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English 563
Eighteenth-Century British Novel
Second Paper/Annotated Bibliography

Defoe's *Roxana*

Background

MLA International journal articles on *Roxana* were latent in the early 1900s, with an exception of a 1955 article, "The Matrimonial Theme of Defoe's *Roxana*," by Spiro Petersen, a scholar who made his name through his work concerning the novel and is credited with bringing it into the modern scholar's conscious. In the early 1970s, a smattering of journal articles on *Roxana* began to appear, covering innocuous topics such as 'theme', 'structure' and 'Georgian settings' in the book. In 1979, Terry J. Castle wrote an article, "'Amy, Who Knew My Disease': A Psychosexual Pattern in Defoe's *Roxana*" and since then, a broader range of racier analysis appeared on the scene. These covered topics such as conversion, family matters, sexuality, mental illness, deception and religion. With the peaked interest in gender studies coming to the literary scene in the 1990s, *Roxana* provided steady fodder for scholars as they examined gender roles in Defoe's novel. During the last decade, an approximate average of two journal articles per year appeared in the MLA International Bibliography concerning *Roxana*, with topics ranging from property rights, feminism and colonialism, to rhetoric and didacticism, as well as religious and historical interests.

Methodology

A search of the MLA International Biography archive from 1996- present on keywords "Defoe" and "Roxana" returned 26 articles, 10 of them from peer-reviewed sources. We chose to review these ten sources, with the exception of "The Rhetoric of Virtuous Reading in Defoe's *Roxana* and the 1765 Continuation" by M. Wade Mahon, which was not available at NC State or UNC libraries. A tenth article was selected from available readings, but is not peer-reviewed.

Results

Annotated Bibliography appears in the next section.

Conway, Alison. "Defoe's Protestant Whore." *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 35.2 (2002): 215-233. Alison Conway asserts that Roxana's emptiness, or vacuous identity, parallels that of Protestantism. The novel, in a sense, is an experiment searching for the foundations of individualism. In answer to the question "what are we [Protestants] for?" Defoe investigates the origins and parameters of self-identity in *Roxana*. Conway first discusses the significance of Roxana's term "Protestant Whore," an epithet derived from the actress-courtesan Nell Gwyn.¹ She explains that the term "Protestant" experienced constant re-definition and re-interpretation during the Exclusion Crisis. Conformists and Dissenters alike sought to define themselves in strategic defense against Catholic influences and, in consequence, used the term in varying ways and means to affect political turns (219). According to Conway, the word became a cipher, or vacuum, that could be filled and re-defined. "Protestant" was mutable (much like Roxana). Yet this linguistic freedom and flexibility was also dangerous, as Protestantism could be evacuated in its myriad of definitions. As Conway puts it, Defoe sought to "revitalize[e] the integrity of Protestant individualism" (223). Additionally, she defines Susan's role as vital in this process. The daughter is viewed as a "retelling of the heroine's story" and, in effect, underscores the longing for self-recognition and reconciliation (228). As Conway sees it, Susan brings home the point that "selfhood depends on desire" and is an "organizing principle" of identity (229).

¹In 1681, Nell Gwyn exclaimed: "Pray, good people, be civil; I am the Protestant Whore," before an Oxford mob that protested the Catholic Prince James as a successor to the throne (qtd, 215). Having insider's access to Charles II's court, Gwyn stood as a powerful icon to the masses as a representative of and safeguard for Protestantism. Essentially, she could fend off Catholic infiltration of the court.

Furbank, P.N. and W. R. Owens, "The 'Lost' Continuation of Defoe's *Roxana*."

Eighteenth-Century Fiction 1997 Apr; 9 (3): 299-308. This article was instrumental in clarifying the different editions of the book in circulation after Defoe's death, especially in light of William Hazlitt's commentary in one of the editions, which leads to confusion over existing texts. They recap the six different Eighteenth-Century continuations of the novel, but reveal an additional continuation published by J. Cooke in Paternoster Row, published in 1765, both as a single volume, and then again as a two-volume set, which is undated, which causes the confusion. Finally, they clarify other points about various endings to the many editions that caused confusion among many 18th century writers such as Charles Lamb and William Godwin.

Gabbard, D. Christopher. "The Dutch Wives' Good Husbandry: Defoe's *Roxana* and Financial Literacy." Eighteenth-Century Studies 37.2 (2004): 237-251.

