to serve his ends. It is possible that Dryden used the exotic setting for his political commentary in order to avoid any possible censorship. In the Preface to *Don Sebastian,* Dryden states that the plot is drawn from

Portuguese history, "When the Spaniards with a pretended title, by force of Arms had Usurp'd the Crown of Portugal, from the House of Braganza, a certain Person who call'd himself Don Sebastian [. . .] appear'd" (*Preface*), [34] a remote location designed to avoid inquisitive and censorious eyes.

In the prologue to his play, Dryden declares that his play is "a Play's of no Religion" (16). This was patently disingenuous since Dryden had embraced Catholicism and denounced the religion of the majority of the English people, i.e. Protestantism. In fact, for an audience used to attending plays with allegorical representations, Dryden's attempt must have only directed more attention to its religious implications. A few lines further down in the prologue, Dryden refers to consequences of the Restoration anti-Catholic penal laws that affected the life of every Catholic in England. He refers to the "Act for the better securing of Government by disarming Papists and reputed Papists" which was approved by the Parliament shortly after the arrival of William and Mary.

> Horses, by Papists are not to be ridden;
>
> But sure the Muses Horse was ne'er forbidden.
>
> For in no Rate-Book, it was ever found
>
> That Pegasus was valued at Five-pound:
>
> Fine him to daily Drudging and Inditing;
>
> And let him pay his Taxes out, in Writing. (41-6)

Because of the persistent fears of religious war, the English Parliament deprived Catholic Englishmen of keeping arms and horses except for the purposes of defending themselves

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[34] This text is taken from Early English Books Online edition of the play. All subsequent references to this text will be cited parenthetically by (act, scene, and page number.)

and their households.[35] Dryden, wittily, refers to the limitations that were imposed on the lives of English Roman Catholics that resulted from the intolerant penal laws.

Dryden had good reasons for his worries about the reception of his play. Converts to Catholicism, like Dryden, were considered guilty. At that time, conversion to the Papist faith was an act of high treason. This led to the imprisonment of numerous Catholic converts during the few months that followed the revolution of 1688 (Miner 406). In fact, the persecution of the English Catholics in that year added but one new episode to the long history of the systematic oppression of the Catholics in England. Catholics were excluded from any new opportunity of religious reconciliation. For instant, the Act of Toleration of 1689 allowed more religious freedom for Protestant Dissenters while, at the same time, the Act provided nothing for Catholics. On the contrary, Catholics were no more allowed to hold their public celebrations as they used to do during James II's reign (Black 131). In sum, the accumulated anti-Catholic legal procedures resulted in increasing the isolation of the Catholic population in England.

Dryden's "Play of no Religion" hints at some of the aggressive and bloody anti-Catholic episodes of the history of his country. Public hostility towards everything Papist was transformed into mass violence during November and December 1689. Riots broke out in many places and rioters attacked Catholic individuals and burned their homes and properties. Act IV in *Don Sebastian* involves a long mob scene in which the Mufti urges people to use violence against his own opponents. It is likely that this scene represents the anti-Catholic riots of 1689. In his article "Political Allusions in Dryden's Later Plays," John Moore argues that what Dryden describes by the rabble actions is a retelling of the public

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[35] For more on the prologue's political implications, see Earl Miner's commentary on Don Sebastian, *The Works of John Dryden,* Volume XV: Plays: *Albion and Albanius, Don Sebastian, Amphitryon* (pp. 417-423).

riots that took place in the aftermath of the Glorious Revolution (41). Bywaters explains in his reading of the play that whereas the noble behavior of James and his allies is celebrated in the serious plot, the disgusting baseness of the rabble (revolutionaries) is represented in the comic plot of the play (43). The villain courtier, Mustafa, describes the past violent actions of the ignorant and narrow-minded rabble he gathers against those who were considered idolatrous:

> Do you remember the glorious Rapines and Robberies you have committed? Your breaking open and gutting of Houses, your rummaging of Cellars, your demolishing of Christian Temples, and bearing off in triumph the superstitious Plate and Pictures, the Ornaments of their wicked Altars, when all rich Moveables were sentenc'd for idolatrous, and all that was idolatrous was seiz'd? (IV. ii 87)

Although the Prologue to the play promises to avoid religious polemics, Dryden, as the lines above shows, hint at the long history of Catholic persecution in England. Mustapha's speech refers clearly to the charges of idolatry and superstition that were among the typical charges used against Roman Catholics in England. Such clear references must have revived the recent memories of the violent riots of 1689.

My analysis of this play highlights Dryden's engagement with contemporary political life and details the references to the religious conflict in England in the aftermath of the Glorious Revolution. In fact, the play's portrayal of renegades, corrupt clergymen, and barbarian rioters contains deeper meanings in relation to the religious conflict of the late decades of the seventeenth-century England.

Don Sebastian sheds light on anti-Catholic policies that were adopted by the English Protestant majority in the aftermath of the Glorious Revolution. Among the most pressing issues that concerned the playwright were problems of religious bias and physical

persecution. Searching for the true religion, the consequences of religious conversion on the individual, and the lasting effect of the past sins on the new generations are but few examples of the problems the plays address. The unusual length long of the play, I argue, reflects the lengthy flow of ideas and feelings that the playwright wished to convey.

Dryden chooses a slave market for the first scene of his play to reflect on the absurdity of persecuting a man by another man. The scene shows the humiliation of Antonio, a Portuguese nobleman and a captive at the hands of the victorious Moors, led by the villain Mustapha. Antonio finds himself put up for sale for anyone who pays his master the best. At the beginning Antonio refuses to submit to this new situation and shows resistance calling Mustapha a "[d]og" (I.i.17). Mustafa, who is aware of his superior position, replies "[l]earn better manners, or I shall serve you a Dog-trick; come, down upon all four immediately; I'll make you know your Rider (I.i.17). Mustapha then engages in physical aggression and lashes Antonio with a whip. The Portuguese nobleman is broken at that point. Mustafa tames Antonio to be able to "amble, trot, and gallop" in front of the buyers (I.i.17). Antonio discovers shortly that this is only the beginning of his humiliation that day. One of the buyers asks Mustapha to strip the slave of his clothes so he can check if his body shows any sign of diseases or weakness. Mustapha, eager to quickly finish the deal, invites the buyer to feel Antonio's body bragging that this is "the best piece of Man's flesh in the Market, not an Eye-sore in his whole body: Feel his Legs, Master, neither Splint, Spavin, nor Wind gall" (I.i.17). In fact, the terminology used and the physical check used in the scene are similar to cattle's auctions in which sellers and buyers discuss the physical traits of animals. At the end of the scene, Antonio's destiny is decided when the Mufti enters to interrupt the deal and claims the right to take the slave to work on his properties.

