TO KIERAN AND LIAM
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INTRODUCTION

From Bradstreet to Poe

he specter of the East haunts the literature of colonial British America and the new United States from the earliest promotional pamphlets to the most aesthetically sophisticated works of art of the American Renaissance. Take, for instance, the writings of John Smith, hailed as the author of “the first American book.”¹ Having traveled through virtually all parts of the known world in his quest, first, to do battle with Muslims, and, then, to help subdue New World Natives, Smith singles out “Cathay and Chyna” as “the most famous Kingdomes in the world.”² Or let us choose another beginning point, the poetry of the devout New England Puritan Anne Bradstreet, labeled the “first authentic poetic artist in America’s history” by one critic and identified by another as the poet who brought “forth a newborn, New World poetry.”³ To whom does she compare the most revered monarch of her age? She finds the fittest comparison to Queen Elizabeth in “Zenobia, potent Empress of the East.”⁴ Edward Taylor casts the human soul’s most “Elemental Frame” as a “China Dish” in one poem, then in another uses the very same figure of a “China Dish” to represent the beauty of God’s creation.⁵ In the most popular book other than the Bible in seventeenth-century New England, a book whose 1,800-line poem “The Day of Doom” was memorized by schoolchildren in New England for over a century, Michael Wigglesworth tells his readers how “The Eastern Conquerour was said to weep, / When he the Indian Ocean did view.”⁶

Lest we think those closer to the founding of the United States lost their appetite for the East, we find, quite the contrary, that the men and
women who put their very lives on the line to help bring the United States into being turned Eastward just as much as, if not more than, America's first British colonists. In the same month the Declaration of Independence was signed, no less a figure than Benjamin Franklin compared the British Empire itself to “a fine and noble China Vase.” Apparently, Franklin quite liked the phrase; he repeated it seven years later in a letter to an English correspondent who was worried that the new “confederation [of states] may be annihilated” by dissension from within. Franklin sought to assuage his correspondent’s fears by assuring him that “there is sense enough in America to take care of their own china vase.” Figures of the Orient leave their mark long after the Revolution, too, even—and perhaps especially—among those writers who have traditionally been cast as the founders of a distinctively American literary tradition. Take, for instance, Washington Irving. While we know Irving as the author of the *Sketchbook,* we tend to forget those works devoted exclusively to the East that were enormously popular among nineteenth-century readers, including *A Conquest of Granada* and *Tales of the Alhambra.* We need look no further than Nathaniel Hawthorne’s hypercanonical *Scarlet Letter* to find another instance among many other possible examples of the presence of the East in the very period during which the nation’s literature came of age. For Hawthorne characterizes Hester Prynne, that most American of creations in his most penetrating examination of American history and culture, as having “in her nature a rich, voluptuous, Oriental characteristic.”

Figures of the East served important rhetorical functions for American writers not only in radically different historical periods but also from remarkably different—indeed, sometimes even combative or contradictory—ideological, regional, religious, political, and personal perspectives. Those who advocated colonization for the sake of empire, those who saw it as part of the Lord’s work, and those who envisioned it as a way to wealth all turn Eastward to make their case. British American writers in Massachusetts call on these figures, as do writers in Pennsylvania and the staple colonies such as Virginia and Georgia in the South. Male writers use these figures, but then so, too, do female writers. Figures of the East appear in the most celebrated of works from the period by the most widely praised of authors, and they appear just as often in works known only to the most well-read specialists in the field. These figures can be found in those works popular in the period, and they can be found in those works passed over by contemporary audiences.

The extraordinary interest in the people, places, and things of the East shown by British American readers and writers from the sixteenth well into
the nineteenth centuries should hardly surprise us. After all, Europeans
recognized the landmass that would come to be called “America” only after
countless ships sailed west in Christopher Columbus’s wake in hopes they
might locate a quicker route to the riches of the East. Even after Europe-
ans and people of European descent living in America realized the glaring
flaws in their geographical knowledge by acknowledging the existence of a
considerable body of land separating them from the East Indies, these very
same people continued to invest enormous amounts of money, time, and
labor, not to mention the lives of many a sailor, searching for a Northwest
Passage that would accomplish what had eluded those earlier voyages, but
this time with an ironic twist. Those who sought a Northwest Passage after
the European recognition of America sought not just a quicker route to the
East, but also, it is important to point out, a quicker route to the East that
specifically avoided the New World as much as possible.8

For many in Europe and America, then, the New World was as much
an obstacle as an opportunity. Scholars long ago established that many
Europeans and Anglo-Americans before 1800 viewed North America as the
home of unparalleled possibilities for the less fortunate and potential profit
for all. We have focused significantly less attention on the implications of
the determined effort on both sides of the Atlantic, on the one hand, to
find a Northwest Passage but also, at the same time, to produce Eastern
goods in America. This effort cast America’s chief value in terms of the
place that Europeans had wanted America to be but was not. In this way, at
least, America’s value derived from its relation to the East. British American
colonists as well as those who helped forge a new nation thus lived in the
shadow of a land they neither occupied nor equaled. The discursive systems
of the British American colonies and new nation, systems that helped give
meaning to the lives of the first Anglo-Americans, came into being by
establishing their value in terms of what they were not; they established their
value, that is, by serving as pathways to the true object of European desire,
not as communities whose value derived from what they and they alone had
to offer.

