

WEEK 5

AS WE ENTER WEEK 5, do a quick check-up with your independent Gulliver's Travels literature project: Are you on track to finish the book, your discussion questions, and your final essay next month? Managing a parallel project like this requires a whole different set of organization skills, and if you've been giving Gulliver short shrift the last few weeks, you will need to bump up your efforts over the next couple of weeks. (The audiobook version narrated by David Hyde Pierce is lots of fun.)

We are also moving into the middle of this semester, which means midterms are coming up. You can give these exams as much significance as you want—treat them as casual check-ins or use them as an important indicator of your progress—so be thinking about how you'd like to handle them. I encourage you to take at least one as a proper exam, giving yourself a time limit and testing your recall by not using notes or books, because it's good practice—and a good way to see how your study skills are working for you. Definitely don't wrap your academic self-worth up in them—they're just tests—but do give them a real effort.

- ☐ Read "The Loveliest Bones" introduction (p. 75-79) and Ch. 5 "Java Man" (p.80-99) in *Remarkable Creatures*.
- ☐ Answer the following questions in your biology notebook.
 - Describe the physical features of *Pithecanthropus erectus* (p. 91) and how explain how Dubois came to his conclusions.
 - Why do you think there was such "refusal" to consider human evolution by so many naturalists of that time period? These very same naturalists were willing to consider other, sometimes very surprising new ideas about other living organisms. Be detailed in your response.
 - What influence did Thomas Huxley have on Eugene Dubois?
 - Why did Dubois choose to search in the Dutch East Indies and not in Africa for the missing link?
 - What evidence did Dubois offer that the skull cap and femur were from the same individual?
 - What evidence did Dubois assemble to support his claim that Pithecanthropus was an intermediate between apes and modern humans?
 - What is the significance of cranial volume to the identification of hominid fossils? How is this measured? What other anatomical features are diagnostic of hominid versus transitional versus ape fossils?

VOLTAIRE'S ACERBIC WIT did not always win him friends. That proved to be a lucky thing for political philosophy, since when the French exiled him in 1726, Voltaire had a chance to experience English politics and English ideas about religion and individual rights. Inspired, Voltaire began to investigate politics across the known world, considering how government evolved in different countries.

The king of France may not have loved Voltaire, but other rulers were interested in Voltaire's idea. The king of Prussia Frederick the II was so inspired by Voltaire's political philosophy that he decided to use Voltaire's ideals as the model for Prussia's government. Flattered, Voltaire dubbed his patron "Frederick the Great" and accepted his offer to live and work in Prussia in 1749. Even though their relationship was short-lived—Voltaire chaffed at what he called Frederick's "intellectual tyranny"—Voltaire's influence was not. Frederick II attempted to take Voltaire's rational Enlightenment ideals and apply them to the practical task of governing Prussia.

This week, we're going to be exploring the challenges of applying philosophy to real-life politics through Frederick the Great's *Forms of Government*, a tome in which Frederick broke down, class by class, how Voltaire's socio-political ideas could apply to the people in his country. These passages tell us a lot about what Voltaire believed about politics as well as about what life was like for different kinds of people in Enlightenment Prussia.

As you read, think about what changes Voltaire's ideas will mean for each group of people, starting with the king himself. For each group, what things change? What stays the same? Who sees the most benefits? The fewest benefits? What are the challenges of applying the ideals of reason to a real-life country? What compromises must be made?

After you've worked through this lesson, you'll tackle your second essay. This time, you'll be comparing the ideas of two philosophers, considering their view of human nature, belief in natural rights, view on government, contribution to government, and other ideas. The purpose of your paper is comparison only, so you don't have to argue that one philosopher is more correct than the other—you're just looking at what they have in common and where they differ.

☐ **Listen to Lecture: Philosophical Ideals Meet Political Realities.** Jot down notes to remind yourself of important points

☐ **Study the image on the following page.**

Voltaire is sitting and talking to Frederick II, the king of Prussia, who was a devotee of Voltaire's work. Consider the differences between the two men: Voltaire in his casual clothes, sitting at his desk, in the middle of writing, and Frederick in his fancy uniform. (That's his horse rearing dramatically in the background.) What kind of men does this engraving suggest Voltaire and Frederick are? What kind of relationship do they have with each other?

This engraving by Pierre-Louis Baquoy is based on a drawing done by Nicolas Monsi-aux around 1795. It's on display at the Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris.

Credit: Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris



❑ Read and annotate the following primary sources.

DOCUMENT 5-A

Frederick II of Prussia

***From* Essay on Forms of Government and the Duties of Sovereigns**

THE ROYAL FAMILY

(1) With respect to the true monarchical government, it is the best or the worst of all other, accordingly as it is administered.

(2) We have remarked that men granted preeminence to one of their equals, [expecting] that he should do them certain services... the maintenance of the laws; a strict execution of justice...

(3) [The King should undertake]... a profound study of the local situation of the country, which it is the [King's] duty to govern, and a perfect knowledge of the [spirit] of the nation...

(4) Princes and monarchs, therefore, are not invested with supreme authority that they may, with impunity, riot in debauchery and voluptuousness. They are not raised by their fellow citizens in order that their pride may pompously display itself, and contemptuously insult simplicity of manners, poverty and wretchedness. Government is not intrusted to them so that they may

be surrounded by a crowd of useless people, whose idleness engenders every vice...

(5) The ill administration of monarchical government originates in various causes, the source of which is the character of the sovereign...

ARMY OFFICERS

(1) ...It is necessary to have among our neighbors, especially among our enemies, eyes and ears which shall be open to receive, and report with fidelity what they have seen and heard. Men are wicked...

(2) The military system ought... to rest on good principles, which from experience are known to be certain. The genius of the nation ought to be understood; of what it is capable, and how far its safety may be risked by leading it against the enemy... The discovery of gunpowder has entirely changed the mode of making war. A superiority of fire at present decides the day. Discipline, rules and tactics have all been changed, in order that they may conform to the new custom... So many new refinements have, therefore so much changed the art of war that it would... [be unpardonable for a general today to] risk a battle according to the plans made by [great commanders from the past]. Victory then was carried by valor and strength: it is at present decided by artillery...

SERFS

(1) ...The sovereign ought frequently to remember the condition of the poor, to imagine himself in the place of the peasant or the manufacturer, and then to say, "Were I born one among the class of citizens whose labors constitute the wealth of the state, what should I require from the king?" The answer which, on such a supposition, good sense would suggest it is his duty to put in practice.

(2) In most of the kingdoms of Europe there are provinces in which the peasants are... serfs to their lords. This, of all conditions, is the most unhappy, and that at which humanity most revolts. No man certainly was born to be the slave of his equal. We reasonably detest such an abuse; and it is supposed that nothing more than will is [needed] to abolish so barbarous a custom. But this is not true: it is held on ancient tenures, and contracts made between the landholders and colonists... whoever should suddenly desire to abolish this abominable administration would entirely overthrow the [present way] of managing estates, and must be obliged, in part, to [compensate] the nobility for the losses which their rents must suffer.

LANDOWNERS

(1) ...[W]hat are the most proper means invariably to maintain those provinces in abundance ... that [they] may continue flourishing? The first is to be careful that the lands are well cultivated; to clear such grounds as are capable of tillage; to increase the breed of sheep and cattle, so that the more may be gained by milk, butter, cheese, and manure; afterward to obtain an exact statement of [how much grain is] grown in good, indifferent, and bad seasons, and to subtract the quantity consumed, [so that the surplus can be calculated, in order to determine] the point at which exportation ought to stop...

(2) Every sovereign actuated by the public good is obliged to keep storehouses abundantly furnished, that supplies may be ready, when the harvest is bad, and famine prevented [as is the practice in Prussia]. During the scarcity of the years 1771 and 1772, [Prussia, his kingdom] beheld the miseries with which [its neighbor Saxony] and the provinces of [Germany] were afflicted, because this very useful precaution had not been taken. The people pounded oak bark, on which they fed, and this wretched food did but accelerate death...

CHURCHMEN

(1) ...There are few countries in which the people are all of one religious opinion; they often totally differ... The question then is...—Is it requisite that the people should all think alike, or may each one be allowed to think as he pleases? Gloomy politicians will tell us everybody ought to be of the same opinion, [so] that there may be no division among the citizens...

(2) To this is answered that all the members of one society never thought alike... each man believes that which appears to him to be the truth. A poor wretch may be [forced] to pronounce a certain form of prayer, although he inwardly refuses his consent. His persecutor consequently has gained nothing. But, if we revert to the origin of all society, it will be found evident that the [ruler] has no right to interfere in the belief of the subject... Nay, tolerance is itself so advantageous, to the people among whom it is established, that it constitutes the hap-

piest of states. As soon as there is that perfect freedom of opinion, the people are all at peace; whereas persecution has given birth to the most bloody civil wars...

TRADESMEN

(1) ...For the country to be preserved in prosperity, it is indubitably necessary that the balance of trade should be in its favor. If it pays more for importation than it gains by exportation, the result will be that it will be annually impoverished... The means to avoid incurring any such loss are to work up all the raw materials of which the country is in possession, and to [process raw materials from abroad, so] that the price of labor may be gained, in order to [sell the country's products in] a foreign market.

(2) Three things are to be considered in respect to commerce: first the surplus of native products which are exported; next the products of foreign states, which enrich those [who trade in them]; and thirdly foreign merchandize, [imported for home consumption]. The trade of any kingdom must be regulated according to these three articles, for of these only is it susceptible, according to the nature of things... To profit by such advantages as we are in possession of, and to undertake nothing beyond our strength, is the advice of wisdom.

TAX COLLECTORS

(1) No government can exist without [taxation], which is equally necessary to the republic and to the monarchy. The sovereign who labors in the public cause must be paid by the public; the judge the same, that he may have no need to [twist the law]. The soldier must be supported so that he may commit no [robbery or violence for lack of food]. In like manner, it is necessary that those persons who are employed in collecting the [taxes] should receive such salaries as may [relieve] them of any temptation to rob the public... This money must all be necessarily [taken from] the people; and the grand art consists in [taking] without overburdening the people. [So] that taxes may be equally and not arbitrarily [imposed], surveys and registers should be made by which, if the people are properly [classed], the [money paid] will be proportionate to the income of the persons paying..

(2) Excise [sales tax] is another [kind of tax], levied on cities, and this must be managed by able persons; otherwise, those provisions which are most necessary to life, such as bread... beer, meat, etc., will be [overtaxed] and the weight will fall on the soldier, the laborer, and the artisan...