Dryden, in the slave-market scene, may hint at the fact that Catholics in England formed what can be considered as a third class. With Anglicans at the top and dissenters as a

second class, Roman Catholics were deprived of the relatively tolerant treatment afforded to dissenters. Thus, they occupied an inferior position in the English social texture. The satirical scene contains more than mere laughter or parody. With the references to the anti-Catholic penal laws of the play's prologue that I discussed earlier, the scene, effectively, compresses the long history of dehumanization and persecution of Roman Catholics in England. In the same scene, Dryden satirizes the Protestant political hypocrisy. After being whipped and humiliated, Antonio abandons his pride and courage and obeys Mustapha, "I obey thee cheerfully, […] I see the Doctrine of Non-Resistance is never practis'd thoroughly but when a Man can't help himself" (I.i.17). James Anderson Winn reads this "joke" as a hint to the common Anglican teaching that states that rebellious activities against the king are sinful. As a result, this teaching requires full obedience even to a tyrannical and corrupt monarch. Dryden considered the Anglican clergymen as hypocrites because they acted against that doctrine when they revolted against King James II and took the oath to William (165).[36] In fact, the Church of England acted against that doctrine when James II's suspicious pro-Catholic policy threatened the stability of the country.

The plot Dryden chooses for his play is based on the Islamic-European conflicts in North Africa during the last decades of the sixteenth century. The historical battle was between the Kingdom of Portugal, led by King Don Sebastian, versus the allied forces of the Moors of Barbary, led by the Emperor Muley-Moluch. The battle took place in northern Morocco, near the town of Ksar-el-Kebirnear. The battle concluded the Portuguese campaign in North Africa with a catastrophic defeat of the invaders after the death of King

[36] In the same vein, Bywaters reads Dryden's satirical line on "Doctrine of Non-Resistance" as representative of a "Williamire Tory;" who follows that doctrine only in submitting to superior power (42).

Don Sebastian. Dryden departs from the historical accounts of the battle and chooses a different end for the Portuguese King.

In the first Act of the play, the tyrant king Muley-Moluch and his attendants visit the slave market to check the new captives who are offered for sale after the defeat of the Portuguese. Among the captives are King Don Sebastian, his old advisor, Don Alvarez, a captain in the Portuguese army, Don Antonio, and the fair Moroccan princess, Almeyda. The audience is informed later that Almeyda's brother, Muly- Mahumet, the rightful ruler of Morocco, has been killed in the battle. Impressed by the lofty character of Don Sebastian and Almeyda, Muley-Moluch generously receives them at his palace and promises to free them later. Meanwhile, Alvarez and Antonio are sold in the market.

Almeyda discovers later that the reason behind the generosity of Muley-Moluch is that he is in love with her and plans to marry her. She refuses the idea on the basis that he is the usurper of her family's crown and because she is in love with the brave Don Sebastian. To prevent any possibility of this marriage, she marries Don Sebastian in secrecy. To the couple's misfortune, Muley-Moluch discovers their marriage and the fact that Almeyda converted to Christianity when she was in Portugal. The tyrant king, urged by some of his advisors, decides to eliminate Don Sebastian in order to marry Almeyda. Muley-Moluch is ignorant of the plot to overthrow him that is designed by one of his courtiers, Benducar, and the wicked and hypocritical Mufti. Meanwhile, Antonio is sent to the Mufti's house to work for him as a slave. He is quickly discovered by the lustful Johayma, one of the Mufti's numerous wives. Antonio finds himself seduced by Johayma, and at the same time, loved by Morayam, the Mufti's daughter. Antonio succeeds in persuading Morayma to convert to Christianity and they leave the place for good.

The rebellion that is led by Benducar and the Mufti succeeds and the enamored and foolish Muley-Moluch is killed. Don Sebastian, Antonio, and Dorax (a Portuguese renegade

in the Moroccan court) take advantage of the chaos and turn people against the rebels. The Portuguese, aided by a large number of Moors, arrest the rebels and send them to their death. The renegade Dorax is then reconciled with his king, Don Sebastian, after years of enmity. Act IV ends with a settlement between Don Sebastian and his subjects after the death of all the villains.

The last act introduces the ultimate tragic event that destroys the love story between Don Sebastian and Almeyda. When he discovers the marriage between Don Sebastian and Almeyda, the old Alvarez reveals the fact that Don Sebastian and Almeyda are siblings. Alvarez explains to the shocked couple that Almeyda's father is the late king of Portugal, Don Sebastian's father. The king had an adulterous affair with Almeyda's mother when the latter was received with her husband in the Portuguese court. Unable to stand this news, the couple decides to depart forever in self-exile. The plot, Dryden used, had many advantages for him as a playwright. In his article "Political Allusions in Dryden's Later Plays," John Moore points out that Dryden's plot, which involves subjects' ingratitude to their king, a revolution, religious and political controversy, gave the playwright an opportunity for "pointed allusions to the topics which concerned Englishmen most in December 1689" (38). Dryden invested the actions of the play to comment on the dramatically changing religious and political scene in post-Glorious Revolution England.

Slavery as a motive was of great importance in Whig political and religious writings during the Restoration period. Whigs believed that slavery to France and Rome was one of the major threats that popery or Catholicism posed. In numerous pamphlets and other political writings of the period, slavery persisted as an imminent danger that was always engulfing the nation. Dryden, in his play, reverses this motive as he presents Christian characters enslaved by the barbarous "other." Dryden enslaves the noble Don Sebastian to shed light on the slavery and religious oppression of Roman Catholics who suffered the

most after the Glorious Revolution. Dryden hints that Catholics were the actual victims (slaves) of the biased Protestant majority in his country since it deprived them of their rights. Dryden's decision to conclude his play with the liberty of all the Portuguese characters can be read as a reference to the wide hopes of English Catholics for religious liberty. In the same sense, Don Sebastian, who is more likely to be a representation of James II, puts his freedom above all other demands in the play. This is obvious in the following dialogue between him and Muley-Moluch,

> Moluch.
>
> […]. If you can frame
>
> A farther wish, give wing to your desires,
>
> And name the thing you want.
>
> Sebast.
>
> My Liberty:
>
> For were ev'n Paradise it self my Prison,
>
> Still I shou'd long to leap the Chrystal walls. (II.i. 31)

Similar to Don Sebastian's attitude, James's short reign (1685-88) witnessed an increasing sense of religious liberty and tolerance. In fact, James had extended the freedom of worship to Christians regardless of the theological differences between their churches. Now, under William III's reign, those liberties had been curtailed.