If America could never be the East, British American writers and
those of the new nation could, at least, use the infinitely greater cultural
power granted Eastern people, places, and things in their own quest for
acknowledgment as a truly civilized community by European and Creole
intellectuals. Writers in the British American colonies and the early United
States used these figures to ward off accusations that the people who lived
in the many communities springing to life across the Eastern Seaboard of
North America lacked the necessary refinement and gentility to be classified
as truly “civilized” peoples.9 As I hope to demonstrate in the chapters that follow, some of the most important British American writers, in a variety of forms and for a variety of reasons, show remarkable consistency in their contention that the way early American culture could equal—and perhaps even surpass—its supposed social superiors in Europe was for American literature and culture to become more Oriental. That is, writers of what we have come to call early American literature offered the East as a solution to America’s inferior civilized status by suggesting that America become more civilized, not by becoming more European—or perhaps not only by becoming more European—but by adopting aesthetic styles and standards long associated with an East cast as superior aesthetically to both America and Europe.10

Before I lay out this argument in greater detail, though, I must first address a fundamental question of terminology on which the argument depends. It is all well and good to argue that early American writers turned to figures of the East to argue for the civilized nature of colonial culture, but such an argument depends entirely on what counts as “East.” In the chapters that follow, the case for the importance of figures of the East in early American literature has been made using definitions of the “East” contemporaneous with the writings on which each chapter focuses. Doing so leads us not only to different definitions of what counts as East and West on the globe but also to sets of assumptions about the relation between the various parts of the globe, and sets of associations attached to various parts of the globe, that differ from modern ones. It is not, in other words, simply that the writers in question divide the world differently than we do. For the most part, the writers examined in this study attached different concepts, values, and ideas to particular places and peoples on the globe than we do. Since these concepts, values, and ideas were integral to producing a text’s various meanings and implications, we must pay them special attention here. These unstated assumptions, rules, and associations constitute what I call a “symbolic spatial economy.”

I use the term “symbolic spatial economy” to indicate the unstated set of assumptions that form the complex, sometimes contradictory, system of symbols that allow the ideas, images, and concepts associated with any particular geographic space on the globe to seem only natural. Words relating to physical geography are, after all, no less figurative than words that do not refer to physical spaces on the globe where people live, work, and die. “India,” for instance, refers to the spot on the globe we have come to call “India” but not because of some inherent relationship between “India,” the signifier, and “India,” the actual place being signified.11 Just like any other
word in a language, those words referring to particular spaces on the globe carry with them not only a literal meaning—the literal space on the globe to which the word refers—but also a range of connotations. Words relating to spaces on the globe, that is, carry symbolic resonance just as any other words in the language do. These symbolic associations are not random, but they do not necessarily correspond to what can be considered objectively true of the people and places of that region of the earth. They make sense only in the context of some larger signifying systems, what Foucault has famously called “discursive systems.” Words relating to physical geography, I would suggest, are the products of the subset of those signifying systems relating to geography, a subset that structures and organizes the symbolic meanings attached to physical space, a structuring system that can be likened to an economy. This system teaches us not only to associate certain parts of the globe with certain ideas, images, and concepts, but also and in the same moment teaches us so well that the very productive capacity of the system becomes invisible to us. We come to think of the associations that grow out of this economy as preexisting our way of understanding the world rather than being borne directly out of that understanding.

Of course, as integral parts of larger systems of meanings, the associations attached to any distinct space on the globe are not isolated from or unrelated to the associations linked to any other part of the globe. Indeed, they are, ultimately, dependent on one another for their meaning. In this way, if the images associated with one spot on the map are altered, other spots that are unrelated geographically might, through this change in associated imagery, also undergo a change. The symbolic spatial economy, then, represents a fluid and flexible way of organizing the world rather than a static monolith of meanings.

In order to see the symbolic spatial economy at work in the texts under investigation in this book, I have used the definition of “East” operative at the time of the work about which I am writing. This is not to say that a single, uniform definition of the “East” existed across even a single language community during the period. Not only did the “East” include different parts of the globe at different moments in British American writing over the period, but disagreements over just which parts of the globe should be classified as “East” and which as “West” occurred during the period as well. The proper category for the land and people of Greece, for instance, was a source of considerable dispute. Was it in the East or the West?12 No matter what precise region one’s definition of the East included in this period, though, the “East” for all British American and early national writers included a much larger section of the map than we currently assign it,
and the discriminations we make between and among, for instance, the Far East, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and so forth, simply did not exist. The East for Anglophone writers well into the nineteenth century included both China and Persia; it included North Africa and Russia; it included Turkey and India; and sometimes it included Egypt. During the period this study covers, Jerusalem and other Christian holy lands were considered part of the Orient. As Martin W. Lewis and Kären E. Wigen point out in *The Myth of Continents*, classifying such a vast geographic territory with an enormously diverse collection of cultures “into a single regional category was seldom questioned” until late in the 1800s. This does not mean that writers in the period saw no difference between the people and/or products of these various locales. The “hither” East was sometimes differentiated from the “farther” East. Hegel was the first to draw “sharp and essential distinctions between different parts of Asia” when he cast “hither” and “farther” Asia as “essentially different from each other.” Hegel, though, was the exception rather than the rule. The vast majority of European and Anglophone writers before and immediately after Hegel understood the East as a single region whose communities, however different, constituted a distinct part of the globe whose peoples shared certain fundamental characteristics and features.

