

PLAYING ARAB:  
IMAGES OF EASTERNERS ON WESTERN STAGES

By Robert Myers  
American University of Beirut

To be published in the conference proceedings of  
“Connections and Ruptures: America and the Middle East,”  
the Third International CASAR Conference, Jan 7-9, 2010  
American University of Beirut

On October 14, 2001, *The Washington Post* published an article entitled “Terrorists by Another Name: The Barbary Pirates,” which examines parallels between the attacks on U.S. citizens and property by North Africans in the late 18th and early 19th centuries and the September 11th attack in New York. The article points out that the aggressors were both from Muslim countries and quotes Captain Glenn Voelz, a history instructor at the U.S. Military Academy, who says: “I’ve picked up a lot of parallels. Maybe we are fighting the same war.”<sup>1</sup> Although the term ‘the long war,’ in reference to the so-called ‘war on terror,’ had at this point not yet been coined, the proper response to such aggressors is summed up in the *Post* article by Dave McIntyre, a former dean at the National War College, who asserts that “because of their outlaw conduct--pirates, and modern-day terrorists put themselves outside the law.” “On the high seas,” says McIntyre, “if you saw a pirate, you sank the bastard. You assault pirates, you don’t arrest pirates.”<sup>2</sup>

Ironically, one of the first battles in this supposed ‘long war’ identified by Captain Voelz was fought not on the battlefield or on the high seas but on the stage, in 1794, when Susanna Rowson’s comic opera *Slaves in Algiers; or A Struggle for Freedom*, premiered in Philadelphia. Rowson’s play represents but one of several theatrical chapters in the relationship between ‘West’ and ‘East’ from the 18th- to the 20th-century that I would like to examine this afternoon. Although these episodes may appear to simply recapitulate ideological, political and military battles taking place off the stage, on closer examination it becomes clear that they embody complex and contradictory threads—connections and ruptures, if you will--in the relationship between the U.S. and the Arab/Muslim world.

On its surface at least, Rowson’s play would seem to constitute the sort of Manichean encounter between East and West that would warm the hearts of Dean McIntyre and Captain Voelz. The play belongs to a long tradition of captivity narratives—counter-ethnographies written by European-Americans held captive by non-Europeans, usually Native Americans—and, more specifically, Barbary captivity narratives, although in this case a clearly fictional one. The play dramatizes the story of Rebecca Constant and her son, who have been separated from her husband and daughter after the Revolutionary War, and who is now held hostage in Algiers by Ben Hassan. Two other Americans, Olivia and her father—whom we eventually discover are Rebecca’s daughter and husband—are also captives, held by the *Dey* of Algiers, Muley Moloc, along with Olivia’s *fiancé*. The story, as Amelia Howe Kritzer observes, presents

“two separate groups of characters: the captors, who inflict suffering on their victims... and the captives, who hold fast to their ideals while courageously struggling for freedom.”<sup>3</sup> In the play’s concluding dialogue—after the Americans have achieved their freedom through a series of implausible coincidences—the protagonist, Olivia, offers what is clearly intended to be the play’s overarching moral: “may Freedom spread her benign influence thro’ every nation, till the bright Eagle, united with the dove and the olive branch, waves high, the acknowledged standard of the world.”<sup>4</sup>

Nevertheless, the play—in spite of its improbable plot, imperial exhortations and melodramatic tone—is complicated, through both its text and context, in ways that preclude a simple equation of Easterner equals captor equals villain and vice-versa. For example, the play opens with Fetnah, whom the audience assumes is an Arab woman, who is the favorite concubine of Muley Moloc. We quickly discover, however, that her father, Ben Hassan, who is holding her American friend, Rebecca, captive, and who has sold Fetnah into slavery, is a Jew who has converted to Islam. Moreover, although Fetnah is completely under the sway of the *Dey*, she refuses to declare her love for him, asserting that she learned the value of freedom from Rebecca: “I am your slave... You bought my person of my parents, who loved gold better than they did their child, but my affections you could not buy.”<sup>5</sup>