- ☐ Consider the following questions. You don't need to write out answers, but you may find it helpful to jot down some of your ideas. Remember: You want to make sure you have evidence from what you read to support your responses. The more evidence you can find to support your position, the stronger it is. If you can't find a lot of evidence, consider taking a different perspective.
 - What can we understand about the interaction between the world of ideals and reality by observing the relationship between Voltaire and Frederick the Great?
 - What is an "enlightened monarch?" What influence could he have on his subjects' everyday lives through the application of rational thought?
- ☐ Use the Toolkit to write at least three thoughtful discussion questions about this week's readings.
- ☐ Listen to Lecture: Comparing and Contrasting.
- ☐ Use the directions below to write your history essay.

Choose two of the philosophers we've studied so far this term, and write an essay comparing and contrasting their historical influence. For this essay, we'll be adding an extra item to the history essay checklist: Answering the question. Before you even start thinking about what to write, take the time to read through the instructions below and make a list of the specific points you are being asked to address and the specific information you are asked to include. Typically, a history essay asks you to show what you know (facts, dates, names, information)

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COMPOSITION: Comparing and Contrasting Texts

and what you think (connections, implications, cause-and effect). You must understand the specific questions you are answering to write a successful essay, and it's worth spending the first 10 minutes of your organization and planning time breaking down the question into its component parts.

This is a history essay, not a philosophy essay, so while it's important that you understand and explain their major ideas in your essay, your focus should be not on their philosophies but on how their philosophies affected politics, government, and society. You can choose any two philosophers you like, though be aware that if you return to comparing Locke and Hobbes, I will expect you to produce a substantially different essay from the one you wrote earlier this term.

You may write this as a traditional compare and contrast essay (see your composition work for this week) or as a salon style dialogue between your two philosophers. (If you choose to write a dialogue, you will still need some kind of introduction and conclusion to complete this project—perhaps spoken by an interested third party to the conversation?)

In order to write a successful essay, you must

- explain both philosophies,
- support your assertions with specific evidence from the text and your own ideas,
- and clearly explain the historical significance of each philosopher's ideas.

Questions that you may find helpful as you are developing and supporting your position:

- What were the major ideas of the Enlightenment and how did they shape political ideas and reality?
 - **Nature of Human Beings:** Are we naturally good or naturally evil? If we are naturally good, does society corrupt us? If we are not naturally evil, are we at least selfish?
 - **Belief in Natural Rights:** Do all human beings have natural rights or should these be given up for the greater good? If we have these, how can they be best protected? If we do not have these, why should they be sacrificed?
 - **View on Government:** Why do governments exist? Should governments ever be overthrown? If so, for what reasons? If not, explain why governments should be absolute.
 - **Contribution to Government:** What has been the greatest contribution to modern government of these philosophers and why is it their greatest contribution?
 - **Works:** Which work do you think has had the greatest impact on the United States' system of government as it is today?

Essay Specifications

- This essay is worth 100 points.
- Your essay should be 1-2 typed, double-spaced pages.
- It should be well-edited with few spelling or grammatical errors.
- Your essay should make specific reference to the primary source documents. You may do outside reading for this essay, but I encourage you to focus mainly on the readings we have done together in class for your arguments.
- Your essay should include historical context, including dates. You should make at least one connection to a historical document we have considered in our readings for this class.

BEING ABLE TO COMPARE AND contrast different ideas—whether they are different texts, different thinkers, different time periods, or any other two things—is an essential part of academic writing. You did a bit of this in your first history essay, and you'll be doing even more in your history essay for this week.

1. A good compare/contrast essay starts with—surprise!—a good understanding of similarities and differences between your two ideas. You've really got to understand both parts—in this case, both philosophers—to write an essay like this well.

2. Figure out what your point is. A good essay shouldn't have a surprise ending—you should know going into it what your thesis is. Don't just start writing and hope you'll be able to come to some conclusion; go in knowing what conclusion you are working toward.

Your thesis needs to be arguable, which means it needs to be an opinion:

- *Mary Wollstonecraft and Jean-Jacques Rousseau had many philosophical differences*

This is a not-great thesis because it's hard to argue with, it's general rather than specific, and it doesn't really make me want to keep reading

- *Mary Wollstonecraft and Jean-Jacques Rousseau are both interested in individual rights, but Wollstonecraft's emphasis on rights for more people makes her a better Enlightenment philosopher.*

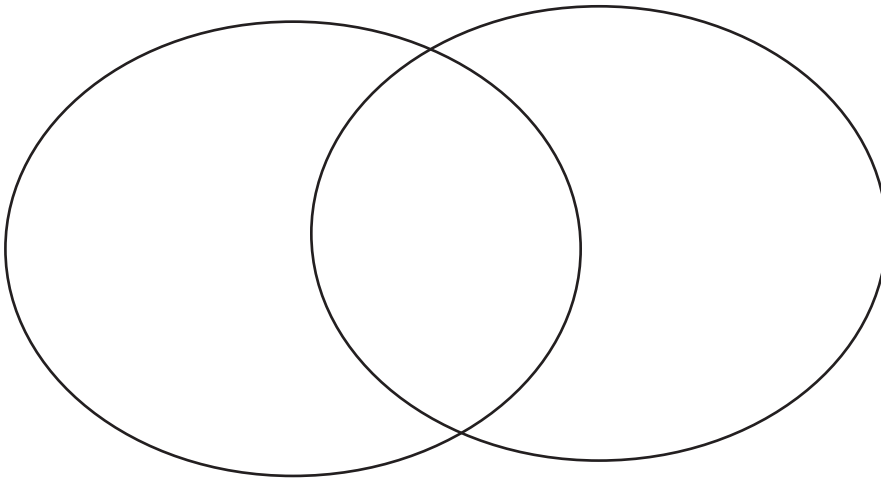
This is a much better thesis because it presents a strong idea that someone could disagree with and lets me know what to look for as the compare/contrast essay continues

To figure out your thesis, work through these steps:

What two philosophers are you going to compare/contrast?

What is your opinion about these two philosophers?

Draw a Venn diagram of their important ideas:



What three differences from your Venn diagram best support your opinion?

[1]

[2]

[3]

What two similarities from your list best support your opinion?

[1] _____

[2] _____

What is your working thesis? _____

3. Decide how to best organize your essay.

There are a few different set-ups that tend to work well for compare/contrast essays.

Block Organization

- **What it is:** Focusing on each item in a separate section and keeping the bulk of your compare/contrast analysis in the introduction and conclusion
- **Works best for:** Writing about two very different things or two very similar things, where it's easier or clearer to examine your two subjects one at a time
- **Your essay will look kind of like this:**

Thesis

Philosopher 1

- Big Idea A (this will be the same idea for both philosophers)
- Big Idea B (this will be the same idea for both philosophers)
- Big Idea C (this will be the same idea for both philosophers)

Philosopher 2

- Big Idea A (this will be the same idea for both philosophers)
- Big Idea B (this will be the same idea for both philosophers)
- Big Idea C (this will be the same idea for both philosophers)

Conclusion

Point-By-Point Organization

- **What it is:** Just what you'd guess from the name—in this set-up, you focus on one idea at a time, considering the two philosopher's ideas about each idea in the same section
- **Works best for:** Illuminating subtle or nuanced differences
- **Your essay will look kind of like this:**

Thesis

Big Idea A

- Philosopher 1's take
- Philosopher 2's take

Big Idea B

- Philosopher 1's take
- Philosopher 2's take

Big Idea C

- Philosopher 1's take
- Philosopher 2's take

Conclusion

□ Grade your “Mac Flecknoe” assignment using the guide below.

Your “Mac Flecknoe” paper is really about how well you understand Dryden’s use of satire, so start by asking yourself how well you’ve understood, used, and explained satire in whichever option you’ve chosen. If you’re paraphrasing the poem (Option 1), you should be able to clearly explain why your modern-day mockeries match up to Dryden’s 18th century ones. If you’ve chosen Option 2, you should be able to point to specific places in your original satire where you’ve used a Dryden-esque technique. And, of course, if you’ve opted for a traditional essay (Option 3), your explanation of 18th century satire should be clear and compelling, with lots of specific Mac Flecknoe examples to back up your argument.

This is an assignment where it’s smart to start your editing by thinking about the point of the assignment is—not just its specifications but the reason someone would ask you to do this specific project for this specific subject. In the case of Mac Flecknoe, the point is clearly to think about how satire gets deployed in literary works. In order to do that well, you have to be able to answer a few questions, whether the answers end up literally in your paper or not.

1. What is satire?

- +10 points if you can answer this question thoroughly and well without having to refer to anything but your essay

_____ /10 points

2. What makes “Mac Flecknoe” an example of satire?

- +10 points if you can answer this question thoroughly and well without having to refer to anything but your essay

_____ /10 points

- +5 points (up to 20 points total) if you can point to specific examples in your essay where you have explained satire in “Mac Flecknoe”
 - in your paraphrase or modern satire, these might be examples that you can compare to Dryden’s examples
 - in your essay, these should be specific quotes or references to Mac Flecknoe

_____ /20 points

3. Does your essay have a beginning?

- +10 if it does
 - in a paraphrase or modern satire, this is the part that sets up the rest of the poem—it sets the scene for what will happen next
 - in your essay, this is the introduction, in which you explain the point of your essay and lay out your thesis

_____ /10 points

4. Does your essay have an ending?

- +10 if it does
 - in a paraphrase or modern satire, this is the part where everything is resolved—you’re not finishing on a cliffhanger but with resolution, and it’s clear that the story you are telling has ended
 - in an essay, this is your conclusion, which should restate your thesis and explain how your essay has supported it; ideally, your conclusion also connects your thesis to some bigger idea about the individual, the community, or the human experience

_____ /10 points

5. How are your spelling and grammar?

Enlist someone to help you, and log all the examples of the three errors you’ve chosen to focus on in your essay. (You may have a lot to log—that’s totally normal. In fact, if you don’t find any examples, you may want to choose a different error to work on.)

-3 points for each error that occurs more than three times (for a maximum of -9 points)

_____ points deducted

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COMPOSITION: Evaluating Your Own Writing

6. Read through your essay slowly and carefully.

What is your overall impression? This isn't a question about how you succeeded but how pleased you are with the overall level of effort you put into this essay. If you did your best work, even if the essay didn't turn out exactly as you hoped, you should give yourself a high rating. If you didn't put in your best effort, you should give yourself a low rating even if your essay turned out well.

- +5 if you are overall pleased with your effort—you hit most of the specifications and think this essay is representative of the best you could do with this particularly assignment
- +3 if you are mostly pleased with your effort but definitely see a few places where you could make significant improvements
- +1 if you know you didn't do your best work

_____ /5 points

- +up to 5 point bonus for exceptional creativity, originality, or excellence in writing (Give yourself these points if you went above and beyond or if your work is significantly better than you expected it to be—and since this is one of your first essays, if you put in a genuine effort, give yourself at least 1 point here.)

_____ /5 points

7. Self-Evaluation

- +10 for answering this question with specific examples:
 - What are you proud of in this essay?

_____ /10 points

- +10 for answering this question with specific examples:
 - What would you like to improve about this essay?