At least until the middle of the nineteenth century, then, the “East” not only covered an enormous portion of the globe but also cast as a single unit groups of people with very different institutions, beliefs, body types, and customs. While the people who inhabited this region were not cast as identical to one another, the logic that allows for these different peoples and places to be categorized together, as a single though diverse unit, gives some sense of how, at times and in important ways, these differences could be overlooked in favor of what were understood to be fundamental similarities. That the figure of the “East” could be understood to include all these different peoples tells us something about the way British American and early national writers organized the world in which they lived. At least at the level of the figure, the similarities between what we consider disparate places on the map exerted more power than those differences that, at least from the perspective of the discursive system in operation at the time, were of secondary significance.

The geographic “East” signified in the figures this study investigates was hardly an empty space, though; nor were its inhabitants utterly powerless in the process of social construction. Quite the contrary. As I note above, a diverse and rich group of peoples and cultures lived in the enormous geographic area classified as “East” by Americans before 1860, and many of
these communities played crucial roles, in some cases, even the dominant roles, in the world’s economy in this period.\textsuperscript{17} Given this study’s specific focus on figures of the East in the discursive system of British America and the early United States, though, I have largely avoided discussion of the role played in the production of those meanings attached to figures of the East during this historical period by those who lived in the East at the time or, for that matter, by individuals from Asia who travelled to or lived in Europe or British America in the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries. The absence of such people and/or groups of people from this study should not be taken as an implicit argument that they had absolutely no impact on the implications of the figures under investigation. Compared with the impact of more local practices of book production, distribution, and readership, though, the influence of Oriental peoples on the meanings of the figures I consider was small enough that it need not be treated in detail here.

The binary division of the globe by peoples of European descent into the different regions of “East” and “West,” with their attendant symbolic associations, is, itself, a social production rather than an unmediated representation of a preexistent physical geography, a production whose emergence can be witnessed at the very beginning of the period this book covers. The dominant modern meanings of “East” and “West” were forged during the early modern period.\textsuperscript{18} As Jerry Brotton demonstrates, “Geographical antecedents of the geographers of the early modern world lacked any perception of a directional ‘east,’ or even of the very distinction between the geographical and symbolic concepts of ‘west’ and ‘east.’”\textsuperscript{19} Brotton goes on to argue that while “no . . . geographical or imaginative line of demarcation firmly existed between a political East and West in the early modern world,” such a conception developed only gradually from the 1500s through the 1700s when “Europe as a geographical and political entity” began to emerge.\textsuperscript{20} Instead, up through the late seventeenth century—the very period when Bradstreet produced her poetry and when it was published in Boston—“the east was not a separate, mysterious space antithetical to the developing ideals of European civilization,” Brotton shows, but, on the contrary, a space “filled with myriad territories from which early modern scholars imbibed spiritual, intellectual, and material sustenance.”\textsuperscript{21}

In examining works of American literature in relation to geographic space, I am not treading new ground but following in footsteps that begin at the field’s very roots. Scholars in the 1920s who succeeded in legitimating American literature as a worthwhile field of academic study used Frederick Jackson Turner’s “frontier thesis” as the basic structuring element in the development of a distinctly American literature.\textsuperscript{22} A cursory glance at the
titles of some of the most important works of scholarship on American literature before 1860—from *Virgin Land* to *The Fatal Environment* to *The Lay of the Land* to *American Incarnation: The Individual, the Nation, and the Continent*—shows how geographic figures have helped shape the way we understand writing classified as American. More recently, the field has witnessed a resurgence of interest in the problem of space, especially in relation to writing before 1900. Ralph Bauer’s *The Cultural Geography of Colonial American Literature* insists, “We must place literary history in the context not only of the historical but also of the spatial dialectics that were foundational in the making of modernity,” while Martin Brückner’s *The Geographic Revolution in Early America* investigates the importance of geographic space by examining the way in which “the construction of the American subject was grounded in the textual experience of geography.” Such works have enabled my very ability to reconstruct the symbolic spatial economy of the period so that I can see the many figures of the East appearing right before my eyes as I read through the archive of British American and early national writings.