According to Jeffrey Richards, in *Drama, Theatre, and Identity in the American New Republic*, Rowson, who, ironically, was the daughter of a British naval officer who was deported to England during the American Revolutionary War, has written a play that is “more dependent on earlier plays with Islamic characters than it is on current events.”<sup>6</sup> He points to a number of sources, most notably *Zara*, a translation/adaptation by the British playwright Aaron Hill of Voltaire’s *Zaïre*, a play based very loosely on historical events about two French crusaders held captive by a Turkish sultan of Jerusalem. Voltaire’s play is, above all, an allegory of the struggle between absolutism, represented by Eastern characters, and freedom, represented by Western characters. As such it was a relatively popular theatrical piece in the North American colonies during most of the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. (Theatres were ordered closed by the American authorities during the Revolutionary War). “Nevertheless, imbedded in the text of *Zara*,” writes Richards, “is a cultural history of representation of Islam that, in moments of crisis like that sparked by the Algerian captives in the 1780s and 1790s, would bring back the more literal meaning.”<sup>7</sup> Although Richards asserts that “what influences playwrights ... most is other plays rather than current events,” he here acknowledges that Rowson’s play can not be viewed in a historical vacuum, which further problematizes a timeless allegorical reading of the play.<sup>8</sup> Raymond Williams makes a similar argument for seeing dramatic works within a historical context when he offers a refined version of Hegel’s *zeitgeist* and Marx’s “superstructure,” which he refers to as the “structure of feeling”:

Dramatic conventions... are fundamentally related to the structure of feeling in that period. All the products of a community in a given period are... essentially related... In the study of a period, we may be able to reconstruct... the material life, the general social organization, and, to a large extent, the dominant ideas... And it seems to be true, from the nature of art, that it is from such a totality that the artist draws.<sup>9</sup>

Following Williams’ theory, it hardly seems a coincidence that, although there had been attacks against U.S. vessels in the 1780s, “the major public uproar” against the Barbary

pirates occurred in 1793, one year before the Philadelphia production of Rowson's play, when over 100 Americans were held in Algiers," in what Anne Myles describes as "the [United States'] first hostage crisis."<sup>10</sup>

There are several other aspects of Rowson's text and its history that severely undercut any straightforward reading of the play as a simple allegory of Western Enlightenment values versus Eastern barbarism. First, as previously mentioned, *Slaves in Algiers* participates in a larger tradition of factual and fictional "captive narratives" in which European settlers described their fate while held captive by Native Americans. One such emblematic text, a novelized account of a captivity by Anne Eliza Bleecker, *The History of Maria Kittle*, was published the year before Rowson's play premiered in Philadelphia, at the same time as a number of articles and texts appeared denouncing the holding of American hostages in North Africa. As Baepler writes, "The rise in popularity of the Barbary captivity narrative coincides not only with the growing number of U.S. sailors held in North African bondage... but also with the resurgent demand for Indian captivity tales..." "In some instances, publishers issued both Indian captivity narratives and Barbary captivity narratives. Matthew Carey in Boston, for example, published several of each, as well as... *Slaves in Algiers*"<sup>11</sup>

Not only did the rhetoric of Native American captivity tales profoundly inform Barbary captivity tales, the rhetoric of fictional and ostensibly non-fiction Barbary captivity tales informed one another. Baepler points to what he calls "the intertextuality of tropes and styles" in the two kinds of texts.<sup>12</sup> Rowson's text is also clearly informed by the rhetoric of the contemporary press. For example, in the prologue of the play, one of the actors in Rowson's play asks: "Or, shall the noble Eagle see her brood,/Beneath the pirate kite's fell claw subdued."<sup>13</sup> As Angela Sutton has pointed out, the term "corsair," which had been used in the innumerable reports in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* from 1750-1785 about sailors from the Barbary coast, was replaced for the first time in 1786--seven years before the premiere of Rowson's play in Philadelphia—with the term "pirate."<sup>14</sup>