Throughout his play, Dryden establishes witty conversations to direct his criticism to religion in general and Anglicanism in particular. Dryden's problematic and complex attitude towards everything religious is expressed, at least partially, in the final scene between Antonio and Morayma who meet to discuss their plans. While Morayma shows her willingness to convert to Christianity as soon as the couple reaches Portugal, the couple,

worried about future challenges, summon up stories about unfaithful couples. Morayma claims that in Europe, churches are but places for men and women to find new lovers,

> I am afraid you are not very valiant, that you huff so much before hand: but, they say, your Churches are fine places for Love-devotion: many a she-Saint is there worship'd.
>
> Ant.
>
> Temples are there, as they are in all other Countries, good conveniences for dumb enterviews: I hear the Protestants an't much reform'd in that point neither; for their Sectaries call their Churches by the naturall name of Meeting-houses. therefore I warn thee in good time, not more of devotion than needs must, good future Spowse; and allways in a veile; for those eyes of thine are damn'd enemies to mortification.
>
> Mor.
>
> The best thing I have heard of Christendom, is that we women are allow'd the priviledge of having Souls; and I assure you, I shall make bold to bestow mine, upon some Lover, when ever you begin to go astray, and, if I find no Convenience in a Church, a private Chamber will serve the turn. (V.i. 113)

Dryden appears to be satirical of different Christian churches; Catholicism (the official religion of Portugal) and Protestantism, the faith of the majority of the English people. Other meanings can also be understood from this short dialogue. Given that the majority of his audience were overwhelmingly anti-Catholic Protestants, it would be hazardous for a Catholic playwright, like Dryden, to criticize Protestantism openly. He must have needed careful argumentation and a milder way to express his criticism. To that end, Dryden satirizes the Portuguese Catholic Church before inserting Antonio's comment "I hear the Protestants an't much reform'd in that point neither; for their Sectaries call their Churches by

the naturall name of Meeting-houses" (V.i. 113). From another angle, Morayma seems to be aware of the religious schism inside Christendom. It is clear that she is becoming a Catholic. This may be read as a reference to the writer's belief in the strength and continuity of the Catholicism in absorbing more converts from other sects.

The final scene of the play introduces striking news to the noble couple, Don Sebastian and Almeyda. The truth about their past is revealed and, accordingly, their relationship is turned from marriage into incest. It is this element in the story that forms the tragic element of the play. Dryden must have invented the heartbreaking end to convey some deep meanings. In his book *Poetry and the Realm of Politics: Shakespeare to Dryden*, Howard Erskine-Hill argues that the theme of the unknown incest of the helpless couple can be read as a metaphor for the "inexplicable defeat of truth and right within a providential vision of history"(249). This reading, which I find of great validity, attempts to offer an explanation for the defeat of James II and the wide hopes of English Catholics of an end for their long history of persecution in England. The play proposes that James II's tragic end, like Don Sebastian's, is something that can hardly be explained. Both of them cannot be blamed for the miserable state they have ended with.

A close reading of the play shows many connections between Don Sebastian and James II as both are victims of a foreign usurper. In *Acts of Implication: Suggestion and Covert Meaning in the Works of Dryden*, Irvin Ehrenpreis observes that like the supporters of Don Sebastian who hoped for his return to claim his usurped throne, English Jacobites hoped for the return of James II to his rightful throne. Ehrenpreis adds that in *Don Sebastian*, the battle of the royal hero on foreign country against a usurper who belongs to a different religion "certainly points to the war between James II and William in Ireland" (49). Similar to Almanzor in *The Conquest of Granada*, many virtues, typical in pro- James propaganda, are attributed to Don Sebastian like justice, courage, generosity, and nobility. In

Don Sebastian, Dorax describes his former monarch with remarkable objectivity. Dorax tells Benducar of his complex relationship with Don Sebastian,

> *Sebastian* was my aim; he was a Man:
> Nay, though he hated me, and I hate him,
> Yet I must do him right; he was a Man,
> Above man's height, ev'n towring to *Divinity*.
> Brave, pious, generous, great, and liberal:
> Just as the Scales of Heaven that weigh the Seasons,
> He lov'd his People, him they idoliz'd:
> [……..]
> His goodness was diffus'd to human kind.
> And all his cruelty confin'd to me. (I.i.4)

What makes this lofty description more effective is the fact that it is the opinion of one of Don Sebastian's fiercest enemies. Dryden was curious to highlight the perfect relationship between Don Sebastian and his subjects as a metaphor for a similar relationship between James II and his loyal subjects. Dorax is not the only enemy who is impressed by the majestic traits of Don Sebastian. In the slave market, the Portuguese captives approach the lottery which will decide which among them is saved. As Don Sebastian approaches to take his turn, King Muly-Moluch notices his captive's splendid charisma. Muly-Moluch tells his servant Benducar,

> Mark him who now approaches to the Lott'ry,
> He looks secure of Death, superior greatness,
> Like *Jove* when he made Fate, and said thou art
> The Slave of my Creation; I admire him. (I.i.11)

The King confesses to Benducar that the brave character of Don Sebastian deserves admiration. Because of the remarkable courage Don Sebastian shows in his captivity, Muly-Moluch declares that he cannot hide his sympathy more and intends to offer franchise to all enslaved Portuguese nationals:

> They plead too strongly
> To be withstood: My Clouds are gath'ring too,
> In kindly mixture with this Royal showr:
> Be safe, and owe thy Life, not to my gift,
> But to the greatness of thy mind, Sebastian:
> Thy Subjects too shall live; a due reward
> For their untainted Faith, in thy concealment. (I.i.14-5)

If the character of Don Sebastian is a representation of James II, then Muly-Moluch is more likely to be linked with William III. Similar to the "tyrant" in English Catholic polemics, Muly-Moluch prepares to be the new tyrant of Morocco. As he decides to use his power to enjoy the captive Almeyda, Muly-Moluch declares,

> Right thou hast me,
> I wou'd, but cannot kill: I must enjoy her:
> I must, and what I must be sure I will.
> What's Royalty but pow'r to please my self?
> And if I dare not, then am I the Slave,
> And my own Slaves the Sovereigns, — 'tis resolv'd,
> Weak Princes flatter when they want the pow'r
> To curb their People; tender Plants must bend,
> But when a Government is grown to strength,
> Like some old Oak, rough with its armed Bark,

It yields not to the tug, but only nods,

And turns to sullen State. (II.i. 21-22)

In addition to describing the tyrannical mentality of Muly-Moluch that might be applied to William III, this excerpt sheds light on another important idea related to the English political system in general. That is, "when a Government is grown to strength" it will denounce many of its former pleadges and promises. In fact, this takes us back to the year 1660 when the restored monarchy promised to ensure a considerable level of religious freedom to moderate non-Anglican Protestants. In *James II and the Three Questions*, Peter Walker points out that these promises of religious toleration – mainely included in the Declaration of Breda of 1660 – were only used "to smooth the way for the king's restoration" (7). Few years after the Restoration of Charles II, the Cavalier Parliament ignored the promises of toleration and took a hostile policy against dissenters and Roman Catholics.

In a deferent vein, what is noteworthy in *Don Sebastian* is Dryden's repeated emphasis on highlighting the strong relationship and "untainted" loyalty of Don Sebastian's subjects to their monarch. In Act I, Sebastian praises the nobility and courage of his followers as he declares,

For Subjects such as they are seldom seen,

Who not forsook me at my greatest need;

Nor for base lucre sold their Loyalty,

But shar'd my dangers to the last event,

And fenc'd 'em with their own. (I.i. 13)

This praise of Catholic-coded Portuguese subjects carries an implicit criticism of the unfaithful English subjects who betrayed James II and welcomed William III when he landed in England in 1688. In other words, Dryden contrasts the treacherous nature of those who deserted King James II with the noble and courageous faith of English Catholics who

remained loyal to their *rightful* monarch. In fact, Dryden's consistent praise of James and his perfect model as a leader concurs with Michael McKeon's reading of Dryden's *Annus Mirabilis*. Dryden's poem, written in 1666, addresses the ever-growing dissent in Restoration England. McKeon claims that Dryden deserted the ideas of religious uniformity as a successful model of unity. Dryden, instead, called for a new model that "involves the abolition of division by subsuming group interests under that of the court" (146). Dryden's vision was crystalized more clearly during James's reign as the poet tried to present James's rule as the only political body that could extend religious liberty for all sects under one united political system.