Just as I am hardly the first scholar to investigate American literature in relation to matters relating to space, so, too, have previous analyses directed our attention toward various aspects of the Orient in early America. Before Edward Said’s *Orientalism*, scholars generally took references to the Orient in early America as evidence of the diversity and open-mindedness of the canonical figures of America’s literary tradition. As examples of this trend, I would point to Frederic Ives Carpenter’s *Emerson and Asia* in 1930 and Arthur E. Christy’s *The Orient in American Transcendentalism* two years later, as well as Dorothee Metlitsky Finkelstein’s *Melville's Orienta* in 1961 and David Reynolds’s discussion in *Faith in Fiction* (1981) of the Oriental tale in America before 1830. More recent works such as A. Owen Aldridge’s 1993 *The Dragon and the Eagle: The Presence of China in the American Enlightenment* follows in this tradition, as does Arthur Versluis’s *American Transcendentalism and Asian Religion*, also from 1993, which offers without question the most detailed study of Orientalism in nineteenth-century American literature. While conceding Said’s point that Transcendentalist writers practice some intellectual colonialism in their adaptation of Oriental materials for their purposes, Versluis adheres more closely to the perspective established by Christy. Versluis reads American Transcendentalists’ use of Asian religions not primarily as an instance of the kind of Orientalism Said identified but, instead, as evidence of the willingness of these writers to embrace even the most “esoteric” ideas. While I argue that figures of the East played a key role in the way early American authors sought to present...
themselves as part of a civilized culture, Versluis argues that engagement with Oriental religious materials was “at the center of the entire American Transcendentalist movement.”

Scholars writing in the wake of Said and in the fields of postcolonial and colonial discourse studies that grew exponentially after Orientalism have, first of all, pushed their inquiries even further back into America’s colonial history, directing attention to pre-Revolutionary writings as well as those of the nineteenth century. These scholars’ reexamination of the influence of the Orient in pre-Revolutionary British America has led them to point out the sometimes explicit, sometimes implicit links between various forms of power inherent in representations of the Orient as well as the relation these representations—and the various powers they invoke and produce—have with questions of imperialism and empire in particular. So Hilton Obenzinger argues in American Palestine (1999) that representations of the Holy Land by nineteenth-century American writers can best be understood through the lens of theorists of settler colonialism, while Malini Schueller’s U.S. Orientalisms (1998) adapts Said’s Orientalist model to show what she identifies as various kinds of Orientalism in American literature from the Revolutionary period to approximately 1890. While these Orientalisms, Schueller shows, do not cohere into a single narrative, collectively they illustrate how images of the Orient were crucial to the formation of notions of U.S. nationhood. Timothy S. Marr and Fuad Sha’ban take us further back into the American past than Schueller does in examining seventeenth-century materials in their demonstrations, in The Cultural Roots of American Islamicism (2006) and Islam and Arabs in Early American Thought (1991), of the connection of Islam to American identity.

In some ways the most relevant predecessor to Oriental Shadows can be found in an essay not specifically devoted to an examination of the East at all, Michael Warner’s provocative “What’s Colonial about Colonial America?” Toward the end of his piece, Warner argues that the “spatial imagination of colonial culture has tended to be ignored” by scholars. In order to make his case, he points out that “England’s movement into America was in most ways parallel with its movement into India,” a fact of which Warner reminds us with examples from contemporary writings well known to British Americans of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This observation leads Warner to remark that “it is surprising how invisible India has been in the history of Anglo-American colonialism.” Warner contends that our focus on the incipient nationalism of explicitly nonnational colonial writing blinds us to the spatial imagination that would understand India and America as fundamentally connected. I think he is absolutely correct in this.
nationalism provides its own symbolic spatial economy that serves its own interests. In paying close attention to figures of the East in early American writing, I hope to expose the workings of a prenationalist spatial imagination—what I am calling a symbolic spatial economy—that, partly through the very writings investigated in the rest of this book, helps produce the distinctively modern way we in the United States tend to understand the people and places on the globe and their relation to one another.

Scholarship has played its role, too, as Warner notes, in teaching us how to imagine the relation between different spaces on the map. We can see such instruction in the work of those very scholars who were crucial in establishing the unstated assumptions that would help provide the intellectual foundations for the study of early American literary studies. Perhaps the most distinguished and certainly one of the most influential of those scholars, Perry Miller, acknowledges the fascination for all things Oriental expressed by American writers of the 1830s, 40s, and 50s, but in order to establish what he considers the native Americaness of American literature, Miller acknowledges the Oriental influence only to suggest its lack of true importance. In what would become one of his most influential pieces, Miller asks in “From Edwards to Emerson” whether “New England’s transcendentalism [was] wholly Germanic or Hindu in origin.” Miller concedes the point that the literary theories espoused by nineteenth-century American writers “were importations, not native American growths, . . . extracted from imperfect translations of the Hindu scriptures.” He concedes, in other words, that a superficial reading of nineteenth-century American literature shows that these writings owe a substantial debt to ideas imported—however imperfectly—from the Orient. Miller wants us to see that what he calls “a deeper reading” will reveal what seems counterintuitive: that the Pantheistic writings of nineteenth-century American writers who were openly hostile to traditional Christianity owe their greatest intellectual debt to the staunchly, unflinchingly Calvinist writings of the American Puritans who brooked no dissent when it came to matters of God.