Second, even viewers of the play in the 1790s could not have ignored the irony of a work that includes the word "slaves" in its title and presents "freedom" as the *sine qua non* of a fulfilled life being presented in a country in which such a large percentage of its own inhabitants were enslaved. For example, in 1799, William Eaton, a U.S. officer who was later involved in the First Barbary War, said, in response to those who denounced the conditions of Americans held captive in Algiers, "Barbary is hell—So, alas, is all America south of Pennsylvania."<sup>15</sup> More significantly, as president, Thomas Jefferson, who must have understood the irony of denouncing slavery abroad since he was himself a slave owner, considered capturing hostages from North Africa and exchanging them for U.S. hostages held in North Africa.<sup>16</sup> Paradoxically, the final implausible plot twist of Rowson's play is a slave rebellion, a response to slavery that when promoted by American abolitionists several decades later in the U.S. helped lead to a civil war.

The most crucial element in precluding any straightforward, Manichean reading of Rowson's play is, however, its unabashed proto-feminism. After a series of implausible plot turns--Rebecca refuses the overtures of Ben Hassan, who, she realizes, has already pocketed the ransom paid for her release, and then confronts the *Dey*, only to discover that her husband and daughter are also being held hostage, which is followed by an escape attempt by Ben Hassan in his wife's clothes, and a heartwarming reunion of the

Constant family and the other Americans, who look forward to their return to the land of freedom—the actor playing Rebecca, Susanna Rowson in the Philadelphia production, returns in the role of the playwright to deliver these final words, directed to the female members of the audience:

Well, ladies, tell me: how d’ye like my play?

“The creature has some sense methinks,”

“She says that we should have supreme dominion,

“And in good truth we’re all of her opinion.”<sup>17</sup>

Even if we had not been forewarned by Melani McAlister and others that the gendering of America as a female, especially as a female victim held hostage by lascivious barbarians, is perhaps the most clever guise in empire’s wardrobe, more recent chapters in the drama of ‘the long war’—the Pentagon’s spurious story of Jessica Lynch’s captivity in Iraq, and Lynndie England and her group photographs in Abu Ghraib—should certainly remind us.<sup>18</sup> On closer inspection, the reader realizes that the coda by Rowson is not the play’s only finale. The other is the humiliation of Eastern men: Muley Muloc, with his scimitar-sized moustache, who is threatened with being bastinadoed—i.e. beaten on his feet—until Olivia’s *fiancé*, Henry, intervenes, saying ‘we don’t do things like that,’ and the pusillanimous Ben Hassan, who slinks off in fear, dressed as a woman. In Rowson’s rendering, as in that of Lynndie England, the triumph of ‘freedom’ and the empowering of the American women who embody it in the struggle with the tyrannical Orient require the emasculation of Eastern men.

Ira Aldridge, the protagonist in the next dramatic chapter of the West’s ‘long war’ with the East I would like to examine, could have had no delusions about the extent of his freedom in the land of his birth. An African-American actor, who in his memoir claimed to descend from royal Senegalese lineage, was in fact born in New York City to free blacks in 1807. As he discovered when he was fifteen, however, the exercise of that freedom did not extend to presenting all-black productions of Shakespeare. In 1821, when Aldridge was fourteen, the African Theatre, a “*black corps dramatique*,” as the press described them, was arrested, ostensibly for creating a public disturbance, after presenting an all-black production of *Richard III* in New York, and its members were released only after “promising never to act Shakespeare again.”<sup>19</sup> Soon after, write Marshall and Stock in their biography of Aldridge, “the hardening of white prejudice against blacks carried with it the demise of the Negro theatre, but it was at this... time that the white actor Edwin Forrest ‘represented on the stage the Southern plantation negro...’ So the genuine Negro performers in America were forced out to make way for the white ‘nigger minstrels.’”<sup>20</sup>