_____ /10 points

- Rate your work on a scale from 10 to 1: How well did you succeed in accomplishing the requirements of this paper? Give yourself between 10 and 1 points for this—the higher your points, the better your opinion of your work. Remember: Be kind. Try to rate your work as you would rate someone else's.
- +up to 10 points

_____ /10 points

TOTAL POINTS

_____ /100 points

WELL FIRST OFF, look, it's a woman—Behn was actually one of the first women in recorded history to earn her living as a writer, even though many people today haven't heard of her.

The Enlightenment is actually full of women writing, but a lot of women's writing from this time has been lost or forgotten, which is a shame. We know very little about Behn's life, but the glimpses we have are fascinating: Maybe she was a spy for Charles II? She refused to write a congratulatory poem for William and Mary, which would have been a pretty bold move at the time? Records of her life are contradictory or missing—and there's some evidence that Behn herself tried to obscure her early history—so we'll probably never know the true biography of Behn: The feminist writer Germaine Greer has called her “a palimpsest,” a manuscript page scrubbed clean to be rewritten.

So we've got a woman, but we've also got a person actually talking about the problem of slavery, which was still in its early days. *Oroonoko* is an early attempt at an abolitionist novel. (Whether you think it ultimately succeeds as an abolitionist novel is worth considering.) We're reading the beginning, which is an interesting mash-up of the traditional Oriental romance (set in Africa), Greek and Roman epics (with Oroonoko as the hero), and realistic fiction.

❑ Listen to Lecture: *Oroonoko*. Jot down notes to remind yourself of important points.

❑ Read and annotate the selections from *Oroonoko*. Keep these questions in mind as you read:

- What's actually happening in this text? Try to summarize the story in a couple of succinct sentences.
- What are we to make of the narrator's repeated likening of the natives to Adam and Eve prior to their fall—what does this imply about the effects, or at least the potential effects, of “civilization”?
- How does Imoinda's role in relation to Oroonoko compare to the narrator's role?
- What is the author's view of slavery in general? What is her view of Oroonoko's slavery in particular?
- What is the author's view of Africans and African civilization?
- Is this an abolitionist novel?
- Who is the narrator? What is the effect of the narrative voice?

Aphra Behn

From *Oroonoko: or, the Royal Slave*

(1) I do not pretend, in giving you the history of this Royal Slave, to entertain my reader with adventures of a feigned hero, whose life and fortunes fancy may manage at the poet's pleasure; nor in relating the truth, design to adorn it with any accidents but such as arrived in earnest to him: and it shall come simply into the world, recommended by its own proper merits and natural intrigues; there being enough of reality to support it, and to render it diverting, without the addition of invention.

(2) **I was myself an eye-witness**¹ to a great part of what you will find here set down; and what I could not be witness of, I received from the mouth of the chief actor in this history, the hero himself, who gave us the whole transactions of his youth: and though I shall omit, for brevity's sake, a thousand little accidents of his life, which, however pleasant to us, where history was scarce and adventures very rare, yet might prove tedious and heavy to my reader, in a world where he finds diversions for every minute, new and strange. But we who were perfectly charmed with the character of this great man were curious to gather every circumstance of his life.

(3) The scene of the last part of his adventures lies in **a colony in America, called Surinam, in the West Indies**.²

(4) But before I give you the story of this gallant slave, 'tis fit I tell you the manner of bringing them to these new colonies; those they make use of there not being natives of the place:

for those we live with in perfect amity, without daring to command 'em; but, on the contrary, caress 'em with all the brotherly and friendly affection in the world; trading with them for their fish, venison, buffalo's skins, and little rarities; as marmosets, a sort of monkey, as big as a rat or weasel, but of marvelous and delicate shape, having face and hands like a human creature; and **cousheries**³, a little beast in the form and fashion of a lion, as big as a kitten, but so exactly made in all parts like that noble beast that it is in miniature. Then for little paraketoos, great parrots, mackaws, and a thousand other birds and beasts of wonderful and surprising forms, shapes, and colors. For skins of prodigious snakes, of which there are some threescore yards in length; as is the skin of one that may be seen at **his Majesty's Antiquary's**⁴; where are also **some rare flies**⁵, of amazing forms and colors, presented to 'em by myself; some as big as my fist, some less; and all of various excellencies, such as art cannot imitate. Then we trade for feathers, which they order into all shapes, make themselves little short habits of 'em and glorious wreaths for their heads, necks, arms, and legs, whose tinctures are unconceivable. I had a set of these presented to me, and I gave 'em to the King's Theater, and it was the dress of the **Indian Queen**⁶, infinitely admired by persons of quality; and was unimitable. Besides these, a thousand little knacks and rarities in nature; and some of art, as their baskets, weapons, aprons, etc. We dealt with 'em with beads of all colors, knives, axes, pins, and needles; which they used only as tools to drill holes with in their ears, noses, and lips, where they hang a great many little things; as long beads, bits of tin, brass or silver beat thin, and any shining trinket. The beads they weave into aprons about a quarter of **an ell long**⁷, and of the same breadth; working them very prettily in flowers of several colors; which apron they wear just before 'em, as Adam and Eve did the fig-leaves; the men wearing a long stripe of linen, which they deal with us for. They thread these beads also on long cotton threads, and make girdles to tie their aprons to, which come twenty times, or more, about the waist, and then cross, like a shoulder-belt, both ways, and round their necks, arms, and legs. This adornment, with their long black hair, and the face painted in little specks or flowers here and there, makes 'em a wonderful figure to behold.

(5) Some of the beauties, which indeed are finely shaped, as almost all are, and who have pretty features, are charming and novel; for they have all that is called beauty, except the color, which is a reddish yellow; or after a new oiling, which they often use to themselves, they are of the color of a new brick, but smooth, soft, and sleek. They are extreme modest and bashful, very shy, and nice of being touched. And though they are all thus naked, if one lives forever among 'em there is not to be seen an undecent action, or glance: and being continually used to see one another so unadorned, so like our first parents before the Fall, it seems as if they had no wishes, there being nothing to heighten curiosity; but all you can see, you see at once, and every moment see; and where there is no novelty, there can be no curiosity. Not but I have seen a handsome young Indian dying for love of a very beautiful young Indian maid; but all his courtship was to fold his arms, pursue her with his eyes, and sighs were all his language: while she, as if no such lover were present, or rather as if she desired none such, carefully guarded her eyes from beholding him; and never approached him but she looked down with all the blushing modesty I have seen in the most severe and cautious of our world.

(6) And these people represented to mean absolute idea of the first state of innocence, before man knew how to sin. And 'tis most evident and plain that simple Nature is the most harmless, inoffensive, and virtuous mistress. 'Tis she alone, if she were permitted, that better instructs the world than all the inventions of man. Religion would here but destroy that tranquillity they possess by ignorance; and laws would but teach 'em to know offense, of which now they have no notion.⁸ They once made mourning and fasting for the death of the English Governor, who had given his hand to come on such a day to 'em, and neither came nor sent; believing, when a man's word was past, nothing but death could or should prevent his keeping it: and when they saw he was not dead, they asked him what name they had for a man who promised a thing he did not do. The Governor told them, such a man was a liar, which was a word of infamy to a gentleman. Then one of 'em replied, "Governor, you are a liar, and guilty of that infamy." They have a native justice, which knows no fraud; and they understand no vice, or cunning, but when they are taught by the white men. They have plurality of wives; which, when they grow old, serve those that succeed 'em, who are young, but with a servitude easy and respected; and unless they take slaves in war, they have no other attendants.

(7) Those on that continent where I was had no king; but the oldest war-captain was obeyed with great resignation. A war-captain is a man who has led them on to battle with conduct and success; of whom I shall have occasion to speak more hereafter, and of some other of their customs and manners, as they fall in my way.

(8) With these people, as I said, we live in perfect tranquillity and good understanding, as it behooves us to do; they knowing all the places where to seek the best food of the country, and the means of getting it; and for very small and unvaluable trifles, supply us with that 'tis impossible for us to get: for they do not only in the woods, and over the savannahs, in hunting, supply the parts of hounds, by swiftly scouring through those almost impassable places, and by the mere activity of their feet run down the nimblest deer and other eatable beasts; but in the water, one would think they were gods of the rivers, or fellow-citizens of the deep; so rare an art they have in swimming, diving, and almost living in water; by which they command the less swift inhabitants of the floods. And then for shooting, what they cannot take, or reach with their hands, they do with arrows; and have so admirable an aim that they will split almost an hair, and at any distance that an arrow can reach: they will shoot down oranges and other fruit, and only touch the stalk with the dart's point, that they may not hurt the fruit. So that they being on all occasions very useful to us, we find it absolutely necessary to caress 'em as friends, and not to treat 'em as slaves, nor dare we do other, their numbers so far surpassing ours in that continent.

(9) Those then whom we make use of to work in our plantations of sugar are negroes, black slaves altogether, who are transported thither in this manner. Those who want slaves make a bargain with a master or a captain of a ship, and contract to pay him so much apiece, a matter of twenty pound a head, for as many as he agrees for, and to pay for 'em when they shall be delivered on such a plantation: so that when there arrives a ship laden with slaves, they who have so contracted go aboard, and receive their number by lot; and perhaps in one lot that may be for ten, there may happen to be three or four men, the rest women and children. Or be there more or less of either sex, you are obliged to be contented with your lot.

(10) **Coramantien**⁹, a country of blacks so called, was one of those places in which they found the most advantageous trading for these slaves, and thither most of our great traders in that merchandise traffic; for that nation is very warlike and brave: and having a continual campaign, being always in hostility with one neighboring prince or other; they had the fortune to take a great many captives: for all they took in battle were sold as slaves; at least those common men who could not ransom themselves. Of these slaves so taken, the general only has all the profit; and of these generals our captains and masters of ships buy all their freights.

(11) The King of Coramantien was himself a man of an hundred and odd years old, and had no son, though he had many beautiful black wives: for most certainly there are beauties that can charm of that color. In his younger years he had had many gallant men to his sons, thirteen of whom died in battle, conquering when they fell; and he had only left him for his successor one grandchild, son to one of these dead victors, who, as soon as he could bear a bow in his hand, and a quiver at his back, was sent into the field to be trained up by one of the oldest generals to war; where, from his natural inclination to arms, and the occasions given him, with the good conduct of the old general, he became, at the age of seventeen, one of the most expert captains and bravest soldiers that ever saw the field of Mars: so that he was adored as the wonder of all that world, and the darling of the soldiers. Besides, he was adorned with a native beauty, so transcending all those of his gloomy race that he struck an awe and reverence even into those that knew not his quality; as he did into me, who beheld him with surprise and wonder, when afterwards he arrived in our world.