We have yet to find a fully satisfactory answer—and we never will—to the problem of continuity at the core of “From Edwards to Emerson.” What relationship does the writing produced by those colonists living in North America—who were, after all, a group of people who generally reacted with alarm at the slightest suggestion they had relinquished their claims to being British by living so far removed from their homeland—what relationship does writing produced by such people bear to the literature produced by the citizens of nation who fought a protracted and bloody eight-year war designed specifically to free themselves from the very state
to whom they had pledged their allegiance? By what logic, scholars have asked from the birth of scholarly interest in American literature, do we justify the yoking together of pre- and post-Revolutionary writings from the communities that would become the United States into a single, unbroken narrative? The issue of whether a continuity exists between the writings of the British American colonies and those in the United States relies itself, of course, on the questionable assumption that the writings of those colonies can be made to form a unified, coherent collective entity themselves. We might view the writing produced in Britain’s American colonies instead, for instance, as constituting a series of related but distinct discursive systems. But let us say we accept the premise that an object called “colonial American literature” exists and can be studied. If, as Benedict Anderson has noted, all nationalist movements necessarily rob the graves of their ancestors in order to provide the nation with a history of its own, how, as scholars, do we understand the relationship between those whose graves are robbed and those who resurrect the corpses for their own purposes?

Of course, such attempts to demonstrate a continuous literary tradition that extends from colonial to postcolonial times necessarily rely on a sometimes implicit, sometimes explicit theory of Americanness. The coherence of these narratives depends, in other words, on identifying some distinctive-ly American characteristic or characteristics of American literature so that even those works that expressly announce themselves as something other than American can be included in our national narratives. Some scholars have shown how American works seem to bear distinctive stylistic features that differentiate them from, for instance, the literature of other nations written in English. Scholars often point to the shaping power of experience to produce a distinctly American brand of writing. We have learned a great deal over the years about what appear to be thematic concerns that seem to be peculiarly if not exclusively American. Much work has been done to identify those genres and/or formal structures whose origins can be traced to the colonies or the new nation. Others have taken a different tack by trying to tie together the various strands of America’s literary history by using the place of a work’s publication, where the author was born or where he or she lived during a crucial period of his or her life, or some complex combination of these criteria, as the basis for a unified story of America’s literary heritages. Still others have pointed out ideological commonalities among those works that have achieved canonical status that serve, along with the critical presuppositions that are used to interpret those works, to maintain the very notion of a unified American literary tradition in spite of much evidence to the contrary.
I do not propose in the space of this introduction, or, for that matter, even in the rest of the book, to solve the problem of continuity that has haunted the field of early American studies since its inception and that will, we can be confident, continue to bedevil scholars for as long as such a field exists within the discipline. The use of figures of the East by those writers we have labeled as “American” represents simply another important and, heretofore, overlooked way of understanding the relationship between pre- and post-Revolutionary American writing. Figures of the East in early American literature provide no more of a master narrative that defines all of early American literature than did figures of the wilderness or the frontier. These figures of the East in colonial British American and early national writing do reveal a distinctive tradition of figurative language that begins in the formative years of colonization and continues unabated through what has been called the “flowering of narrative” in the middle of the nineteenth century. Put differently, one of the many ways the works I examine in what follows and, I would also suggest, any work produced during the period of this study mark themselves as American can be seen in the work done by the figures of the East used in the text. In the complex set of characteristics that distinguish the literary tradition of what we have come to call American literature, they share a bond in the way they represent the relationship between what they cast as the “East” and “West.”

We can see one way in which American writers’ relation to figures of the East would have been different when we look at some of the work done on figures of the East by scholars of British literature of the same period. So, for instance, Ros Ballaster convincingly demonstrates in Fabulous Orients that we should read fictions of the Orient published in England from the late seventeenth through the eighteenth centuries in relation to the burgeoning expansion of Britain’s empire in India and the East more broadly. Our interpretation of these tales, Ballaster insists, must take into account England’s status in the world community as a tiny island nation bent on extending its power across the globe to ever-more-distant communities. If Oriental tales published in Great Britain helped British readers imagine their own relation to empire differently, then those readers whose relation to empire was different before they even picked up the magazine and began to read would have necessarily taken different meanings from those very same words. For representations of the “East” must have born at least some subtle trace, for British American and early national readers, of the commercial, political, military, and economic interests those in Great Britain, British America, and the United States harbored in this region of the globe. But the expansion of the empire looked very different, and indeed, meant
something very different, to readers in London than to readers in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Charleston, and, to be sure, the even more remote outposts of Great Britain’s empire in North America. The relation of these British American readers to the most basic laws and liberties associated with Great Britain differed from those of readers in London, Oxford, or Exeter simply because of where they lived. If where you were on the globe helped define your status within Great Britain, then where you were on the globe necessarily defined your relation to even those imaginary representations of every other place on the globe.  