It was in this environment that Aldridge left New York for London, to seek an acting career in England. He eventually performed all over the U.K., in Germany, Poland, elsewhere in Eastern Europe, Russia and Constantinople (unfortunately no written record of his performances there has yet been found). As a result, the finest African-American actor of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century—indeed one of the finest actors of the 19<sup>th</sup> century--remains largely unknown in his native land. Aldridge’s roles included Shylock and Lear—which he eventually performed in Berlin in white face—a number of lesser-known roles such as Mungo the slave in *The Padlock*, and Oroonoko, an African prince who becomes a slave, in a play by the same name. Much of his repertory, however, consisted of playing “Moors,” such as Aaron in *Titus Andronicus*, Muley Hassan in Schiller’s *Fiesco*, and

Zanga in *The Revenge*. The latter play, written in 1721, combines elements of Aphra Behn's *Abdelazar* or *The Moor's Revenge*, *Othello* and Marlowe's *Lust Dominion*.<sup>21</sup> Not surprisingly, however, the role for which Aldridge ultimately became famous in Great Britain and in Europe and Russia was Othello. He premiered in the title role of the play at Covent Garden in 1833, five months after a hugely successful production featuring Edmund Kean and William Macready, England's two most renowned actors of the period. Kean, like every other Othello since the Jacobean period, had performed the play in blackface, and Aldridge was the first black actor in the play's history to perform the role of Othello.<sup>22</sup>

There are several aspects of Aldridge's life, acting career and portrayal of Othello that bear directly upon this brief study of Western portrayals of Easterners. First, the critical response to Aldridge's 1833 performance of Othello was tepid, perhaps because he was seen to be displacing Kean, who was a British icon, but more likely because off the stage Aldridge, like his onstage character, had a white wife and was thought to have white lovers. As Lisa Starks has noted, Othello and Desdemona's bed "was the preoccupation of stage performances... from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century. On the stage the bed was hidden from sight, while ironically it remained the central obsession of audiences... Othello and Desdemona's sex life culminated in the death scene, when the imagined bed was shown and the act of sexual intercourse between the black Othello and his white bride envisioned on stage as murder."<sup>23</sup> Here the trope of the triumph of white Western female virtue over barbarian, Eastern sexuality one sees in *Slaves in Algiers* is, if not entirely inverted, at least rendered far more problematic. That is, of course, if one sees Othello as portrayed by Aldridge as Eastern as well as black, which so few critics during his career in the U.K. and Europe did, and which few do even today. Perhaps this omission is due to the preoccupation with miscegenation in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the current vogue of studies of minstrelsy among theatre scholars. In *Ira Aldridge: The African Roscius*, a collection of essays on Aldridge published in 2007 by Rochester Press, Joyce MacDonald does point out that, "Desdemona herself admits she was won through her sensitivity to an exotically Orientalizing narrative of Othello's origins."<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, the words "Orient" and "Arab" do not even appear in the index, although there are many entries for "Moor." Aldridge may be partly responsible for this exclusion by inventing a false genealogy, apparently for promotional purposes, that both parallels Othello's in the play and locates his own roots in West Africa. Moreover, even as Aldridge was performing Othello in Covent Garden, Parliament was "engaged in debates that culminated in the passage... of a bill emancipating British-owned slaves in the West Indies," and clearly some critics' opinions of his performance were informed by their positions on the question of slavery.<sup>25</sup>

It is, however, beyond dispute that the Othello in Shakespeare's play has many aspects of an Easterner. One could argue, in fact, that he is the embodiment of Eastern otherness in modern literature. In *Norton's Shakespeare*, for example, Stephen Greenblatt defines a Moor as "a Muslim of the mixed Berber and Arab people," although he qualifies this assertion by suggesting that the imagery of blackness associated with the title character implies that Othello is a sub-Saharan black.<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, in Shakespeare's play, Othello defeats the Turks in a fictional rendering of the Battle of Lepanto, and when he marries Desdemona he brings her from Venice, Europe's portal to the East, to the island of Cyprus, where most of the play is set. Perhaps more

significantly, at the end of the play one sees in his words and in his self-inflicted demise his Easternness at war with his Westernness, which, one could argue, is the central conflict in the play:

Set you down this,  
And say besides that in Aleppo once,  
Where a malignant and turbaned Turk  
Beat a Venetian and traduced the state,  
I took by th' throat the circumsised dog  
And smote him thus<sup>27</sup>