In addition to the positive portrayal of the character of Don Sebastian, the play refers to the hypocrisy of the old Portuguese court. The parallel between Don Sebastian's and James II's courts can be hardly ignored here. In Catholic polemics, it is the treachery of people around James that enabled William to invade England. Dorax refers to a similar story in the Portuguese court. In the course of explaining the insults he received when he was in Portugal, Dorax reveals to Don Sebastian some of the secrets of the Portuguese court as he declares,

> Too well I know thee; but for King no more:
> This is not *Lisbonne*, nor the Circle this,
> Where, like a Statue, thou hast stood besieg'd,
> By Sycophants and Fools, the growth of Courts:
> Where thy gull'd eyes, in all the gawdy round,
> Met nothing but a lye in every face;
> And the gross flattery of a gaping Crowd,
> Envious who first should catch, and first applaud. (IV.ii.104)

The Portuguese court, as Dryden portrays, swarms with deceit, hypocrisy, and treachery. In a different vein, the many references to usurpers and illegitimate rule remind us of the traditional Jacobite claims that considered the Glorious Revolution as a usurpation of the English crown. This can be linked with Dryden's numerous hints to the tragic end of James II's rule. In the first Act, Almeyda reminds the cruel Muly-Moluch of his treachery of her late father,

> Traitor, I wou'd; the Name's more justly thine:
> Thy Father was not more than mine, the Heir
> Of this large Empire; but with arms united
> They fought their way, and seiz'd the Crown by force:
> And equal as their danger was their share:
> For where was Eldership, where none had right,
> But that which Conquest gave? 'Twas thy ambition
> Pull'd from my peaceful Father what his Sword
> Help'd thine to gain: Surpriz'd him and his Kingdom,
> No provocation given, no War declar'd. (I.i.15)

When watching a play written after few months of the Glorious Revolution by one of the most loyal writers to the deposed Stuart monarch, one cannot help it but remember the recent dethronement of James II.

David A. Bywaters presents an interesting reading of *Don Sebastian* that suggests that its Portuguese characters resemble the Catholic supporters of James. Bywaters explains that a parody in Act III is used to refer to one of the Protestant views of popery. This view is clear in Benducar's description of Don Sebastian's wedding ceremony (40). In the play, Benducar describes the ceremony which was conducted by,

A puffing Fryar;

Close wrap'd he bore some secret Instrument

Of Christian Superstition in his hand:

My servant follow'd fast, and through a chink,

Perceiv'd the Royal Captives hand in hand:

And heard the hooded Father mumbling charms,

That make those Misbelievers Man and Wife. (III.i. 44)

If the loyalty of the Catholic Portuguese is an allegory for the faithfulness of English Catholics who supported the "legitimate" monarch, James II, then, is more likely that the treacherous Moors represent the Protestants who betrayed their king and allied with a foreign usurper. The play is loaded with descriptions of the treacherous nature of the Moors of Morocco who always side with the strong. Dorax warns Muly-Moluch of the Mufti and the unfaithful Moors,

You know 'em not.

The genius of your Moors is mutiny;

They scarcely want a Guide to move their madness:

Prompt to rebel on every weak pretence,

Blustring when courted, crouching when opprest.

Wise to themselves, and fools to all the World.

Restless in change, and perjur'd to a Proverb.

They love Religion sweetn'd to the sense;

A good, luxurious, palatable faith.

Thus Vice and Godliness, prepost'rous pair,

Ride cheek by joul; but Churchmen hold the Reins.

And, when ere Kings wou'd lower Clergy greatness,

They learn too late what pow'r the Preachers have,

And whose the Subjects are; the *Mufti* knows it;

Nor dares deny what pass'd betwixt us two. (III.i.55)

After years of living in Morocco, Dorax is able to expose the truth of the mutinous Moors. According to Dorax, Moors are easily aroused by corrupt preachers. They are always ready to rebel even for weak pretenses. They prefer a customized and selfish form of religion that would protect their pleasures and vices. He advises Muly-Moluch not to trust them at all because of the fact that the preachers are their true masters. What is noteworthy in this detailed description is the parallels between the image of the unfaithful Moors and the description of the Whigs and the Parliament according to English Catholic ideology. Just like the majority of Parliament members during the reigns of Charles II and his brother James II, the Parliament was the source of endless troubles for English monarchs. They issued bills, protested against laws, and challenged the preferences of their kings.

Dorax's suspicions prove to be prescient. In Act IV, the Moors are easily persuaded by the ambitious and greedy Mufti to rebel against their king. The phraseology and claims used by the Mufti resemble, to a large degree, the Protestant Whig claims during the 1670s and 1680s. When the Mufti gathers the rabble to be raised against Muly-Moluch, he addresses their religious emotions, not their minds,

> Therefore to conclude all, Believers, pluck up your Hearts, and pluck down the Tyrant: Remember the Courage of your Ancestors; remember the Majesty of the People; remember your selves, your Wives and Children; and lastly, above all, remember your Religion, and our holy *Mahomet*; all these require your timous assistance; shall I say they beg it? No, they claim it of you, by all the nearest and dearest Tyes of these three P's Self-Preservation, our Property, and

our Prophet. Now answer me with an unanimous chearful Cry, and follow me, who am your Leader to a glorious Deliverance. (IV.ii.86)

At this point, Dorax's words to Muly-Moluch come true. The power of preachers is manifested in this scene where religious feelings are used to control people and urged them to rebel. The discourse used by the Mufti highlights three of the main demands of opposition leaders during the Restoration period. During that period, Whig political propaganda called intensively for protecting the liberty of the English people, their properties, their beliefs, and their very Englishness against popery and foreign interference (Owen, *Restoration Theatre and Crisis* 273). Obviously, the Mufti uses quite a similar terminology to that used by Whig political leaders in the mass demonstrations they organized during the late 1670s and early 1680s. The three Ps he refers to are Self-Preservation (Englishness), our Property (English properties), and our Prophet (Anglican Protestant faith).

The significant role of the Mufti in *Don Sebastian*, as an Islamic character, requires more consideration concerning the religious implications of his character. Like Settle, Dryden depicts one of the Mufti's main characteristics as hypocrisy. In Dryden's play, the Mufti is always ready to please his king by finding a religious cover for the king's desires. When Muly-Moluch commands the Mufti to modify or cancel "fasting" teachings, the latter is more than happy to serve his king,

Muly-Moluch.