British American and even early national readers thus occupied a triangulated relationship to figures of the East. Figures of the Orient would have been read in British America and the early United States in relation to Europe’s position to the Orient. A wide range of recent scholarship demonstrates British American writers’ “cultural dependence,” to use Lawrence Buell’s term, on standards of taste drawn from Britain in particular and Europe in general. British America’s cultural dependence on Great Britain has been cited by Leonard Tennenhouse as one piece of evidence illustrating American literature’s fundamentally diasporic nature; it has been used to demonstrate the distortion of a related literary tradition by Paul Giles; and Buell takes this dependence as evidence that America produces the world’s very first postcolonial literature. However one explains this dependence, though, scholars from a wide variety of methodological approaches agree that British American writers kept their glance firmly fixed on the mother country across the Atlantic for guidance on cultural and aesthetic matters, even if they often claimed to reject what the Old World had to offer. Their relation to the figure of the Orient, then, was necessarily triangulated by Europe’s relation with the Orient, a triangulation that marked British Americans as necessarily different from those in Europe whom they sought to emulate. The works examined in the chapters that follow, then, are American—at least in part—because of the way they ask their readers to imagine themselves in relation to the figurative category of the geographical “East,” and, in this way, these figures of the East provide one significant foundation among many for a distinctly American literary tradition. The “Eastern imaginary,” the sometimes contradictory but nevertheless systematic ways in which the East was imagined, was different, in other words, in British America during the years of this study than in Great Britain.

This triangulated relation to an East invested with great cultural power did more than simply help British American writers address their fear of provinciality, their fear that those in Europe were absolutely right that America had no legitimate claims to civilized status. Their use of these
figures in the hopes of establishing their own cultural bona fides offered readers in the colonies and early United States—and even, in some cases, England and the rest of Europe—new ways of imagining the relation between East and West. This new way of organizing the world, this new way of organizing the set of figures that constituted the symbolic spatial economy of the period, offered a new shape to economy that cast Europe as the cultural, economic, and political center of the globe. For America to gain in status, the East must be downgraded in stature. In becoming more like the East to please its so-called betters in Europe, America drains power from the East as Europe becomes even more firmly situated in the center of global power and prestige. For Europe and America to become more important in the symbolic spatial economy, the East must be displaced. All things, in this new symbolic universe, emanated from a European center. Europe occupied the center of a globe rather than its former position at the very edge of relevance and power.

Given the extraordinary number of such figures contained in the archive of British American and early national writing, I make no claims that this study represents a comprehensive description of the varied uses of figures related to the East in the period. Nor do I aim to map out a linear narrative of historical development in the use of what is an extraordinary variety of figures carrying a wide range of associations that extends approximately one hundred and fifty years. Instead, I offer case studies of four especially provocative uses of figures of the East that, upon close, textual analysis, harbor important implications for our understanding of the formation of a distinctly American literature within what we commonly recognize as American culture. I will discuss the implications in more detail in the epilogue, but, for now, suffice it to say that close attention to figures of the East in these instances forces us to rethink just how seventeenth-, eighteenth-, and even nineteenth-century American writers sought to demonstrate the significance of American social environments. From the start, they looked to the East, rather than simply either to the land before them or to hallmarks of European refinement, for the terms through which they should be judged. American writers’ sense of themselves as members of a distinct community grows as much, in other words, out of the use of figures of the East as it does out of any encounters with the environment, real or imagined, or any effort to adapt European models of cultural refinement. The East, in other words, plays a key role in the story of the emergence of a distinctively American set of literary traditions.

I have chosen to offer case studies of four provocative instances rather than offer a catalog that neatly divides the use of such figures into discrete
categories for several reasons. First of all, such a comprehensive approach would be virtually impossible for one scholar to accomplish given the extraordinary number of figures in the archive. Part of the goal of my book is to demonstrate to scholars that such figures exist in the first place and are important. Second, I believe the best way to interest literary scholars—as opposed to, say, historians—in this archive is to demonstrate the figurative richness of the material and its relevance to important issues in the study of American literature. This simply cannot be done in an “inventory.”

Each chapter thus makes its case by marshalling evidence drawn primarily from a close reading of the language of the text under analysis. These close readings of literary texts, though, occur only after first situating the specific work in the context of its production, distribution, imagined audience, and/or genre, historical factors that scholars working on the history of the book in the early modern Atlantic world have taught us are particularly important in understanding texts of the period. My decision to employ a methodology that relies primarily if not exclusively on figurative rather than more traditional “historical” evidence grows out of my conviction that, in the words of Henri Lefebvre, “[r]epresentations of space . . . have a substantial role and a specific influence in the production of space.” Far from ignoring or dismissing the historical, though, such an approach takes literature—and all practices of representation—as a crucial component in the production of history rather than as merely reflective of the political, social, economic, and other so-called historical events and phenomena. For such an emphasis on figurative analysis allows us to see the birth of the very categories historical actors developed to understand the world around them. “If,” to return to Lefebvre, “space is produced, if there is a productive process, then we are dealing with history.” Historical events such as the Navigation Acts passed by Britain’s Parliament in the eighteenth century, for instance, or the dramatic political and social events that occurred in India in the centuries covered by this study play an important role as well in the production of those categories colonial British Americans used to experience their world. When the evidence has indicated that historical events played a role in the way the writers discussed in this book figured what they considered the “East,” such events have been included in the analysis.