It is no surprise that many of the characters in Aldridge's repertory of Moors, swarthy Easterners and African slaves conflate blackness and Easternness, as does the figure of Othello himself. And, although Aldridge tried to pass himself off as a Senegalese royal, he was also an American—and thus, at least nominally, Western—and the first black to play *Othello* on the European stage. He was also very likely the first non-European to play an Oriental. It is through his career, as well as through the obvious conflation of Native American and North African Muslim in Rowson's play and the paradoxes these pairings necessarily provoke concerning slavery, North American genocide and the lawlessness of broken treaties in the U.S., that we can begin to see how thoroughly the facile dichotomies of East and West, freedom and tyranny, had dissolved before the first shot was fired in Captain Goelz's 'long war.'

I would like to conclude with characterizations of Arabs that appear in two twentieth-century plays, one British, from the 1950s, *Look Back in Anger*, by John Osborne, and the other American, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, from the 1960s. They are of particular interest, in part, for the ways in which they so thoroughly invert Rowson's trope of Western female righteousness, as opposed to Eastern tyranny, and so clearly disclose the imperial agendas of their white male characters. Osborne's play, which premiered in London in 1956, was praised by the British critic Kenneth Tynan for its "instinctive leftishness."<sup>28</sup> It is, therefore, odd to revisit the play and see how quickly the protagonist displays his loathing for women and Easterners. Soon after the curtain goes upon in the dreary Midlands' attic apartment where the play's trio resides, on a Sunday afternoon when Jimmy and Cliff are reading the newspapers while Alison, Jimmy's upper-class wife, stands ironing clothes, Jimmy, without any provocation, turns to Cliff and says:

Have you ever noticed how noisy women are? (*Crosses below chairs to L.C.*)  
Have you? The way they kick the floor about, simply walking over it? Or  
have you watched them sitting at their dressing tables, dropping their weapons  
and banging down their bits of boxes and brushes and lipsticks?

*He faces her dressing table.*

I've watched her doing it night after night. When you see a woman in front of  
her bedroom mirror, you realize what a refined sort of butcher she is.  
(*Turns in.*) Did you ever see some dirty old Arab, sticking his fingers into  
some mess of lamb fat and gristle? Well, she's just like that. Thank God they  
don't have many women surgeons! Those primitive hands would have your  
guts out in no time.<sup>29</sup>

This unprovoked rant is in fact Jimmy's second attack on Alison in the first few minutes of the play. He has already chastised her for expressing no opinion about a

newspaper she's not yet read because she is ironing: "...Does the White Woman's Burden make it impossible to think?," he asks.<sup>30</sup>

Since Alison is the daughter of a Colonel who has served in India, it is ironic to see her first attacked because she is aligned with imperial power, and shortly thereafter because she is like the vilest of colonial subjects. However, before her father, the Colonel, appears in their attic apartment to take his daughter away and recounts his feelings of displacement on his return to England, Jimmy has already unmasked himself as not only a misogynist but as someone who looks back nostalgically at the colonial enterprise:

I hate to admit it, but I can understand how her Daddy must have felt when he came back from England. The Edwardian brigade do make their brief little world look pretty tempting... What a romantic picture. Phoney too, of course... Still, even I regret it somehow...<sup>31</sup>

Just before he looks back longingly at British imperialism in India, Jimmy says, "Somebody said—what was it—we get our cooking from Paris (that's a laugh), our politics from Moscow, and our morals from Port Said."<sup>32</sup> Not only does Jimmy, and by extension Osborne, here again disparage the Arabs, but he does so by simultaneously suggesting that they are amoral and, perhaps unconsciously, by pointing to the last bastion of the British Empire, i.e. Port Said. It is indeed a striking coincidence that 1956, the same year that *Look Back in Anger* was produced, the Suez crisis, which had been brewing for several years and which signaled the collapse of the crumbling British colonial enterprise was centered in Port Said. Not surprisingly the newly powerless colonialists, or sympathizers like Jimmy, lashed out with anger at the only ones they still had some power over—women, like Allison, standing at their ironing boards. Moreover, Jimmy, right after his admission that he understands the Edwardians' nostalgia, laments the fact that "it's pretty dreary living in the American Age—unless you're an American of course. Perhaps all our children will be Americans."<sup>33</sup>