The purple present shall be richly paid:

That Vow perform'd, fasting shall be abolish'd:

None ever serv'd Heav'n well with a starv'd face:

Preach Abstinence no more; I tell thee *Mufty*

[…….]

Mufti.

Fasting is but the Letter of the Law:

Yet it shows well to Preach it to the Vulgar.

Wine is against our Law, that's literal too,

But not deny'd to Kings and to their Guides,

Wine is a Holy Liquor, for the Great.

Dorax *aside.*

This *Mufti* in my conscience is some *English*

Renegade, he talks so savourly of toping. (I.i.6)

In addition to ignoring fasting as an important religious teaching, the hypocrite Mufti exceeds all limits as he makes consuming alcohol something permissible for kings and their "guides." Dryden's intentions cannot be missed, especially with Dorax's asides. The hypocrite Mufti reminds Dorax of the practices of English renegades who retain similar hypocritical and corrupt characteristics.

In addition to all of his corrupt activities, the selfish Mufti, in order to please Muley-Moloch, even justifies rape and identifies it as a part of religion. The Mufti assures the tyrant king,

'Tis true, our law forbids to wed a Christian;

But it forbids you not to ravish her.

You have a conqueror's right upon your slave;

And then the more despite you do a Christian,

You serve the prophet more, who loathes that sect. (III.i)

The references to the Mufti as selfish and hypocritical recall, as Bywaters argues, Gilbert Burnet,[37] who was satirized in contemporary political literature (49). In many scenes in the play, the Mufti's lust is highlighted. In Act I, he offers a thousand golden Sultanins for the chance to have Almeyda. The Mufti's hypocrisy and flattery to Muley-Moloch are associated with the Jacobite view of the hypocrite Burnet. After Muley-Moloch wins the war, the Mufti finds an opportunity to get closer to the king. Muley-Moloch asks the Mufti to "wrest and rend the Law to please thy Prince" (III.i. 45). The latter finds no difficulties in finding justification of drinking wine although prohibited in Islam.

The hypocrisy of the Mufti is exposed clearly to the audience in Act IV. In a long monologue, the Mufti uncovers the reality behind his fake religious disguise,

> This 'tis to have a sound Head-piece; by this I have got to be chief of my Religion; that is, honestly speaking to teach others what I neither know nor believe myself. For what's *Mahomet* to me, but that I get by him? […] I'll not make the first precedent for a Church-man to forgive Injuries. (IV.ii 75-6)

The Mufti confesses that he does not practice the religious teachings he preaches. He uses religion for self-promotion. He labels himself a "Church-man" a description that can hardly be considered as unintentional. In another scene, Dorax criticizes the Mufti and describes him similarly: "[f]or Church-men, though they itch to govern all, / Are silly, woful, awkard Politicians" (II.i. 24). Later on, when the quarrel between the two develops, Dorax further illustrates the idea of the Mufti as a Church-man. Dorax claims that, "he [the Mufti] damns me from his Church, / Because I wou'd restrain him to his Duty" (II.i. 25). Even Muly-

---

[37] After the Revolution, the exiled Bishop Burnet returned to England with William and Mary. He modified all his views on the "doctrine of non-resistance." In 1688, he published an *Inquiry into the Measures of Submission to the Supreme Authority* which reflected his pro-Glorious Revolution ideas. In addition, he played an important role in urging Anglican clergy to take the oath of allegiance to the new monarch, i.e. William III (Clough 120).

Moluch describes the Mufti with the same label. Pleased by the Mufti's ability to manipulate and play ambiguously with religious texts, Muly-Moluch declares, "[h]ow happy is the Prince who has a Churchman / So learn'd and pliant to expound his Laws (III.i. 46). All these references to the Mufti as a Church-man asserts the reading of the Mufti's character as an allegory of English Anglican clergy whom Dryden charges with hypocrisy, corruption and unfaithfulness. In his book *The Faith of John Dryden: Change and Continuity,* George Douglas Atkins argues that by emphasizing the evil relationship between the clergy and monarchs, "Dryden evidently has in mind activities of certain Anglican churchmen during the last years of the Stuart reign" (148). It is obvious that Dryden's play represents the Anglican clergymen as taking advantage of their sacred office to acquire more wealth and power.

More details about the false Mufti are uncovered with the progress of the actions of the play. In Act IV, Morayma, the Mufti's daughter, unable to stand her father's corrupt activities, exposes the truth behind his character. She reveals his evil practices that exploit naïve people who always believe his eloquent speeches. When she finds the Mufti spying on his wife – whose faithfulness he suspects – Morayma returns her jewelry to her father as she declares,

> No Sir, you get more by pious Fools than Raylers, when you insinuate into their Families, manage their Fortunes while they live, and beggar their Heirs by getting Legacies when they dye. And do you think I'll be the receiver of your Theft? I discharge my Conscience of it: Here take again your filthy Mammon, and restore it you had best to the true Owners. (IV.ii. 77)

In addition to hypocrisy, corruption, and greed, the Mufti is portrayed as a lustful old man who uses his position and wealth to fulfil his sexual desires. In the slave-market scene, the Mufti is mostly interested in female captives. He shows a willingness to spend a thousand *Sultanins* to win the fairest of them. The Mufti, as the audience discovers later, retains a

huge property in which he keeps his numerous wives and female-slaves. In the first Act, the wicked Mustapha tells Muly-Moluch that the Mufti found a beautiful "virgin" among the Portuguese captives who were enslaved after the battle. The Mufti, immediately, tries to buy her. Mustapha explains,

> By the same token there was a dainty Virgin, (Virgin said I! but I won't be too positive of that neither) with a roguish leering eye! he paid me down for her upon the nail a thousand golden Sultanins; or he had never had her I can tell him that: Now is it very likely he would pay so dear for such a delicious Morsel, and give it away out of his own mouth; when it had such a farewel with it too? (I.i. 6)

Muly-Moluch appears to be fully aware of the Mufti's lustful character. When the captives are brought in front of him, Muly-Moluch, satirically, askes Mustapha to unveil that particular lady whom the Mufti desired earlier,

> Unveil the Woman; I wou'd view the Face
> That warm'd our Mufti's Zeal:
> These pious Parrots peck the fairest Fruit:
> Such Tasters are for Kings. (I.i. 14)

The religious and political milieu Dryden portrays in *Don Sebastian* is filled with corruption and amorality at all levels of life. Obviously, the play's main target for criticism is the Mufti. However, Dryden criticizes a wider scale of religious figures and practices in his play. In *Don Sebastian*, Dryden criticizes some of the more general practices of the Church that exploit people under the disguise of religion. Dorax, in one of his quarrels with the Mufti, claims that,

> I tell thee, Mufti, if the World were wise,
> They wou'd not wag one finger in your quarrels.

Your Heav'n you promise, but our Earth you covet.