(12) He had scarce arrived at his seventeenth year, when, fighting by his side, the general was killed with an arrow in his eye, which the Prince Oroonoko (for so was this gallant **Moor**¹⁰ called) very narrowly avoided; nor had he, if the general who saw the arrow shot, and perceiving it aimed at the prince, had not bowed his head between, on purpose to receive it in his own body, rather than it should touch that of the prince, and so saved him.

(13) 'Twas then, afflicted as Oroonoko was, that he was proclaimed general in the old man's place: and then it was, at the finishing of that war, which had continued for two years, that the prince came to court, where he had hardly been a month together, from the time of his fifth year to that of seventeen; and 'twas amazing to imagine where it was he learned so much humanity: or, to give his accomplishments a juster name, where 'twas he got that real greatness of soul, those refined notions of true honor, that absolute generosity, and that softness that was capable of the highest passions of love and gallantry, whose objects were almost continually fighting men, or those mangled or dead, who heard no sounds but those of war and groans. Some part of it we may attribute to the care of a Frenchman of wit and learning, who, finding it turn to very good account to be a sort of royal tutor to this young black, and perceiving him very ready, apt, and quick of apprehension, took a great pleasure to teach him morals, language, and science; and was for it extremely beloved and valued by him. Another reason was,

he loved when he came from war; to see all the English gentlemen that traded thither; and did not only learn their language, but that of the Spaniard also, with whom he traded afterwards for slaves.

(14) I have often seen and conversed with this great man, and been a witness to many of his mighty actions; and do assure my reader, the most illustrious courts could not have produced a braver man, both for greatness of courage and mind, a judgment more solid, a wit more quick, and a conversation more sweet and diverting. He knew almost as much as if he had read much: he had heard of and admired the Romans: he had heard of the late Civil Wars in England, and the deplorable death of **our great monarch**¹¹; and would discourse of it with all the sense and abhorrence of the injustice imaginable. He had an extreme good and graceful mien, and all the civility of a well-bred great man. He had nothing of barbarity in his nature, but in all points addressed himself as if his education had been in some European court.

(15) This great and just character of Oroonoko gave me an extreme curiosity to see him, especially when I knew he spoke French and English, and that I could talk with him. But though I had heard so much of him, I was as greatly surprised when I saw him as if I had heard nothing of him; so beyond all report I found him. He came into the room, and addressed himself to me and some other women with the best grace in the world. He was pretty tall, but of a shape the most exact that can be fancied: the most famous statuary could not form the figure of a man more admirably turned from head to foot. His face was not of that brown rusty black which most of that nation are, but of perfect ebony, or polished jet. His eyes were the most awful that could be seen, and very piercing; the white of 'em being like snow, as were his teeth. His nose was rising and Roman, instead of African and flat. His mouth the finest shaped that could be seen; far from those great turned lips which are so natural to the rest of the negroes.

The whole proportion and air of his face was so nobly and exactly formed that, bating his color, there could be nothing in nature more beautiful, agreeable, and handsome.¹²

There was no one grace wanting that bears the standard of true beauty. His hair came down to his shoulders, by the aids of art, which was by pulling it out with a quill, and keeping it combed; of which he took particular care. Nor did the perfections of his mind come short of those of his person; for his discourse was admirable upon almost any subject: and whoever had heard him speak would have been convinced of their errors, that all fine wit is confined to the white men, especially to those of Christendom; and would have confessed that Oroonoko was as capable even of reigning well, and of governing as wisely, had as great a soul, as politic maxims, and was as sensible of power, as any prince civilized in the most refined schools of humanity and learning, or the most illustrious courts.

(16) This prince, such as I have described him, whose soul and body were so admirably adorned, was (while yet he was in the court of his grandfather, as I said) as capable of love as 'twas possible for a brave and gallant man to be; and in saying that, I have named the highest degree of love: for sure great souls are most capable of that passion.

(17) I have already said, the old general was killed by the shot of a narrow by the side of this prince in battle; and that Oroonoko was made general. This old dead hero had one only daughter left of his race, a beauty, that to describe her truly, one need say only, she was female to the noble male; the beautiful black Venus to our young Mars; as charming in her person as he, and of delicate virtues. I have seen a hundred white men sighing after her, and making a thousand vows at her feet, all in vain, and unsuccessful. And she was indeed too great for any but a prince of her own nation to adore.

(18) Oroonoko coming from the wars (which were now ended), after he had made his court to his grandfather he thought in honor he ought to make a visit to Imoinda, the daughter of his foster-father, the dead general; and to make some excuses to her, because his preservation was the occasion of her father's death; and to present her with those slaves that had been taken in this last battle, as the trophies of her father's victories. When he came, attended by all the young soldiers of any merit, he was infinitely surprised at the beauty of this fair Queen of Night, whose face and person was so exceeding all he had ever beheld, that lovely modesty with which she received him, that softness in her look and sighs, upon the melancholy occasion of this honor that was done by so great a man as Oroonoko, and a prince of whom she had heard such admirable things; the awfulness wherewith she received him, and the sweetness of her words and behavior while he staid, gained a perfect conquest over his fierce heart, and made him feel the victor could be subdued. So that having made his first compliments, and presented her an hundred and fifty slaves in fetters, he told her with his eyes that he was not insensible of her charms; while Imoinda, who wished for nothing more than so glorious a conquest, was pleased to believe she understood that silent language of new-born love; and, from that

moment, put on all her additions to beauty.

(19) The prince returned to court with quite another humor than before; and though he did not speak much of the fair Imoinda, he had the pleasure to hear all his followers speak of nothing but the charms of that maid, insomuch that, even in the presence of the old king, they were extolling her, and heightening, if possible, the beauties they had found in her: so that nothing else was talked of, no other sound was heard in every corner where there were whisperers, but Imoinda! Imoinda!

(20) 'Twill be imagined Oroonoko staid not long before he made his second visit; nor, considering his quality, not much longer before he told her he adored her. I have often heard him say that he admired by what strange inspiration he came to talk things so soft, and so passionate, who never knew love, nor was used to the conversation of women; but (to use his own words) he said, most happily, some new and, till then, unknown power instructed his heart and tongue in the language of love, and at the same time, in favor of him, inspired Imoinda with a sense of his passion. She was touched with what he said, and returned it all in such answers as went to his very heart, with a pleasure unknown before. Nor did he use those obligations ill, that love had done him, but turned all his happy moments to the best advantage; and as he knew no vice, his flame aimed at nothing but honor; if such a distinction may be made in love; and especially in that country, where men take to themselves as many as they can maintain; and where the only crime and sin with woman is to turn her off, to abandon her to want, shame, and misery: such ill morals are only practised in Christian countries, where they prefer the bare name of religion; and, without virtue or morality, think that sufficient. But Oroonoko was none of those professors; but as he had right notions of honor, so he made her such propositions as were not only and barely such; but, contrary to the custom of his country, he made her vows she should be the only woman he would possess while he lived; that no age or wrinkles should incline him to change; for her soul would be always fine, and always young; and he should have an eternal idea in his mind of the charms she now bore; and should look into his heart for that idea, when he could find it no longer in her face.

(21) After a thousand assurances of his lasting flame, and her eternal empire over him, she condescended to receive him for her husband; or rather, received him as the greatest honor the gods could do her.

(22) There is a certain ceremony in these cases to be observed, which I forgot to ask how 'twas performed; but 'twas concluded on both sides that, in obedience to him, the grandfather was to be first made acquainted with the design: for they pay a most absolute resignation to the monarch, especially when he is a parent also.

(23) On the other side, the old king, who had many wives and many concubines, wanted not court-flatterers to insinuate into his heart a thousand tender thoughts for this young beauty; and who represented her to his fancy as the most charming he had ever possessed in all the long race of his numerous years. At this character, his old heart, like an extinguished brand, most apt to take fire, felt new sparks of love, and began to kindle; and now grown to his second childhood, longed with impatience to behold this gay thing, with whom, alas! he could but innocently play. But how he should be confirmed she was this wonder, before he used his power to call her to court (where maidens never came, unless for the king's private use) he was next to consider; and while he was so doing, he had intelligence brought him that Imoinda was most certainly mistress to the Prince Oroonoko. This gave him some chagrin: however, it gave him also an opportunity, one day, when the prince was a-hunting, to wait on a man of quality, as his slave and attendant, who should go and make a present to Imoinda, as from the prince; he should then, unknown, see this fair maid, and have an opportunity to hear what message she would return the prince for his present, and from thence gather the state of her heart, and degree of her inclination. This was put in execution, and the old monarch saw, and burned: he found her all he had heard, and would not delay his happiness, but found he should have some obstacle to overcome her heart; for she expressed her sense of the present the prince had sent her, in terms so sweet, so soft and pretty, with an air of love and joy that could not be dissembled, insomuch that 'twas past doubt whether she loved Oroonoko entirely. This gave the old king some affliction; but he salved it with this, that the obedience the people pay their king was not at all inferior to what they paid their gods; and what love would not oblige Imoinda to do, duty would compel her to.

(24) He was therefore no sooner got to his apartment but he sent the royal veil to Imoinda; that is the ceremony of invitation: he sends the lady he has a mind to honor with his bed, a veil, with which she is covered, and secured for the king's use; and 'tis death to disobey; besides, held a most impious disobedience.

(25) 'Tis not to be imagined the surprise and grief that seized the lovely maid at this news and sight. However, as delays in these cases are dangerous, and pleading worse than treason; trembling, and almost fainting, she was obliged to suffer herself to be covered and led away.

(26) They brought her thus to court; and the king, who had caused a very rich bath to be prepared, was led into it, where he sat under a canopy, in state, to receive this longed-for virgin; whom he having commanded should be brought to him, they (after disrobing her) led her to the bath, and making fast the doors, left her to descend. The king, without more courtship, bade her throw off her mantle, and come to his arms. But Imoinda, all in tears, threw herself on the marble, on the brink of the bath, and besought him to hear her. She told him, as she was a maid, how proud of the divine glory she should have been, of having it in her power to oblige her king; but as by the laws he could not, and from his royal goodness would not, take from any man his wedded wife; so she believed she should be the occasion of making him commit a great sin if she did not reveal her state and condition, and tell him she was another's, and could not be so happy to be his.

(27) The king, enraged at this delay, hastily demanded the name of the bold man that had married a woman of her degree without his consent. Imoinda, seeing his eyes fierce, and his hands tremble (whether with age or anger, I know not, but she fancied the last), almost repented she had said so much, for now she feared the storm would fall on the prince; she therefore said a thousand things to appease the raging of his flame, and to prepare him to hear who it was with calmness: but before she spoke, he imagined who she meant, but would not seem to do so, but commanded her to lay aside her mantle, and suffer herself to receive his caresses, or, by his gods he swore, that happy man whom she was going to name should die, though it were even Oroonoko himself. "Therefore," said he, "deny this marriage, and swear thyself a maid." "That," replied Imoinda, "by all our powers I do; for I am not yet known to my husband." "'Tis enough," said the king, "'tis enough both to satisfy my conscience and my heart." And rising from his seat, he went and led her into the bath; it being in vain for her to resist.