This article questions Roxana's fiscal acumen and examines her dependence on others to manage her wealth. Gabbard suggests that the courtesan is financially illiterate and this deficiency explains, in part, her failed conversion. Gabbard places his argument within a historical framework. In the seventeenth and eighteenth-centuries, bookkeeping was closely allied to and symbolic of, moral rectitude. Quoting Mary Poovey, he indicates that "virtue was [literally] made visible" by accounting. An individual could take stock of (and reflect on) personal needs and desires as expenses were recorded in a ledger. According to Gabbard, although Roxana exhibits sharp political skill, she is ruined in the end due to her incompetence in bookkeeping. He explicates several key moments in the text that

render Roxana's financial knowledge doubtful. Her keen tallying of assets is, instead, considered as a screen that obscures her fiscal ineptitude. Citing *The Complete English Tradesman*, Gabbard highlights Defoe's support of female education in business and finance and reads *Roxana* as a prelude, of sorts, to *CET*. Lastly, Gabbard discusses the significance of Dutch mercantilism within the novel. Holland, known for its "Golden Age," represents an economy that smartly employs all its citizen-laborers, which include the trained Dutch businesswoman. Hence Defoe's novel, for Gabbard, critiques the boundaries that prevent English tradeswomen, wives, and daughters from obtaining better, fiscal knowledge.

Griffin, Robert J. "The Text in Motion: Eighteenth-Century Roxanas." *ELH* 2005 Summer; 72 (2): 387-406. Griffin calls into question current textual criticism and historical critics by noting, "The publication history of *Roxana* shifts our attention from thinking about closure in the narrative to thinking about closure in relation to the mode of existence of a text, which, I will argue, is constantly in motion," (390). He argues that the various endings written to *Roxana* reveal not only something about the various authors who wrote various new endings to Defoe's work, but about "how publishers perceived the desires of actual customers in the marketplace" (393). Griffin reviews the story and then summarizes three very different endings from three different editions, and notes that this, plus the lack of copyright for the book, results in an "unstable" text, which he argues should really be viewed as completely different texts, not just different editions.

Hinnant, Hakell. "Moll Flanders, Roxana, and First-Person Narratives: Models and

Prototypes." Eighteenth-Century Novel 2004; 4: 39 - 72. Hinnant proposes that *Roxana* is a part of a developing genre of fiction in Defoe's time which is at variance with Ian Watt's categorical constraints on the novel ("romance idealism", "naïve empiricism" and "extreme skepticism"). Hinnant calls for a more simplified view of Defoe's *Roxana*, stating, "a work may not simply derive from a particular genre but also interrogate, through its very specificity, the conventions of that genre" and argues that these books should be compared to other female first-person narratives of the time, concluding "namely that what a work of art or a text 'represents' is not always as important as what it 'transforms'" (42). Hinnant evaluates Defoe's female narratives with several popular "autobiographies" of the time, comparing the heroine's inner dialogues and actions in the tales. He concludes that Defoe's construction of these novels is not a haphazard accident, but a result of a thorough knowledge of popular readings in the Eighteenth Century.

Joseph, Betty. "Mutations of the Imperial Contract." Genders (24) (online download).

Rather than analyzing the text for literary explication, Joseph uses *Roxana* to make sense of a 1985 rape of 73 year-old destitute Muslim woman of India, addressing issues of individualism, religion, and property in an evolution of women's rights in her article in light of India's colonial history under British rule. This verbose, loosely-connected essay asks "what the relationship between imperialism and feminism is today"(7) and criticizes Nancy Armstrong's theories of domestic fiction (and the need to understand a deeper psychic layer in Defoe's characters) as being too complex, stating: "we do not always need the service of psychoanalytic frameworks to understand the relationship between the psychic, the sexual and the

politico-economic relations of production" (9). Joseph sees Defoe's *Roxana* as an attempt to keep women in line with domestic expectations, a movement of male domination, as well reflecting attitudes of colonialism. However, in relegating *Roxana* to this line of enquiry, Joseph herself reduces *Roxana* to a stereotype, an error that overlooks the complexity of the character and many passages of revolutionary discussion in Defoe's novel. Joseph seems to miss the fact that the one character in the novel most guilty of exploiting Roxana as an item of property is actually Roxana herself, a point which should be explored when discussing feminine issues.