The character George, in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, which premiered six years after Osborne's play, at the height of East/West tensions during the Cuban missile crisis, clearly seems related to Osborne's protagonist. Not only is his weapon against women—both Martha and Honey—words, he is, like Jimmy, a physically ineffectual intellectual. Among Martha's most vicious provocations against George is her humiliating story to the guests about George's novel and the fact that her father would not allow him to publish it. George strikes back by comparing Martha, quite gratuitously, as Jimmy does Allison, to a barbaric Arab:

MARTHA: You make me sick.

GEORGE: It's perfectly all right for you... I mean, you can make your own rules... you can go around like a hopped-up Arab, slashing away at everything in sight, scarring up half the world if you want to. But somebody else try it... no sir.<sup>34</sup>

Elsewhere he displays uncharacteristic ignorance when, in offering a litany of the drinking habits of various nationalities and ethnic groups, he boldly states that "Arabs don't drink," which is why, one assumes, he believes if they get "hopped-up" they will scar up half the world.<sup>35</sup> In the same way that Jimmy laments the loss of the British Empire, George, the erudite and articulate academic presages colonial attitudes received from the British—and their allies at Suez: the French and the Israelis—along with a

woeful ignorance about the world that will soon come to haunt the burgeoning American Empire. In both of these plays, Arabs are convenient scapegoats, who, like women, supposedly need to be dominated because they lack the ability to control themselves. Martha and Alison, the female characters in Osborne and Albee's plays, who are now equated with the despised and tyrannical enemy of *Slaves in Algiers*, have certainly come a long way from Rowson's Rebecca and her other female exemplars of Western freedom.

---

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Richard Leiby. "Terrorists by Another Name: The Barbary Pirates." *The Washington Post*. October 14, 2001.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. According to Tim Harper in the *Toronto Star*: "Although the first use of the term 'Long War' is credited in 2006 to General John Abizaid, the U.S. Central Comman chief, it really had its coming out January 31 [,2006] in the U.S. president's State of the Union address. 'Our generation is in a long war against a determined enemy,' Bush said. The article refers to the new name as "re-branding" the "War on Terror." February 12, 2006.

<sup>3</sup> Amelia Howe Kritzer. "Comedies by Early American Women." *Cambridge Companion to American Women Playwrights*. Brenda Murphy, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 3-18; 6.

<sup>4</sup> Susanna Haswell Rowson. *Slaves in Algiers. Plays by Early American Women, 1775-1850*. Amelia Howe Kritzer, ed. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1995) 55-96; 93.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>6</sup> Jeffrey H. Richards. *Drama, Theatre, and Identity in the American New Republic*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 143.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 144.

<sup>9</sup> Raymond Williams and Michael Orom. "Film and the Dramatic Tradition." 1954. *The Raymond Williams Reader*. Ed. John Higgins. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 33.

<sup>10</sup> Anne G. Myles. "Slaves in Algiers, Captives in Iraq: The Strange Career of the Barbary Captivity Narrative." [www.common-place.org](http://www.common-place.org) 5, 1 (October 2004), 2.

<sup>11</sup> Paul Baepler, ed. *White Slaves, African Masters: An Anthology of American Barbary Captivity Narratives*. (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1999), 24.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>13</sup> Rowson, 59.