(28) In this time, the prince, who was returned from hunting, went to visit his Imoinda, but found her gone; and not only so, but heard she had received the royal veil. This raised him to a storm; and in his madness, they had much ado to save him from laying violent hands on himself. Force first prevailed, and then reason: they urged all to him that might oppose his rage; but nothing weighed so greatly with him as the king's old age, incapable of injuring him with Imoinda. He would give way to that hope, because it pleased him most, and flattered best his heart. Yet this served not altogether to make him cease his different passions, which sometimes raged within him, and softened into showers. 'Twas not enough to appease him, to tell him his grandfather was old, and could not that way injure him, while he retained that awful duty which the young men are used there to pay to their grave relations. He could not be convinced he had no cause to sigh and mourn for the loss of a mistress he could not with all his strength and courage retrieve. And he would often cry, "O, my friends! were she in walled cities, or confined from me in fortifications of the greatest strength; did enchantments or monsters detain her from me; I would venture through any hazard to free her: but here, in the arms of a feeble old man, my youth, my violent love, my trade in arms, and all my vast desire of glory, avail me nothing. Imoinda is as irrecoverably lost to me as if she were snatched by the cold arms of death. Oh! she is never to be retrieved. If I would wait tedious years, till fate should bow the old king to his grave, even that would not leave me Imoinda free; but still that custom that makes it so vile a crime for a son to marry his father's wives or mistresses would hinder my happiness; unless I would either ignobly set an ill precedent to my successors, or abandon my country, and fly with her to some unknown world who never heard our story."

(29) But it was objected to him that his case was not the same; for Imoinda being his lawful wife by solemn contract, 'twas he was the injured man, and might, if he so pleased take Imoinda back, the breach of the law being on his grandfather's side; and that if he could circumvent him, and redeem her from the otan, which is the palace of the king's women, a sort of seraglio, it was both just and lawful for him so to do.

(30) This reasoning had some force upon him, and he should have been entirely comforted, but for the thought that she was possessed by his grandfather. However, he loved so well that he was resolved to believe what most favored his hope, and to endeavor to learn from Imoinda's own mouth, what only she could satisfy him in, whether she was robbed of that blessing which was only due to his faith and love. But as it was very hard to get a sight of the women (for no men ever entered into the otan but when the king went to entertain himself with some one of his wives or mistresses; and 'twas death, at any other time, for any other to go in), so he knew not how to contrive to get a sight of her.

(31) While Oroonoko felt all the agonies of love, and suffered under a torment the most painful in the world, the old king was not exempted from his share of affliction. He was troubled for having been forced, by an irresistible passion, to rob his son of a treasure, he knew, could not but be extremely dear to him; since she was the most beautiful that ever had been seen, and had besides all the sweetness and innocence of youth and modesty, with a charm of wit surpassing all. He found that, however she was forced to expose her lovely person to his withered arms, she could only sigh and weep there, and think of Oroonoko; and oftentimes could not forbear speaking of him, though her life were, by custom, forfeited by owning her passion. But she spoke not of a lover only, but of a prince dear to him to whom she spoke; and of the praises of a man who, till now, filled the old man's soul with joy at every recital of his bravery, or even his name. And 'twas this dotage on our young hero that gave Imoinda a thousand privileges to speak of him, without offending; and this condescension in the old king, that made her take the satisfaction of speaking of him so very often.

(32) Besides, he many times inquired how the prince bore himself: and those of whom he asked, being entirely slaves to the merits and virtues of the prince, still answered what they thought conducted best to his service; which was, to make the old king fancy that the prince had no more interest in Imoinda, and had resigned her willingly to the pleasure of the king; that he diverted himself with his mathematicians, his fortifications, his officers, and his hunting.

(33) This pleased the old lover, who failed not to report these things again to Imoinda, that she might, by the example of her young lover, withdraw her heart, and rest better contented in his arms. But, however she was forced to receive this unwelcome news, in all appearance with unconcern and content, her heart was bursting within, and she was only happy when she could get alone, to vent her griefs and moans with sighs and tears.

(34) What reports of the prince's conduct were made to the king, he thought good to justify as far as possibly he could by his actions; and when he appeared in the presence of the king, he showed a face not at all betraying his heart: so that in a little time, the old man, being entirely convinced that he was no longer a lover of Imoinda, he carried him with him, in his train, to the otan, often to banquet with his mistresses. But as soon as he entered, one day, into the apartment of Imoinda, with the king, at the first glance from her eyes, notwithstanding all his determined resolution, he was ready to sink in the place where he stood; and had certainly done so but for the support of Aboan, a young man who was next to him; which, with his change of countenance, had betrayed him, had the king chanced to look that way. And I have observed, 'tis a very great error in those who laugh when one says, "A negro can change color": for I have seen 'em as frequently blush, and look pale, and that as visibly as ever I saw in the most beautiful white. And 'tis certain that both these changes were evident, this day, in both these lovers. And Imoinda, who saw with some joy the change in the prince's face, and found it in her own, strove to divert the king from beholding either, by a forced caress, with which she met him; which was a new wound in the heart of the poor dying prince. But as soon as the king was busied in looking on some fine thing of Imoinda's making, she had time to tell the prince, with her angry, but love-darting eyes, that she resented his coldness, and bemoaned her own miserable captivity. Nor were his eyes silent, but answered hers again, as much as eyes could do, instructed by the most tender and most passionate heart that ever loved: and they spoke so well, and so effectually, as Imoinda no longer doubted but she was the only delight and darling of that soul she found pleading in 'em its right of love, which none was more willing to resign than she. And 'twas this powerful language alone that in an instant conveyed all the thoughts of their souls to each other; that they both found there wanted but opportunity to make them both entirely happy. But when he saw another door opened by Onahal (a former old wife of the king's, who now had charge of Imoinda), and saw the prospect of a bed of state made ready, with sweets and flowers for the dalliance of the king, who immediately led the trembling victim from his sight, into that prepared repose; what rage! what wild frenzies seized his heart! which forcing to keep within bounds, and to suffer without noise, it became the more insupportable, and rent his soul with ten thousand pains. He was forced to retire to vent his groans, where he fell down on a carpet, and lay struggling a long time, and only breathing now and then, "O Imoinda!"

(35) When Onahal had finished her necessary affair within, shutting the door, she came forth, to wait till the king called; and hearing someone sighing in the other room, she passed on, and found the prince in that deplorable condition, which she thought needed her aid. She gave him cordials, but all in vain; till finding the nature of his disease, by his sighs, and naming Imoinda, she told him he had not so much cause as he imagined to afflict himself: for if he knew the king so well as she did, he would not lose a moment in jealousy; and that she was confident that

Imoinda bore, at this moment, part in his affliction. Aboan was of the same opinion, and both together persuaded him to reassume his courage; and all sitting down on the carpet, the prince said so many obliging things to Onahal that he half-persuaded her to be of his party: and she promised him she would thus far comply with his just desires, that she would let Imoinda know how faithful he was, what he suffered, and what he said.

(36) This discourse lasted till the king called, which gave Oroonoko a certain satisfaction; and with the hope Onahal had made him conceive, he assumed a look as gay as 'twas possible a man in his circumstances could do: and presently after, he was called in with the rest who waited without. The king commanded music to be brought, and several of his young wives and mistresses came all together by his command, to dance before him; where Imoinda performed her part with an air and grace so surpassing all the rest as her beauty was above 'em, and received the present ordained as a prize. The prince was every moment more charmed with the new beauties and graces he beheld in this fair one; and while he gazed, and she danced, Onahal was retired to a window with Aboan.

(37) This Onahal, as I said, was one of the **cast-mistresses**¹³ of the old king; and 'twas these (now past their beauty) that were made guardians or governantes to the new and the young ones, and whose business it was to teach them all those wanton arts of love with which they prevailed and charmed heretofore in their turn; and who now treated the triumphing happy ones with all the severity as to liberty and freedom that was possible, in revenge of their honors they rob them of; envying them those satisfactions, those gallantries and presents, that were once made to themselves, while youth and beauty lasted, and which they now saw pass, as it were regardless by, and paid only to the bloomings. And, certainly, nothing is more afflicting to a decayed beauty than to behold in itself declining charms that were once adored; and to find those caresses paid to new beauties, to which once she laid claim; to hear them whisper, as she passes by, that once was a delicate woman. Those abandoned ladies therefore endeavor to revenge all the despites and decays of time, on these flourishing happy ones. And 'twas this severity that gave Oroonoko a thousand fears he should never prevail with Onahal to see Imoinda. But as I said, she was now retired to a window with Aboan.

(38) This young man was not only one of the best quality, but a man extremely well made, and beautiful; and coming often to attend the king to the otan, he had subdued the heart of the antiquated Onahal, which had not forgot how pleasant it was to be in love. And though she had some decays in her face, she had none in her sense and wit; she was there agreeable still, even to Aboan's youth: so that he took pleasure in entertaining her with discourses of love. He knew also that to make his court to these she-favorites was the way to be great; these being the persons that do all affairs and business at court. He had also observed that she had given him glances more tender and inviting than she had done to others of his quality. And now, when he saw that her favor could so absolutely oblige the prince, he failed not to sigh in her ear, and to look with eyes all soft upon her, and gave her hope that she had made some impressions on his heart. He found her pleased at this, and making a thousand advances to him: but the ceremony ending, and the king departing, broke up the company for that day, and his conversation.

(39) Aboan failed not that night to tell the prince of his success, and how advantageous the service of Onahal might be to his amour with Imoinda. The prince was overjoyed with this good news, and besought him if it were possible to caress her so as to engage her entirely, which he could not fail to do, if he complied with her desires: "For then," said the prince, "her life lying at your mercy, she must grant you the request you make in my behalf." Aboan understood him, and assured him he would make love so effectually that he would defy the most expert mistress of the art to find out whether he dissembled it, or had it really. And 'twas with impatience they waited the next opportunity of going to the otan.

(40) The wars came on, the time of taking the field approached; and 'twas impossible for the prince to delay his going at the head of his army to encounter the enemy; so that every day seemed a tedious year, till he saw his Imoinda: for he believed he could not live if he were forced away without being so happy. 'Twas with impatience, therefore, that he expected the next visit the king would make; and according to his wish it was not long.

(41) The parley of the eyes of these two lovers had not passed so secretly but an old jealous lover could spy it; or rather, he wanted not flatterers who told him they observed it: so that the prince was hastened to the camp, and this was the last visit he found he should make to the otan; he therefore urged Aboan to make the best of this last effort, and to explain himself so to Onahal that she, deferring her enjoyment of her young lover no longer, might make way for the prince to speak to Imoinda.