The Phaethons of mankind, who fire that World,

Which you were sent by Preaching but to warm. (II.i. 25)

Dorax considers the actions of the unfaithful clergymen similar to Phaethon's.[38] In fact, their unwise preaching could set the whole world on fire. While showing a false interest in the afterlife, these corrupt clergy work more for their mortal lives.[39] The Mufti, in Dorax's numerous disputes with corrupt courtiers in the Moroccan court, is but one case in point of the larger image of religious hypocrisy. Dorax explains to Mustapha,

Why then these forein thoughts of State-Employments,

Abhorrent to your Function and your Breeding?

Poor droaning Truants of unpractis'd Cells,

Bred in the Fellowship of bearded Boys,

What wonder is it if you know not Men?

Yet there, you live demure, with down-cast Eyes,

And humble as your Discipline requires:

But, when let loose from thence to live at large,

Your little tincture of Devotion dies:

Then Luxury succeeds, and set agog

With a new Scene of yet untasted Joys,

You fall with greedy hunger to the Feast.

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[38] In Greek mythology, Phaethon was the son of Helios, the sun god. One day, young Phaethon asked his father to drive the chariot of the sun. Helios agreed and Phaethon, inexperienced for such a mission, lost control of the immortal horses and the sun-chariot fell one earth causing destruction to mankind.

[39] Moore states that after about one year of the play's production, the above-mentioned lines were quoted on the title page of a satirical pamphlet on Dr. William Sherlock for his support to William and Mary (39).

Of all your College Vertues, nothing now

But your Original Ignorance remains:

Bloated with Pride, Ambition, Avarice,

You swell, to counsel Kings and govern Kingdoms. (II.i. 26)

In another scene, involving the mob, Dryden satirizes politicians on one hand and clergy on the other. The Mufti, in the course of gathering the rabble to revolt against Muly-Moluch, declares,

That your Emperor is a Tyrant is most manifest; for you were born to be *Turks*, but he has play'd the *Turk* with you; and is taking your Religion away.

Second Rabble.

We find that in our decay of Trade; I have seen for these hunder'd years, that Religion and Trade always go together. (IV.ii. 85)

Although satirical, the Second Rabble's observation summarizes much of the play's message. In his simple, yet deep, observation, he explains that hypocrite clergy are in most cases interested in earthly concerns like trade. Another example of the satirical criticism of the religious reality of the English is presented in the slave-market scene. When he discovers Mustapha selling Portuguese captives for his benefit, the Mufti threatens to punish this treacherous action. Mustapha, afraid of the Mufti's punishment cries,

Good my Lord, take pity upon a poor man in this World, and damn me in the next.

Mufti,

No Sirrah, so you may repent, and scape punishment: Did not you sell this very Slave amongst the rest to me, and take Mony for him.

Must.

Patience, my Lord.

I took him up, as your Heriot, with intention to have made the best of him, and then have brought the whole product of him in a Purse to you; for I know you wou'd have spent half of it upon your pious Pleasures, have hoarded up the other half, and given the remainder in Charities to the Poor. (I.i. 19)

Dryden also invites his audience to observe the role of clergy in producing chaos and anarchy in the society. Dryden sheds light on the destructive effects of the unwise involvement of religion in revolutions. In *Don Sebastian*, the Mufti and Mustapha take advantage of the naivety of the rabble in order to direct them against the king. The Mufti, in particular, takes advantage of his religious office to play on the mob's religious emotions. As a hint to the unwise involvement of the clergy in the Glorious Revolution, the Mufti asks the rabble "follow me, who am your leader, to a glorious deliverance" (IV.ii 86). The long mob scene in Act IV is worth much consideration for its emphasis on the absurd motivations of revolutions. This scene as, Moore explains, sheds light on the mentality of the lower classes and the dangerous consequences of agitating them during the times of political unrest (41). In the play, Mustapha asks the mob to gather in a wide circle asking them to,

[…]shout to show your Loyalty.

(*A great shout.*)

Hear'st thou that, Slave *Antonio*? these obstreperous Villains shout, and know not for what they make a noise. You shall see me manage 'em, that you may judge what ignorant Beasts they are. For whom do you shout now? who's to Live and Reign? tell me that the wisest of you.

First Rabble.

Even who you please Captain.

Must.

La you there; I told you so.

Second Rabble.

We are not bound to know who is to Live and Reign; our business is only to rise upon command, and plunder.

Third Rabble.

Ay, the Richest of both Parties; for they are our Enemies. (IV.ii. 84)

The mob, who kindled the bloody revolution, are described as "ignorant beasts." The villains of the play use the mob to achieve personal ends. Moore explains that in *Don Sebastian* Dryden introduced "a long mob scene (irrelevant to the main action, because the real revolution was taking place off stage) for no purpose but to give him a chance to ridicule the instability of the populace" (39). As the above excerpt of the scene shows, it is very easy for anyone to control ignorant people. Although fully unaware of the consequences of their actions, the mob succeeds in elimination the old regime and replacing it with a new one.

The final scene of the play, in which Don Sebastian and Almeyda separate, reflects the general moral of the play. At the end of the scene, Dorax assures Antonio and Morayma to,

[…] be happy both:

And let *Sebastian* and *Almeyda's* Fate,

This dreadfull Sentence to the World relate,

That unrepented Crimes of Parents dead,

Are justly punish'd on their Childrens head. (V.i. 132)

Dorax explains that, sometimes, the follies of the past generations could affect, negatively, the lives of the following generations. In one sense, the playwright must have chosen to refer to the errs of others that destroyed the life of Don Sebastian and Almeyda in order to reflect on the responsibility of the English people (mostly Anglicans) for the dethronement of the

legitimate monarch, King James II. In other words, Dryden implies that, just like the unfortunate Don Sebastian, James cannot be blamed for the end of the Stuart rule in England. Dryden lamented the end of James's short reign that introduced a considerable level of toleration and religious liberty to Protestant dissenters and Roman Catholics.

In conclusion, in addition to the succession question, and the court sexuality, the fierce religious quarrels of Restoration England highlight the importance of reading early modern drama in terms of the internal religious dimension of British culture. *The Empress of Morocco*, *Ibrahim the Illustrious Bassa*, and *Don Sebastian* used Muslims characters and settings as allegories for the internal religious disputes in England. As the above discussion reveals, it is important to be aware of the fact that such plays do not necessarily reflect the English perception of Islam *per se*, rather they reflect their writers' involvement in internal religious quarrels of the late seventeenth- century England. In fact, Settle and Dryden used Muslim characters and settings as allegories for relevant domestic religious matters.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

My dissertation has shown that the representations of Islam and its culture in British Restoration drama were strongly connected with domestic politics and religion. The plays under concentration in this study employed Muslim characters and settings to express certain political and religious positions and beliefs in Restoration England. The study showed the way in which Restoration stage served as a perfect arena for both Whigs and Tories who aimed to express and spread certain political ideas and views. The plays by Boyle, Whitaker, Settle, Southerne, and others provide us with a new way of understanding the interplay between playwrights' treatment of Muslim characters on stage and the contemporary ideology of the age. For instant, chapter two showed how the literary production during the political debate over the succession question used allegorical figures and plots to comment on this important issue. The works under study in the second chapter of this study used complex political allegories that were based on Oriental Muslim settings. Interestingly, the use of allegory enabled the playwrights to deliver advice, criticism, and commentary on the major concerns of the political nation. Thus, Restoration playwrights used their historical sources both to heroicize or demonize certain Restoration political and religious figures, and, at the same time, to distance themselves from any hostile reactions by their political opponents. For the majority of Restoration spectators who were used to making connections between dramatic production and the contemporary political scene of their time, the parallels between Islamic states' and English political crises were clear in many ways.