<sup>14</sup> "Atlantic Orientalism: How Language in Jefferson's America Defeated the Barbary Pirates" [www.darkmatter101.org](http://www.darkmatter101.org), 6. As Sutton writes, "In the mid-1780s, however, the letters and articles in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* begin to reflect the type of language found in captivity narratives. The July 26 edition of 1786 marks the first time the sea-rovers off the coast of North Africa are referred to as 'pirates' instead of 'corsairs.' After 1786, the term 'Barbary pirate' appears with regularity." Although the term "Barbary" does not appear in Rowson's text, it is clearly the milieu of the captives and would have been seen by the viewers as such. As Baepler writes: "Most scholars agree that Barbary originated from the Greek barbaros or the Latin barbarus to signify non-Greeks or non-Romans, and thus uncivilized populations" (2). One need only recall Iago's admonition to Brabantio in *Othello* that his daughter is "making the beast with two backs" "with a Barbary horse" (Greenblatt ed., I.1 116-117, 111-112, p. 2103) to confirm that the term—and, by extension, the milieu and its people—is pejorative. As Sutton points out, the concept of "Barbary" peoples is a European conflation of a wide variety of non-Europeans who inhabited North Africa. This complex variety can be seen most clearly in Rowson's play in the figure of Ben Hassan, a Jewish convert to Islam, although in her rendering he is a "renegado," a traitor to his religion, and a despicable anti-Jewish stereotype, who speaks in a caricatured accent and has sold his own daughter into slavery.

<sup>15</sup> Cited in Myles, 4.

<sup>16</sup> Baepler, 3. In the introduction to *White Slaves*, Baepler also discusses at length the irony of the U.S. holding thousands of actual chattel slaves who were Muslims.

<sup>17</sup> Rowson, 94.

<sup>18</sup> McAlister "Saving Private Lynch." *The New York Times*, April 6, 2003. Myles cites Barbara Ehrenreich, who writes that: "A certain kind of feminism, or perhaps a certain kind of feminist naiveté, died in Abu

---

Ghraib.” “[E]verything that the Islamic fundamentalists believe characterizes Western culture, all nicely arranged in one hideous image: imperial arrogance, sexual depravity... and gender equality” (4).

<sup>19</sup> Marshall, 35, 36.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 36, 37.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. 70.

<sup>22</sup> Joyce Green MacDonald, “Acting Black: Othello, Othello Burlesques, and the Performance of Blackness.” Bernth Lindfors (ed.) *Ira Aldridge: The African Roscius*, 135.

<sup>23</sup> Cited in Nicholas M. Evans “Ira Aldridge Shakespeare and Minstrelsy.” Bernth Lindfors (ed.), 167.

<sup>24</sup> MacDonald, 147.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 136.

<sup>26</sup> Shakespeare, 2101. As Walter Cohen writes in the introduction to *Othello* in the Norton edition: “In Act 1, Othello was asked to defend the Venetians from the Turks—that is, to defend Christianity against a Muslim people with whom Moors were traditionally linked on religious and military grounds. An orthodox Christian and loyal servant of the state, he readily agreed. Here, in Act 5, he recalls that he had also done so once before. But his recollection is the occasion for his suicide, a deed that splits him in two. Othello is both agent and object of injustice, both servant and enemy of the Christian state. He is and is not the Turk” (2098).

<sup>27</sup> 5.2, 360-365, 2172.

<sup>28</sup> Dominic Shellard. *British Theater Since the War* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2000), 52.

<sup>29</sup> John Osborne. *Look Back in Anger: A Play in Three Acts* (London: Faber, 1957), 24.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. 17.

<sup>34</sup> Edward Albee. *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* 151-152. Much of the material for the analyses of Osborne and Albee’s plays is drawn from my own “Nile Queens, Arabian Princes, Hard-Working Turks and Dirty Old Arabs: Images of Easterners in Modern Western Plays.” *Culture Critique*, Vol 1, 2, July 2009. As I point out in that article, Albee’s play was produced two years after the release of Otto Preminger’s *Exodus*, a highly influential film in which, according to Jack Shaheen in *Reel Bad Arabs* (New York: Olive Brank-Interlink, 2001), Arab fighters are at one point equated with “storm troopers” and the word “Palestinian,” at least referring to an Arab, is never mentioned (191). For a more extended analysis of the film and its impact on the “structure of feeling” in the US in the 1960s and later, refer to the analysis of *Exodus* that Amy Kaplan offers in this volume.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 106.