(42) The whole affair being agreed on between the prince and Aboan, they attended the king,

as the custom was, to the otan; where, while the whole company was taken up in beholding the dancing, and antic postures the woman-royal made, to divert the kind, Onahal singled out Aboan, whom she found most pliable to her wish. When she had him where she believed she could not be heard, she sighed to him, and softly cried, "Ah, Aboan! when will you be sensible of my passion? I confess it with my mouth, because I would not give my eyes the lie; and you have but too much already perceived they have confessed my flame: nor would I have you believe that, because I am the abandoned mistress of a king, I esteem myself altogether divested of charms. No, Aboan, I have still a rest of beauty enough engaging, and have learned to please too well, not to be desirable. I can have lovers still, but will have none but Aboan." "Madam," replied the half-feigning youth, "you have already, by my eyes, found you can still conquer; and I believe 'tis in pity of me you condescend to this kind confession. But, Madam, words are used to be so small a part of our country-courtship that 'tis rare one can get so happy an opportunity as to tell one's heart; and those few minutes we have are forced to be snatched for more certain proofs of love than speaking and sighing; and such I languish for."

(43) He spoke this with such a tone that she hoped it true, and could not forbear believing it; and being wholly transported with joy for having subdued the finest of all the king's subjects to her desires, she took from her ears two large pearls, and commanded him to wear 'em in his. He would have refused 'em, crying, "Madam, these are not the proofs of your love that I expect; 'tis opportunity, 'tis a lone hour only, that can make me happy." But forcing the pearls into his hand, she whispered softly to him; "Oh! do not fear a woman's invention, when love sets her a-thinking." And pressing his hand, she cried, "This night you shall be happy. Come to the gate of the orange-grove, behind the otan, and I will be ready about midnight to receive you." 'Twas thus agreed, and she left him, that no notice might be taken of their speaking together.

(44) The ladies were still dancing, and the king, laid on a carpet, with a great deal of pleasure was beholding them, especially Imoinda, who that day appeared more lovely than ever; being enlivened with the good tidings Onahal had brought her, of the constant passion the prince had for her. The prince was laid on another carpet at the other end of the room, with his eyes fixed on the object of his soul; and as she turned or moved, so did they: and she alone gave his eyes and soul their motions. Nor did Imoinda employ her eyes to any other use than in beholding with infinite pleasure the joy she produced in those of the prince. But while she was more regarding him than the steps she took, she chanced to fall; and so near him, as that leaping with extreme force from the carpet, he caught her in his arms as she fell: and 'twas visible to the whole [company], the joy wherewith he received her. He clasped her close to his bosom, and quite forgot that reverence that was due to the mistress of a king, and that punishment that is the reward of a boldness of this nature. And had not the presence of mind of Imoinda (fonder of his safety than her own) befriended him, in making her spring from his arms, and fall into her dance again, he had at that instant met his death; for the old king, jealous to the last degree, rose up in rage, broke all the diversion, and led Imoinda to her apartment, and sent out word to the prince to go immediately to the camp; and that if he were found another night in court, he should suffer the death ordained for disobedient offenders.

(45) You may imagine how welcome this news was to Oroonoko, whose unseasonable transport and caress of Imoinda was blamed by all men that loved him: and now he perceived his fault, yet cried that for such another moment he would be content to die.

(46) All the otan was in disorder about this accident; and Onahal was particularly concerned because on the prince's stay depended her happiness; for she could no longer expect that of Aboan: so that ere they departed, they contrived it so that the prince and he should both come that night to the grove of the otan, which was all of oranges and citrons, and that there they would wait her orders.

(47) They parted thus with grief enough till night, leaving the king in possession of the lovely maid. But nothing could appease the jealousy of the old lover; he would not be imposed on, but would have it that Imoinda made a false step on purpose to fall into Oroonoko's bosom, and that all things looked like a design on both sides; and 'twas in vain she protested her innocence: he was old and obstinate, and left her more than half assured that his fear was true.

(48) The king, going to his apartment, sent to know where the prince was, and if he intended to obey his command. The messenger returned, and told him, he found the prince pensive, and altogether unprepared for the campaign; that he lay negligently on the ground, and answered very little. This confirmed the jealousy of the king, and he commanded that they should very narrowly and privately watch his motions; and that he should not stir from his apartment but one spy or other should be employed to watch him: so that the hour approaching wherein he

was to go to the citron-grove and taking only Aboan along with him, he leaves his apartment, and was watched to the very gate of the otan; where he was seen to enter; and where they left him, to carry back the tidings to the king.¹⁴

(49) Oroonoko and Aboan were no sooner entered but Onahal led the prince to the apartment of Imoinda; who, not knowing anything of her happiness, was laid in bed. But Onahal only left him in her chamber; to make the best of his opportunity; and took her dear Aboan to her own; where he showed the height of complaisance for his prince, when, to give him an opportunity, he suffered himself to be caressed in bed by Onahal.

(50) The prince softly wakened Imoinda, who was not a little surprised with joy to find him there; and yet she trembled with a thousand fears. I believe he omitted saying nothing to this young maid that might persuade her to suffer him to seize his own, and take the rights of love. And I believe she was not long resisting those arms where she so longed to be; and having opportunity, night, and silence, youth, love, and desire, he soon prevailed, and ravished in a moment what his old grandfather had been endeavoring for so many months.

(51) 'Tis not to be imagined the satisfaction of these two young lovers; nor the vows she made him, that she remained a spotless maid till that night, and that what she did with his grandfather had robbed him of no part of her virgin-honor; the gods, in mercy and justice, having reserved that for her plighted lord, to whom of right it belonged. And 'tis impossible to express the transports he suffered, while he listened to a discourse so charming from her loved lips; and clasped that body in his arms, for whom he had so long languished: and nothing now afflicted him but his sudden departure from her; for he told her the necessity, and his commands, but should depart satisfied in this, that since the old king had hitherto not been able to deprive him of those enjoyments which only belonged to him, he believed for the future he would be less able to injure him: so that, abating the scandal of the veil, which was no otherwise so than that she was wife to another, he believed her safe, even in the arms of the king, and innocent; yet would he have ventured at the conquest of the world, and have given it all, to have had her avoided that honor of receiving the royal veil. 'Twas thus, between a thousand caresses, that both bemoaned the hard fate of youth and beauty, so liable to that cruel promotion: 'twas a glory that could well have been spared here, though desired and aimed at by all the young females of that kingdom.

(52) But while they were thus fondly employed, forgetting how time ran on, and that the dawn must conduct him far away from his only happiness, they heard a great noise in the otan, and unusual voices of men; at which the prince, starting from the arms of the frightened Imoinda, ran to a little battle-ax he used to wear by his side; and having not so much leisure as to put on his habit, he opposed himself against some who were already opening the door: which they did with so much violence that Oroonoko was not able to defend it; but was forced to cry out with a commanding voice, "Whoever ye are that have the boldness to attempt to approach this apartment thus rudely, know that I, the Prince Oroonoko, will revenge it with the certain death of him that first enters. Therefore, stand back, and know, this place is sacred to love and me this night; to-morrow 'tis the king's."

(53) This he spoke with a voice so resolved and assured that they soon retired from the door; but cried, "'Tis by the king's command we are come; and being satisfied by thy voice, O Prince, as much as if we had entered, we can report to the king the truth of all his fears, and leave thee to provide for thy own safety, as thou art advised by thy friends."

(54) At these words they departed, and left the prince to take a short and sad leave of his Imoinda; who, trusting in the strength of her charms, believed she should appease the fury of a jealous king, by saying she was surprised, and that it was by force of arms he got into her apartment. All her concern now was for his life, and therefore she hastened him to the camp, and with much ado prevailed on him to go. Nor was it she alone that prevailed; Aboan and Onahal both pleaded, and both assured him of a lie that should be well enough contrived to secure Imoinda. So that at last, with a heart sad as death, dying eyes, and sighing soul, Oroonoko departed, and took his way to the camp.

(55) It was not long after, the king in person came to the otan; where beholding Imoinda, with rage in his eyes, he upbraided her wickedness and perfidy; and threatening her royal lover, she fell on her face at his feet, bedewing the floor with her tears, and imploring his pardon for a fault which she had not with her will committed; as Onahal, who was also prostrate with her, could testify: that, unknown to her, he had broke into her apartment, and ravished her. She spoke this much against her conscience; but to save her own life, 'twas absolutely necessary she should feign this falsity. She knew it could not injure the prince, he being fled to an army that would stand by him against any injuries that should assault him. However, this last thought,

of Imoinda's being ravished, changed the measures of his revenge; and whereas before he designed to be himself her executioner, he now resolved she should not die. But as it is the greatest crime in nature amongst 'em to touch a woman after having been possessed by a son, a father, or a brother, so now he looked on Imoinda as a polluted thing, wholly unfit for his embrace; nor would he resign her to his grandson, because she had received the royal veil: he therefore removes her from the otan, with Onahal; whom he put into safe hands, with order they should be both sold off as slaves to another country, either Christian or heathen, 'twas no matter where.

(56) This cruel sentence, worse than death, they implored might be reversed; but their prayers were vain, and it was put in execution accordingly, and that with so much secrecy that none, either without or within the otan, knew anything of their absence or their destiny.

(57) The old king nevertheless executed this with a great deal of reluctance; but he believed he had made a very great conquest over himself when he had once resolved, and had performed what he resolved. He believed now that his love had been unjust; and that he could not expect the gods, or Captain of the Clouds (as they call the unknown Power), would suffer a better consequence from so ill a cause. He now begins to hold Oroonoko excused; and to say, he had reason for what he did: and now everybody could assure the king how passionately Imoinda was beloved by the prince; even those confessed it now who said the contrary before his flame was not abated. So that the king being old, and not able to defend himself in war, and having no sons of all his race remaining alive, but only this, to maintain him on his throne; and looking on this as a man disobliged, first by the rape of his mistress, or rather wife, and now by depriving him wholly of her, he feared, might make him desperate, and do some cruel thing, either to himself or his old grandfather the offender, he began to repent him extremely of the contempt he had, in his rage, put on Imoinda. Besides, he considered he ought in honor to have killed her for this offense, if it had been one. He ought to have had so much value and consideration for a maid of her quality as to have nobly put her to death, and not to have sold her like a common slave; the greatest revenge, and the most disgraceful of any, and to which they a thousand times prefer death, and implore it; as Imoinda did, but could not obtain that honor. Seeing therefore it was certain that Oroonoko would highly resent this affront, he thought good to make some excuse for his rashness to him; and to that end, he sent a messenger to the camp, with orders to treat with him about the matter, to gain his pardon, and to endeavor to mitigate his grief; but that by no means he should tell him she was sold, but secretly put to death: for he knew he should never obtain his pardon for the other.