Each of my four chapters focuses on a single author’s use of figures relating to places, peoples, and things understood as Eastern at the time of the literary work’s production and/or circulation. The four authors whose work I have chosen to analyze—Anne Bradstreet, James Kirkpatrick, Benjamin Franklin, and Edgar Allan Poe—offer glimpses into important historical periods, geographic regions, cultural formations, and aesthetic
developments that are encompassed by an object of study, American literature before 1850, that not only includes many disparate regions but also spans the very historical period that gave birth to distinctly modern ways of organizing the world. These authors include a female member of the highest ranks of seventeenth-century New England society, a devout Christian, whom critics have labeled the first American author; a writer of relatively modest social background living in the staple colonies who wrote poems celebrating Britain’s use of the colonies for commercial gain before returning to England to gain fame as a physician; a businessman from the mid-Atlantic whose work as a printer served as a prelude to his crucial role in British America’s Revolution for independence; and an author born in Boston, and raised in Virginia, who would challenge efforts to evaluate literature using nationalist standards during the period of America’s first great literary productions. While these authors are drawn from a range of geographic regions and historical periods, and while their works cover a variety of topics and genres, the work of three of these four has come to play a prominent role in the way we tell the story of America’s literary history. I have chosen to focus so much attention on such canonical authors from some of the most important periods in early American literary history in order to demonstrate how figures of the East—so long neglected in our study of this literature—in fact serve vital literary functions in writings by authors who have come to be understood as crucial to the emergence of a distinctly American literature.

Chapter 1 focuses on the New England poet Anne Bradstreet (c. 1612–72). Bradstreet’s writings demonstrate more clearly than those of any other colonial British American writer how references to the East in early American writing have been hiding in plain sight. Bradstreet wrote far more about the East than she did about any other topic, yet figures of the East in her poetry have received virtually no scholarly attention. Careful attention to two of her poems, “The Four Monarchies” and “An Elegie Upon that Honourable and Renowned Knight Sir Philip Sidney,” shows how Bradstreet ties colonial British Americans to the East and, in so doing, brings colonial British America into the realm of civilized nations. Bradstreet rests the colonists’ claims to civilized status on the bodily ties her poems establish between Alexander the Great and colonial British Americans. As part of the same imagined body as the great conqueror, Britain’s American colonists share in the exalted social status Alexander gains from his Eastern conquests.

In order to demonstrate that figures of the East played a role in writing from the colonies to New England’s south, we turn our attention to
commercial images associated with the East that can be found in materials relating to the promotion of Georgia in the 1730s and early 1740s. Chapter 2 focuses primarily on “An Address to James Oglethorpe, Esq” (first published in 1732–33), written by James Kirkpatrick (c. 1700–1770) in support of the new colony’s efforts to paint itself as a rich source of commercial goods that were associated with China and India. In its vision of a Georgia overflowing with Eastern goods, Kirkpatrick’s poem collapses the very distinction between the geographic East and West. The collapse elevates, the chapter argues, what British America has to offer the world, for it suggests that America gains its value by helping Britain look more civilized by allowing it to look more “Eastern. The East occupies the position in this poem of the place to be emulated, of the transcendent signified that seems to provide the ultimate source of value, and the poem quite pointedly and explicitly asks us to imagine America’s value in relation to what it classifies as “Chinese” and/or “Eastern” standards and objects rather than in terms, either, of the distinctive products to be found in the American environment or of some resemblance to the mother country of Great Britain.

While the first two chapters investigate writings from colonial British America, the third chapter focuses on late-eighteenth-century literature in circulation at the moment of the United States’ birth as a political entity by examining the Oriental tales written by Benjamin Franklin. Franklin’s “Eastern tales” use the ideas, images, and conceptions linked to the category of the “East” to define the “human” itself, a “human” that is understood in opposition to one of the key terms of the Enlightenment with which Franklin is so often associated: reason. Franklin suggests that the notion of “reason” on which Americans operate has the curious effect of leading to uncivilized behavior, and he offers a model of civilized behavior for Americans to emulate drawn from a specifically Orientalized East. Thus the truly civilized human in Franklin’s Oriental tales is an Eastern man.

The final chapter suggests one way in which figures of the East provide the glue that binds America’s colonial and national periods of literary production together. Focusing on Edgar Allan Poe’s spoof of The Arabian Nights, “The Thousand-and-Second Tale of Scheherazade,” the chapter argues that Poe casts what he considers an Eastern aesthetic as superior to aesthetic theories trumpeted by American literary nationalists. Scheherazade’s aesthetic theory becomes the model for American literature to emulate, a model that, if followed, would allow American aesthetic products to be considered in the same breath as those of more civilized communities. In suggesting that this superior, Orientalized vision of literature could serve as a model for the United States, Poe’s story offers a way for American cul-
ture to be included in the category of civilized nations by having American aesthetic theory become more Oriental.\textsuperscript{40}