Boyle's *Mustapha*, which addresses the complications of the succession question, can be considered as an early alarm that warned of the dangerous consequences of the unsettled succession issue in England. Boyle made use of his long political and military experience to diagnose the political dilemmas of early Restoration period. In addition, Boyle took

advantage of Charles's interest in theater to deliver certain political messages to the king and the political nation. Boyle used the allegorical story of Sultan Solyman and his sons to touch on the upcoming succession crisis that would endanger the whole nation. Although represented as a powerful, victorious, and noble, Solyman suffers from some defects that result in the ruin of his family and the rupture of a rebellion against him. The play ends with a Sultan with no successors and an empire uncertain about its future. The play stresses the importance of having the process of succession performed without foreign interference in order to avoid chaos and infighting. This message could hardly have been missed by a Restoration audience who were used to dramatic allegories.

In the same vein, William Whitaker's *The Conspiracy* establishes many historical and political parallels related to the succession question in England. *The Conspiracy*, which is based on actual accounts of the history of the Ottoman Empire, comments on one of the most complicated political allegories of the Exclusion Crisis period. The play retells the story of the dethronement and execution of the Ottoman Sultan Ibrahim (r. 1640- 48) and the subsequent enthronement of his son, Mehemd IV. Written in a time of great controversy over the succession issue, the play can be seen as an allegory of the dethronement and execution of King Charles I and the restoration of his son, Charles II. The story of Sultan Ibrahim and the quarrels in his court came to reflect the contemporary antagonism between the royalists and those who challenged the Stuart brothers and plotted to interrupt the succession process.

Elkanah Settle's *The Heir of Morocco* shows that the political debate over the succession continued into the later years of Charles's II reign and was still a major topic for discussion in London theaters. Settle, a major Whig propagandist, employed allegorical characters and plots as a smokescreen to express his views on the complex issue of royal succession. He implemented a clever political allegory using an Islamic setting in *The Heir of Morocco* to comment on the succession question. The second chapter showed how Settle's

strong engagement in the political debates of the Restoration period resulted in a tendency to implement more allegory and symbolism in his works. The dissertation explained that the study of Settle's political activism showed that the representations of Muslim characters in his play were heavily influenced by the contemporary politics of Restoration England.

Similarly, Thomas Southerne's *The Loyal Brother* or *The Persian Prince* uses the characters and plot of the play as an allegory for a relevant internal crisis in England, i.e. the succession crisis. The political discourse the playwright presents in his play reflects the increasing partisanship in the English political nation because of the bitter political quarrels and controversy over the succession question. In many scenes in his play, Southerne hints at what James experienced during the tense years of his exile. In the play, the Sophy banishes his bother and deprives him of his offices in a similar way to what happened among the Stuart brothers in early 1680s. The play's Prologue, which is loaded with political implications, makes the connections between Persia's succession crisis and that of Restoration England's much clearer. In addition, through the negative portrait of Ismael, Southerne criticizes the political decisions of the Whig leader Shaftsbury. Ismael/Shaftesbury, as portrayed in the play, is an extreme example of treachery, selfishness, and malice. Ismael, just like the Tory perception of Shaftsbury, shows great ability to control masses, make plots, and fabricate charges.

The third Chapter of this study, challenged the traditional critical views that assumes that the negative – often sexually – representations associated with the Muslim was a result of the historical hostilities against Muslims. The majority of criticism on early modern dramatization of the Muslim highlights only the historically tense relationship between the East and the West. In fact, such readings provide an incomplete understanding of how the West imagined various Muslim peoples and their culture. These studies underestimated the complex domestic dimension of the issue. Thus, the third chapter highlighted the importance

of reading the sexual dramatizations of Muslims in Restoration drama in terms of the internal political dimension of British politics. On the surface, the plays under consideration in the chapter tackle the sexuality of nations geographically located far away from England. Nevertheless, the authors of these plays employ the characters and events of their works as allegories for relevant internal crises in England. In fact, these plays reflect on the sexually indulgent nature of Restoration court. My dissertation showed how the Restoration stage bought out the secrets of the royalty in front of the public. The dissertation highlighted the extent to which British playwrights used the supposed libertine nature of the Muslim court as an allegory for the sexual excess of the court in England.

Elkanah Settle's *The Empress of Morocco*, for example, depicts the conflicts at the Moroccan court that are fulded by the lustful Moroccan empress and her lover, Crimalhaz. This allegorical story served as a means through which the playwright could suggest a similar British environment in which libertinism and pursuit of sensual pleasures were the norm. Similarly, Settle's *Ibrahim the Illustrious Bassa*, following his *The Empress of Morocco*, serves as a coded representation of the increasing political influence through the sexual power of females around Charles II. In *Ibrahim*, the Ottoman Sultan's sexuality offers an opportunity to explore contemporary concerns about Charles II's court. Many Restoration playwrights, especially those with oppositional views, were annoyed by Charles II's free sexual life. What is special in plays like *Ibrahim* is the fact that its representations of Muslims served as a means to present public concerns and anxieties in regards to the King's sexual habits as well as the political influence of his numerous mistresses. It is unlikely that Settle's plays were representatives of England's views about Islam. Instead, the plays embody British anxieties and fears of the wild manners of the King and his court. Settle's views embodied the growing public conviction that the potential source of danger comes not from outsiders, but, rather, from those, particularly women, at the very center of power at court.

Aphra Behn's *Abdelazer, or the Moors Revenge* reflects the increasing complaints about the wild manners of the royal court of Charles II, too. What is different though is that Behn presented an attempt of a loyalist dramatist to find a way out of the charges made by opposition writers who exposed the rakish nature of the royal court. In her play, Behn seems to be on the defensive as she displays considerable loyalty to the king while trying to exclude his association with the libertine manners of the courtiers. Although Behn's tragedy warned of the destructive outcomes of the moral corruption and sexual excess in the political arena in England, it tended to direct her criticism at Charles's amoral courtiers who were led by their sensual desires and corrupt intentions. My discussion of the play showed how Behn maintained an image of Charles in which he was always immune to sexual charges.

In sum, the sexually indulgent image of the Moor/Turk was used by Settle and Behn to comment on the fermented sexual-political tensions during the Restoration period. The third chapter proposed that it is crucial to take into our consideration the fact that such plays reflected many contemporary issues in the political life in early modern England. Settle and Behn used Muslim characters and settings as allegories of relevant sexual-political issues in Charles II's court. The plays discussed in the chapter revealed the extensive use of allegorical characters on stage that are meant to convey certain political messages in regards to court libertinism.