(58) When the messenger came, he found the prince upon the point of engaging with the enemy; but as soon as he heard of the arrival of the messenger, he commanded him to his tent, where he embraced him, and received him with joy: which was soon abated by the downcast looks of the messenger, who was instantly demanded the cause by Oroonoko; who, impatient of delay, asked a thousand questions in a breath, and all concerning Imoinda. But there needed little return; for he could almost answer himself of all he demanded from his sighs and eyes. At last the messenger, casting himself at the prince's feet, and kissing them with all the submission of a man that had something to implore which he dreaded to utter, he besought him to hear with calmness what he had to deliver to him, and to call up all his noble and heroic courage, to encounter with his words, and defend himself against the ungrateful things he must relate. Oroonoko replied, with a deep sigh, and a languishing voice, "I am armed against their worst efforts—for I know they will tell me Imoinda is no more—and after that, you may spare the rest." Then, commanding him to rise, he laid himself on a carpet, under a rich pavilion, and remained a good while silent, and was hardly heard to sigh. When he was come a little to himself, the messenger asked him leave to deliver that part of his embassy which the prince had not yet divined, and the prince cried, "I permit thee." Then he told him the affliction the old king was in, for the rashness he had committed in his cruelty to Imoinda; and how he deigned to ask pardon for his offense, and to implore the prince would not suffer that loss to touch his heart too sensibly, which now all the gods could not restore him, but might recompense him in glory, which he begged he would pursue; and that death, that common revenger of all injuries, would soon even the account between him and a feeble old man.

(59) Oroonoko bade him return his duty to his lord and master, and to assure him, there was no account of revenge to be adjusted between them: if there were, 'twas he was the aggressor; and that death would be just, and, **maugre**¹⁵ his age, would see him righted; and he was contented to leave his share of glory to youths more fortunate and worthy of that favor from the gods; that henceforth he would never lift a weapon, or draw a bow, but abandon the small remains of his life to sighs and tears, and the continual thoughts of what his lord and grandfa-

ther had thought good to send out of the world, with all that youth, that innocence and beauty.¹⁶

(60) After having spoken this, whatever his greatest officers and men of the best rank could do, they could not raise him from the carpet, or persuade him to action and resolutions of life; but commanding all to retire, he shut himself into his pavilion all that day, while the enemy was ready to engage: and wondering at the delay, the whole body of the chief of the army then addressed themselves to him, and to whom they had much ado to get admittance. They fell on their faces at the foot of his carpet, where they lay, and besought him with earnest prayers and tears to lead them forth to battle and not let the enemy take advantages of them; and implored him to have regard to his glory, and to the world, that depended on his courage and conduct. But he made no other reply to all their supplications but this, that he had now no more business for glory; and for the world, it was a trifle not worth his care: “Go,” continued he, sighing, “and divide it amongst you, and reap with joy what you so vainly prize, and leave me to my more welcome destiny.”

(61) They then demanded what they should do, and whom he would constitute in his room, that the confusion of ambitious youth and power might not ruin their order; and make them a prey to the enemy. He replied, he would not give himself the trouble—but wished ‘em to choose the bravest man amongst ‘em, let his quality or birth be what it would: “for, O my friends!” said he, “it is not titles make men brave or good; or birth that bestows courage and generosity, or makes the owner happy. Believe this, when you behold Oroonoko the most wretched, and abandoned by Fortune, of all the creation of the gods.” So turning himself about, he would make no more reply to all they could urge or implore.

(62) The army, beholding their officers return unsuccessful, with sad faces and ominous looks, that presaged no good luck, suffered a thousand fears to take possession of their hearts, and the enemy to come even upon them, before they would provide for their safety, by any defense: and though they were assured by some, who had a mind to animate them, that they should be immediately headed by the prince, and that in the mean time Aboan had orders to command as general; yet they were so dismayed for want of that great example of bravery that they could make but a very feeble resistance; and at last, downright fled before the enemy, who pursued ‘em to the very tents, killing ‘em. Nor could all Aboan’s courage, which that day gained him immortal glory, shame ‘em into a manly defense of themselves. The guards that were left behind about the prince’s tent, seeing the soldiers flee before the enemy, and scatter themselves all over the plain in great disorder, made such outcries as roused the prince from his amorous slumber, in which he had remained buried for two days, without permitting any sustenance to approach him. But, in spite of all his resolutions, he had not the constancy of grief to that degree as to make him insensible of the danger of his army; and in that instant he leaped from his couch, and cried, “Come, if we must die, let us meet death the noblest way; and ‘twill be more like Oroonoko to encounter him at an army’s head, opposing the torrent of a conquering foe, than lazily on a couch, to wait his lingering pleasure, and die every moment by a thousand racking thoughts; or be tamely taken by an enemy, and led a whining lovesick slave to adorn the triumphs of Jamoan, that young victor, who already is entered beyond the limits I have prescribed him.”

(63) While he was speaking, he suffered his people to dress him for the field; and sallying out of his pavilion, with more life and vigor in his countenance than ever he showed, he appeared like some divine power descended to save his country from destruction: and his people had purposely put on him all things that might make him shine with most splendor, to strike a reverend awe into the beholders. He flew into the thickest of those that were pursuing his men; and being animated with despair, he fought as if he came on purpose to die, and did such things as will not be believed that human strength could perform; and such as soon inspired all the rest with new courage and new order. And now it was that they began to fight indeed; and so, as if they would not be outdone even by their adored hero; who turning the tide of the victory, changing absolutely the fate of the day, gained an entire conquest: and Oroonoko having the good fortune to single out Jamoan, he took him prisoner with his own hand, having wounded him almost to death.

(64) This Jamoan afterwards became very dear to him, being a man very gallant, and of excellent graces, and fine parts; so that he never put him amongst the rank of captives, as they used to do, without distinction, for the common sale, or market, but kept him in his own court, where he retained nothing of the prisoner but the name, and returned no more into his own country; so great an affection he took for Oroonoko, and by a thousand tales and adventures of love and gallantry flattered his disease of melancholy and languishment: which I have often heard him say, had certainly killed him but for the conversation of this prince and Aboan, and the French

governor he had from his childhood, of whom I have spoken before, and who was a man of admirable wit, great ingenuity, and learning; all which he had infused into his young pupil. This Frenchman was banished out of his own country, for some heretical notions he held: and though he was a man of very little religion, he had admirable morals and a brave soul.

(65) After the total defeat of Jamoan's army, which all fled, or were left dead upon the place, they spent some time in the camp; Oroonoko choosing rather to remain a while there in his tents than to enter into a palace or live in a court where he had so lately suffered so great a loss. The officers therefore, who saw and knew his cause of discontent, invented all sorts of diversions and sports to entertain their prince: so that what with those amusements abroad, and others at home, that is, within their tents, with the persuasions, arguments, and care of his friends and servants that he more peculiarly prized, he wore off in time a great part of that chagrin, and torture of death of despair, which the first effects of Imoinda's death had given him; inso-much as having received a thousand kind embassies from the king, and invitation to return to court, he obeyed, though with no little reluctance: and when he did so, there was a visible change in him, and for a long time he was much more melancholy than before. But time lessens all extremes, and reduces 'em to mediums and unconcern: but no motives of beauties, though all endeavored it, could engage him in any sort of amour, though he had all the invitations to it, both from his own youth and others' ambitions and designs.

(66) Oroonoko was no sooner returned from this last conquest, and received at court with all the joy and magnificence that could be expressed to a young victor; who was not only returned triumphant, but beloved like a deity, than there arrived in the port an English ship.

(67) The master of it had often before been in these countries, and was very well known to Oroonoko, with whom he had trafficked for slaves, and had used to do the same with his predecessors.

(68) This commander was a man of a finer sort of address and conversation, better bred, and more engaging, than most of that sort of men are; so that he seemed rather never to have been bred out of a court than almost all his life at sea. This captain therefore was always better received at court than most of the traders to those countries were; and especially by Oroonoko, who was more civilized, according to the European mode, than any other had been, and took more delight in the white nations, and, above all, men of parts and wit. To this captain he sold abundance of his slaves; and for the favor and esteem he had for him, made him many presents, and obliged him to stay at court as long as possibly he could. Which the captain seemed to take as a very great honor done him, entertaining the prince every day with globes and maps, and mathematical discourses and instruments; eating, drinking, hunting, and living with him with so much familiarity that it was not to be doubted but he had gained very greatly upon the heart of this gallant young man. And the captain in return of all these mighty favors, besought the prince to honor his vessel with his presence, some day or other at dinner, before he should set sail: which he condescended to accept, and appointed his day. The captain, on his part, failed not to have all things in a readiness, in the most magnificent order he could possibly: and the day being come, the captain, in his boat, richly adorned with carpets and velvet cushions, rowed to the shore to receive the prince; with another long-boat, where was placed all his music and trumpets, with which Oroonoko was extremely delighted; who met him on the shore, attended by his French governor, Jamoan, Aboan, and about an hundred of the noblest of the youths of the court. And after they had first carried the prince on board, the boats fetched the rest off; where they found a very splendid treat, with all sorts of fine wines; and were as well entertained as 'twas possible in such a place to be.

(69) The prince, having drunk hard of punch and several sorts of wine, as did all the rest (for great care was taken they should want nothing of that part of the entertainment), was very merry, and in great admiration of the ship, for he had never been in one before; so that he was curious of beholding every place where he decently might descend. The rest, no less curious, who were not quite overcome with drinking, rambled at their pleasure fore and aft, as their fancies guided 'em: so that the captain, who had well laid his design before, gave the word, and seized on all his guests; they clapping great irons suddenly on the prince, when he was leaped down into the hold to view that part of the vessel; and locking him fast down, secured him. The same treachery was used to all the rest; and all in one instant, in several places of the ship, were lashed fast in irons, and betrayed to slavery. That great design over, they set all hands to work to hoist sail; and with as treacherous as fair a wind they made from the shore with this innocent and glorious prize, who thought of nothing less than such an entertainment.

(70) Some have commended this act, as brave in the captain; but I will spare my sense of it, and leave it to my reader to judge as he pleases.

(71) It may be easily guessed in what manner the prince resented this indignity, who may be best resembled to a lion taken in a toil; so he raged, so he struggled for liberty, but all in vain: and they had so wisely managed his fetters that he could not use a hand in his defense to quit himself of a life that would by no means endure slavery; nor could he move from the place where he was tied to any solid part of the ship against which he might have beat his head, and have finished his disgrace that way. So that being deprived of all other means, he resolved to perish for want of food; and pleased at last with that thought, and toiled and tired by rage and indignation, he laid himself down, and sullenly resolved upon dying, and refused all things that were brought him.