Maurer, Shawn Lisa. "I wou'd be a *Man-Woman*': Roxana's Amazonian Threat to the Ideology of Marriage." Texas Studies in Literature and Language 46.3 (2004): 363-386. Shawn Maurer contends that *Roxana* "articulates and expunges" Defoe's own ambivalence on female independence (380). The only way for Defoe to depict an autonomous woman, according to Maurer, is to create an Amazonian figure. Defoe experiments with the idea of an independent woman yet, in later texts, returns to a model of "complementarity," where the husband acts as the provider and the wife as domestic manager (368). Maurer suggests that while Defoe acknowledges a flawed system in Roxana's first marriage, he hedges to provide a solution to the problem. Instead, Roxana is figured as an Amazonian character that, in the end, must be repressed since she threatens patriarchal stability. The courtesan's agency is disruptive solely because she acts outside social norms. According to Maurer, Roxana breaches the boundaries of "appropriate" female behavior and undercuts chastity and the marriage contract. Although Roxana's critique on marriage is

solidly based on experience, her authority is evaded so patriarchy can properly function. As Maurer puts it, Roxana's desire for economic and sexual freedom is her "greatest transgression" since it lies outside the realm of prescribed femininity (380).

McInelly, Brett C. and David Paxman. "Dating the Devil: Daniel Defoe's *Roxana* and *The Political History of the Devil*." Christianity and Literature 53.4 (2004): 435-453. Brett McInelly considers *Roxana* a precursor to Defoe's *The Political History of the Devil* (1726), and terms the novel "a case study in modern devilry" (439). His article compares the two works and pinpoints their rhetorical, formal, and thematic similarities. By explicating various passages in *Roxana*, McInelly identifies four points Defoe later articulates in *TPHD* regarding the Devil's influence on individuals. McInelly first highlights Defoe's belief that the Devil infiltrates subjects by subtle means. Physical and psychological circumstances, such as Roxana's initial plight, negatively affect moral decisions. A second tenet McInelly finds in *Roxana* is Defoe's belief that social means and constructs are saturated in sin. Since Roxana is born into a fallen world, she must be cautious or else she too will follow corrupt designs. A third element that McInelly identifies is the notion that moral compromise leads to further depravity and entrapment. Hence, Roxana progressively degenerates after her first "sin," and is eventually constrained by her licentious history. This trajectory leads to the final component of demonic machination which is the "hell within." McInelly contends that Roxana lacks "hope," "redemption," or "recovery" because diabolic persuasion has fully infiltrated her mind (*Roxana*, 441).

New, Peter. "Why Roxana Can Never Find Herself." The Modern Language Review 91.2 (1996): 317-29. Peter New investigates the conflicted identity of Roxana and her seemingly, incongruous ways. According to New, the courtesan is always "oscillating between contradictory attitudes" that both "own" and "disown" parts of her self (318). Her history, her wealth, and her name are never be fully revealed to any one individual, aside from Amy. Moments of pride (i.e. the Turkish dance scene) are simultaneously linked to expressions of shame and secrecy. In addition, New explores the role of Roxana's doubles. Amy and the Quaker are viewed as *alter egos* who take action (both good and bad) that Roxana hesitates to perform. It is said that Amy embodies Roxana's "unspeakable desires," whereas the Quaker resembles a character the courtesan longs to possess. Both provide the reader a fuller picture of Roxana and her many sides. What *Roxana* best demonstrates, in New's opinion, is the difficulty of maintaining identity while owning up to a regrettable past. Defoe delivers, for New, a "fractured discourse" that vacillates in futile attempts to define the self (318).

Westfall, Marilyn. "A Sermon by the 'Queen of Whores'". Studies in English Literature, 1500 - 1900 2001 Summer; 41 (3): 483 - 497. Marilyn Westfall sees *Roxana* as a story whose structure is based on the Puritan jeremiad sermon, a sermon which "censures and condemns acts against the conscience," (485) and "extend the hope of salvation by prescribing specific reforms" (486). In addition, she feels Roxana's decline is Defoe's allegory of England's national status, where hedonistic lifestyles are quenching human compassion. Finally, she argues that the book is not a break from Defoe's moralistic writings, but a continuation of his

Puritan ethics, because it promotes charity and disparages extravagance.