The fourth chapter discussed the representations of Muslims in Restoration drama and the relationship with the fierce religious controversies in Restoration England. The discussion showed how the plays under consideration presented religious figures from Muslim countries in order to construct an allegorical discourse that comments on the internal religious faction in England. In fact, after few years of the restoration of Charles II, it became apparent to the majority of Anglicans in England that the nation was threatened by the increasing influence of Catholicism. As a result, the Cavalier Parliament strove to maintain the superiority of

Anglicanism over Catholic and other dissenting voices. While people in streets supported Parliament's cause, they reacted actively against Charles II's negligence in representing the majority of Protestant people. This extensive political and religious turmoil found its way to the Restoration dramatic production, as the study clarified. The fourth chapter discussed the way in which Restoration drama represented religious figures from different Muslim countries in order to serve as smokescreens to the domestic religious conflict in Restoration England

The first example the dissertation presented on the allegorical use of Muslim characters and settings as a means to comment on the religious quarrels of the Restoration period is Elkanah Settle's *Ibrahim the Illustrious Bassa.* Historically speaking, Settle wrote his play in a time marked by increasing anxiety about the influence of Catholicism on the King. People saw in the Catholics around the King a serious source of danger to Protestantism and the reformation of the English Church. In the course of attacking Catholic priests, Settle sheds light on the corrupt religious practices and hypocrisy at the Stuart court. In the play, the character of the Mufti, Sultan Solyman's religious advisor, reflects the contemporary concerns about Charles II's religious preferences. Many Whig propagandists, like Settle, expressed in their works their serious concerns about Charles II's toleration towards English Catholics. The play reflects the increasing fears of the danger of Catholicism and Protestant dissent churches in Restoration England. The Mufti in Settle's play, who is portrayed as hypocrite and corrupt clergyman, is more likely to represent Catholic priests in Restoration England. Settle blames religious figures, like the Mufti, for the chaos and miseries of the protagonist of his play.

In addition to Settle's works, the fourth chapter explored John Dryden whose poetry and plays were among the most influential literary texts in the Restoration period. In fact, the poetry and plays of Dryden contained numerous political and religious allegories. The

dramatically unstable political arena in Restoration England made Dryden pessimistic about the future of his country, leading him to express his political and religious views through his literary works. Dryden's *Don Sebastian, King of Portugal* demonstrates how he used drama to highlight the nation's religious instability and uncertainty. In the play, Dryden uses episodes of Islamic-European history to tackle the nature of the religious conflict within England. Dryden, as a Catholic convert, refers, in his play, to consequences of the Restoration anti-Catholic penal laws that affected the life of the Catholic population in England. The dissertation showed how *Don Sebastian* shed light on anti-Catholic policies that were adopted by the English Protestant majority in the aftermath of the Glorious Revolution. Many other parallels between the actions and characters of the play and the contemporary English political and religious life can be drawn. For example, Don Sebastian, is more likely to be a representation of the exiled James II. In addition, Dryden's praise of Catholic-coded Portuguese subjects who supported their king in the play can be read as a criticism of the unfaithful English subjects who betrayed James II and welcomed William III. In sum, *Don Sebastian* used Muslims characters and settings as allegories for the internal religious disputes in England. My study clarified that plays like *Ibrahim,* and *Don Sebastian* do not necessarily reflect the English perception of Islam and its culture, rather they reflect their writers' involvement in the internal religious quarrels of the late seventeenth-century England.

Future work will investigate the effects of Restoration drama's intense involvement in political and religious negotiations on the way in which Muslim characters and Islam were represented on the English stage. That is, throughout my study of Restoration dramas that represented Muslim characters, I felt that Restoration theatre produced new set of representations of Islam and its culture that is different from previous periods. While the literary productions of earlier periods had discussed a variety of cultural and religious aspects

of the Islamic world such as apostasy, and Christian captivity in Muslim lands, Restoration drama showed little interest in dramatizing such topics. As a result, Restoration drama expressed no great interest in highlighting the distinctions among the different Muslim peoples represented on stage – like Moors, Ottomans, and Persians. Interestingly enough, unlike Renaissance drama, many plays discussed in my dissertation do not show great interest in commenting on the traditional notion of the superiority of Christianity over Islam both spiritually and militarily. Muslim characters occupy natural or common roles that used to be occupied by Christian characters. Undoubtedly, the hostility against Islam is less obvious in these plays as the plots the playwrights created form a unique sense of assimilation of Islam to English audiences. Consequently, one of the direct outcomes of the tendency to assimilate Muslim figures was eliminating much of the cultural and historical specificity of Islamic civilization. In the plays under study, many Muslim protagonists act in a very similar manner to heroic Christian figures. In Restoration drama, perhaps for the first time in the history of English drama, Muslim characters were presented as capable of heroic deeds. Restoration playwrights preferred to free themselves of the cultural specificity of Islamic culture rather than be involved in the classic complicated dialogues with the "Other" which would drive them away from their political agendas they intended to express in the first place. Among the main concerns of the plays under consideration in my study are good political systems, honest monarchs, and a better practice of politics and religion. Restoration playwrights presented Muslim characters to provide a kind of gauge by which domestic controversy over the succession could be measured.

There are many cases in point on this change in the portrayal of Islam and Muslims. For instance, the use of political allegory and Islamic setting in *The Heir of Morocco* contributed to the way in which Muslim characters were represented on stage. Settle's heavy political allusions tend to erase the distinctive cultural aspects of the people who are

allegorized. The original customs, beliefs, and history of the Moors of Algiers disappear with only few exceptions. What Settle presents in his play is a society that can be swapped out with any European society. No great change would occur if we replace the Moorish characters with Italian or Spanish ones, for example. The cultural context in which Settle's characters operate is a plain and characterless one. In many ways, Settle's version of the Islamic world is fairly superficial in comparison with the works of earlier writers such as Renaissance playwrights. For example, Dekker's *Lust's Dominion* (1600), Danborne's *A Christian Turned Turk* (1612), and Massinger's *The Renegado* (1624) discuss more complex cultural aspects of the Islamic world such as religious conversion, Christian captivity in Islamic lands, raids on English vessels, the harem, circumcision and castration, and oriental sexuality. Notably, very few Restoration plays discuss similar issues.

In sum, my future study will trace the development of the representations of Muslims in English drama starting from the Renaissance into the Restoration period. In Renaissance plays such as Dekker's *Lust's Dominion* (1600), Shakespeare's *Othello* (1603), Danborne's *A Christian Turned Turk* (1612), and Massinger's *The Renegado* (1624), themes of race, lust, revenge and politics are tackled. The Elizabethan and Jacobean playwrights utilized typical western prejudices and stereotypes in their depiction of Muslim characters. The Moors and Turks in these plays were presented as cruel, tyrannical and lustful. However, Restoration drama presented a wider range of Muslim characters who were depicted as courageous, noble, and virtuous – in addition to the negative depictions inherited from their predecessors. This shift in the way in which English drama represented the Other/ Muslim deserves more in-depth exploration in order to understand the evolution of the depiction of the Muslim, as well as the reasons that might produce that remarkable change in dramatizing Muslims.

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