(72) This did not a little vex the captain, and the more so because he found almost all of 'em of the same humor; so that the loss of so many brave slaves, so tall and goodly to behold, would have been very considerable. He therefore ordered one to go from him (for he would not be seen himself) to Oroonoko, and to assure him, he was afflicted for having rashly done so unhospitable a deed, and which could not be now remedied, since they were far from shore; but since he resented it in so high a nature, he assured him he would revoke his resolution, and set both him and his friends ashore on the next land they should touch at; and of this the messenger gave him his oath, provided he would resolve to live. And Oroonoko, whose honor was such as he never had violated a word in his life himself, much less a solemn asseveration, believed in an instant what this man said; but replied, he expected, for a confirmation of this, to have his shameful fetters dismissed. This demand was carried to the captain; who returned him answer that the offense had been so great which he had put upon the prince that he durst not trust him with liberty while he remained in the ship, for fear lest by a valor natural to him, and a revenge that would animate that valor, he might commit some outrage fatal to himself and the king his master, to whom this vessel did belong. To this Oroonoko replied, he would engage his honor to behave himself in all friendly order and manner, and obey the command of the captain, as he was lord of the king's vessel and general of those men under his command.

(73) This was delivered to the still doubting captain, **who could not resolve to trust a heathen, he said, upon his parole**¹⁷, a man that had no sense or notion of the God that he worshiped. Oroonoko then replied, he was very sorry to hear that the captain pretended to the knowledge and worship of any gods, who had taught him no better principles than not to credit as he would be credited. But they told him, the difference of their faith occasioned that distrust: for the captain had protested to him upon the word of a Christian, and sworn in the name of a great God; which if he should violate, he would expect eternal torment in the world to come. "Is that all the obligation he has to be just to his oath?" replied Oroonoko. "Let him know, I swear by my honor; which to violate would not only render me contemptible and despised by all brave and honest men, and so give myself perpetual pain, but it would be eternally offending and displeasing all mankind; harming, betraying, circumventing, and outraging all men. But punishments hereafter are suffered by one's self; and the world takes no cognizance whether this God have revenged 'em, or not, 'tis done so secretly, and deferred so long; while the man of no honor suffers every moment the scorn and contempt of the honest world, and dies every day ignominiously in his fame, which is more valuable than life. I speak not this to move belief, but to show you how you mistake, when you imagine that he who will violate his honor will keep his word with his gods." So, turning from him with a disdainful smile, he refused to answer him, when he urged him to know what answer he should carry back to his captain; so that he departed without saying any more.

(74) The captain pondering and consulting what to do, it was concluded that nothing but Oroonoko's liberty would encourage any of the rest to eat, except the Frenchman, whom the captain could not pretend to keep prisoner, but only told him he was secured because he might act something in favor of the prince, but that he should be freed as soon as they came to land. So that they concluded it wholly necessary to free the prince from his irons, that he might show himself to the rest; that they might have an eye upon him, and that they could not fear a single man.

(75) This being resolved, to make the obligation the greater, the captain himself went to Oroonoko; where, after many compliments and assurances of what he had already promised, he receiving from the prince his parole, and his hand, for his good behavior, dismissed his irons, and brought him to his own cabin; where, after having treated and reposed him a while (for he had neither eat nor slept in four days before), he besought him to visit those obstinate people in chains, who refused all manner of sustenance; and entreated him to oblige 'em to eat, and assure 'em of that liberty on the first opportunity.¹⁸

(76) Oroonoko, who was too generous not to give credit to his words, showed himself to his

people, who were transported with excess of joy at the sight of their darling prince; falling at his feet, and kissing and embracing him; believing, as some divine oracle, all he assured 'em. But he besought 'em to bear their chains with that bravery that became those whom he had seen act so nobly in arms; and that they could not give him greater proofs of their love and friendship, since 'twas all the security the captain (his friend) could have, against the revenge, he said, they might possibly justly take, for the injuries sustained by him. And they all, with one accord, assured him, they could not suffer enough, when it was for his repose and safety.

(77) After this, they no longer refused to eat, but took what was brought 'em, and were pleased with their captivity; since by it they hoped to redeem the prince, who, all the rest of the voyage, was treated with all the respect due to his birth, though nothing could divert his melancholy; and he would often sigh for Imoinda, and think this a punishment due to his misfortune, in having left that noble maid behind him, that fatal night, in the otan, when he fled to the camp.

(78) Possessed with a thousand thoughts of past joys with this fair young person, and a thousand griefs for her eternal loss, he endured a tedious voyage, and at last arrived at the mouth of the river of Surinam, a colony belonging to the King of England, and where they were to deliver some part of their slaves. There the merchants and gentlemen of the country going on board, to demand those lots of slaves they had already agreed on; and, amongst those, the overseers of those plantations where I then chanced to be: the captain, who had given the word, ordered his men to bring up those noble slaves in fetters, whom I have spoken of; and having put 'em, some in one, and some in other lots, with women and children (which they call pickaninnies) they sold 'em off, as slaves, to several merchants and gentlemen; not putting any two in one lot, because they would separate 'em far from each other; nor daring to trust 'em together, lest rage and courage should put 'em upon contriving some great action, to the ruin of the colony.

(79) Oroonoko was first seized on, and sold to our overseer, who had the first lot, with seventeen more of all sorts and sizes, but not one of quality with him. When he saw this, he found what they meant; for, as I said, he understood English pretty well; and being wholly unarmed and defenseless, so as it was in vain to make any resistance, he only beheld the captain with a look all fierce and disdainful, upbraiding him with eyes that forced blushes on his guilty cheeks, he only cried in passing over the side of the ship, "Farewell, Sir, 'tis worth my sufferings to gain so true a knowledge both of you and of your gods by whom you swear." And desiring those that held him to forbear their pains, and telling 'em he would make no resistance, he cried, "Come, my fellow-slaves, let us descend, and see if we can meet with more honor and honesty in the next world we shall touch upon." So he nimbly leaped into the boat, and showing no more concern, suffered himself to be rowed up the river, with his seventeen companions.

1. Behn visited colonial South America sometime between 1663 and 1664.
2. Surinam was a British sugar colony on the east coast of Venezuela in South America. Today, it is the Republic of Suriname.
3. This name popped up in lots of "animals of the New World" lists from this time, but we're not sure what animal exactly it was supposed to be—probably the lion-headed marmoset or rice rat, based on other descriptions.
4. The Royal Society's natural history museum in London
5. butterflies, not actual flies
6. This was the title character of a popular 1664 play (co-authored by Dryden), which had a famously lavish production, including "speckled plumes" and feather headdresses.
7. about one foot
8. Pay attention to this idea, which will keep popping up: Behn is criticizing Christianity as a toxic influence on non-Christian natives, who exist in a kind of natural moral perfection without the devices of organized religion.
9. Coramantien (in modern day Ghana) wasn't actually a country—it was a British-held fort and slave market on Africa's Gold Coast. The Cormantines, as the native people came to be called, were much sought-after as slaves because of their physical beauty, fierceness in war, and the dignity with which they bore the decided indignity of slavery.
10. Technically, the word Moor refers to a Muslim from Maghreb, but Moor at this time (and in Shakespeare's) was a more generic term used for any dark-skinned person—including people from Africa and the Arabian empire.
11. Charles I, who was beheaded in 1649 during the civil war between Royalists and Parliamentarians. This suggests that Behn was a James II supporter—though James would be forced into exile and replaced by William and Mary within the year.
12. This is kind of skeezy, but the notion of singling out African people for special praise because they had European features or morality was a whole thing in the 1600s.
13. Women who had aged out of the king's harem
14. This may not seem like particularly exciting or intricate plotting to you, but you are looking at a literary innovation right here. This double plot (Oroonoko's plotting to get close to Imoinda while the king is plotting to keep Oroonoko away from Imoinda) was a major literary innovation, and many other writers would copy its tension-building effects.
15. In spite of. Oroonoko is basically saying here that he will die before the king dies, that he remains loyal to the king in spite of the Imoinda incident.

WEEK 5

LITERATURE: Oroonoko

16. *If you've read The Iliad, this passage may remind you of Achilles, who retreats to his tent and stops fighting after Agamemnon claims the slave-girl Achilles won in war for his own.*
17. *It's ironic that the captain says he can't trust a "heathen" to keep his word of honor (that's what parole means here), but he's actually the one who has behaved in an untrustworthy way. Because breaking his word is outside Oroonoko's moral code, he is at a disadvantage against the captain, whose morality is more flexible.*
18. *Notice that the conditions of slavery have already been imposed on Oroonoko on the ship as he makes promises that limit his authority in the hopes of securing his freedom.*

☐ Do a quick comprehension check.

You should be able to answer these questions using just what you've read:

- What's actually happening in this selection? Try to summarize the story in a couple of succinct sentences.
- What is Oroonoko's relationship to the ruler of Coramantien? What is his relationship to Imoinda?
- What kind of person is Oroonoko? What does he look like, and how does he behave? How does Behn use these descriptions to characterize Oroonoko as a hero?
- What happens to Imoinda? What does Oroonoko think happens to her?
- What sort of relationship does Oroonoko have with the European slave traders before he is kidnapped?
- How does the captain trick Oroonoko and his friends?
- How does Oroonoko fight back? Why does this "vex," or bother, the captain?
- What is the deal that the captain tries to make with Oroonoko?

☐ Consider the following questions—you don't need to write down answers, but you should be able to answer all of these questions, so go back through if there's a question that stumps you.

These questions are designed to help you think more carefully about what you've read—not just what it says but also why it matters, what it suggests, and how it might fit into the wider world of knowledge and experience.

- Compare and contrast Oroonoko and the king of Coramantien. Compare and contrast Oroonoko and the slave trader captain. What do these differences and similarities suggest about Oroonoko's character?
- Is Oroonoko like the other Africans in the book? How do you know, and why does that matter?
- What does Oroonoko learn about the differences between his values and those of the captain? In what sense does Oroonoko lose a certain innocence about the world?
- What is the author's view of slavery in general? What is her view of Oroonoko's slavery in particular?
- How does Oroonoko view slavery before he is kidnapped by the captain?
- Behn was a supporter of James II and the absolute power of kings. What in Oroonoko supports this idea? What doesn't?
- This book starts out with a version of a traditional Oriental Romance, a genre that involved an innocent and beautiful girl being captured by a tyrannical despot and forced into his harem, from which she must be rescued by the noble hero who really deserves her. Why does she use a genre associated with the East for a novel set in Africa? What is she suggesting about the not-white-European world?
- Thomas Southerne almost immediately adapted Behn's novel into a play with one big difference: In his version Imoinda is white. What are some of the implications of that change?

WEEK 5
LITERATURE: *Oroonoko*

- ❑ Continue reading *Gulliver's Travels*. As you read Part 3, keep these questions in mind:
- What unusual trait does the island of Laputa possess?
 - What is the primary interest of the Laputan people?
 - What military advantage do the Laputans gain by the nature of their island that allows them to terrorize other nations?
 - The Grand Academy of Lagado parodies what famous British scientific institution?
 - Glubbdubdrib is a land inhabited by people with what unusual occupation?