\section*{Conclusion}

By way of concluding these introductory remarks, let me briefly return to Perry Miller’s attempts to cleanse America’s seemingly most American nineteenth-century writers of their Oriental influences. Miller’s generation of scholars sought to create a space for American literature in the university, a place that would be valuable in its own right, as derivative of traditions to be found nowhere else in the world. Miller asks us to ignore the Oriental influence on American Transcendentalism as a way of establishing a continuity between pre- and post-Revolutionary literature that allows for American literature to stand, as it were, on its own. A careful examination of the archives of British American writing tells us that Miller—and those who wrote in support of his project—had it backwards. A close examination of the writings of this field demonstrates the need to highlight rather than ignore references to what the colonists and citizens of the new nation would have called the “East.” In place of Miller’s trajectory of Edwards to Emerson, then, I offer an alternate line of descent in American literary history. At least for the pages of this book, I would like us to imagine American literature flowing from Bradstreet to Poe—from, that is, the poetry produced by one of seventeenth-century New England’s most orthodox Puritan thinkers, for whom poetry served as a means of glorifying God, to the nineteenth-century writings of a man who championed the production of art for art’s sake amidst accusations of insanity, ill-mannered behavior, drug abuse, and atheism. These two writers share a common figurative bond that stretches across the centuries and ideologies, and they stand as representatives of a bond that can be found in the literature of the period in general.
The Colonial Body Travels East in Anne Bradstreet’s Poetry

Anne Bradstreet wrote far more poetry concerning Alexander the Great, well over 1,000 lines, than on any other topic or person. Let me put this another way. Bradstreet devoted more poetry to Alexander than to her husband, her children, her grandchildren, her father, or her mother, either individually or combined. She devoted more lines of poetry to Alexander than to one of the most important icons of her age, Queen Elizabeth, or to one of the most important political events of her time, the English Civil War. She wrote more poetry about Alexander than she did about the New England Way or her life in the New World. She wrote more about Alexander than she wrote about her experiences as a woman. She wrote more poetry about Alexander than she wrote about Native Americans, the people who were the Puritans’ sometimes combatants, sometimes allies, but who were always involved in some way in seventeenth-century Puritan New England and English thinking. In fact, we might never have had a published work from her in the first place had Bradstreet not been quite so fascinated with Alexander. After all, virtually all of the material on Alexander appears in “The Four Monarchies,” and this poem alone, as Jane Eberwein points out, “takes up more than half of The Tenth Muse.” “Without its sheer mass,” Eberwein continues, “it is improbable there ever would have been such a book.” As Eberwein goes on to note, “[I]t is Alexander that dominates the poem.” One might even say that The Tenth Muse is as much about Alexander as it is about any other topic.
Given the interest Bradstreet demonstrated in all things relating to Alexander, how could it be that scholars have paid so little attention to “The Four Monarchies” in general and to Alexander in particular? Why have we chosen to focus our interpretive attention on Bradstreet’s other poetry, even though we know Bradstreet devoted an extraordinary amount of her time and energy over many years to “The Four Monarchies,” more time and energy, it seems clear, than she spent on any other piece of writing? Even more importantly, what can be learned about Bradstreet’s writing and, more broadly, colonial British American writing and culture from a more careful analysis of the figure of Alexander as he appears in “The Four Monarchies” and Bradstreet’s other poetry?

I suspect that we have ignored this poem and, more specifically, the figure of Alexander who dominates it, because the poem and person seem to have little to tell us about what is specifically colonial and/or American about colonial British American poetry, culture, and life. The first book of poetry published in England by an American poet provides us with no scenes of encounters with Indians, adjustments to the wilds of America, descriptions of America’s distinctive landscape, meditations on colonial political squabbles, or colorful portraits of colonial life in general. Instead, Bradstreet fills her poetry with references to “antique Greeks” such as Alexander, and she provides us with detailed scenes of England regaining its strength after the Civil War so that it can “lay waste” to “Turkey.” Bradstreet recounts stories of “barbarous” people, “sottish kings,” and incestuous relations in the East. She writes of Egyptian revolutions. She devotes hundreds of lines to scenes set in Asia and “less Asia” in which she speaks of “Asiatic coast[s]” alongside “Asiatic cowardice.” She writes of the “manners, habit, gestures” of the “luxurious nation” of Persia. Bradstreet does write about “Indian Kings,” but she uses the phrase without exception to refer to Southeast Asian royalty rather than Native Americans leaders. She compares Queen Elizabeth to the “potent empress of the East” and follows Alexander’s attempts to conquer what she refers to as the “East” as he relentlessly battles to “his empire extend / Unto the utmost bounds o’ th’ orient.” While a colonial British American poet wrote these words, the images in the lines seem to ignore rather than engage with what William Spengemann has labeled “American Things.” Yet, depending on how one counts what should be classified as “Eastern Things,” at least a third of Bradstreet’s poetry is devoted to references just like those above.

In an effort to begin filling this void in scholarship concerning the significance of “Eastern things” in Bradstreet’s poetry, this chapter will analyze her representation of Alexander the Great. Such a focus on Bradstreet’s
The Colonial Body Travels East in Anne Bradstreet's Poetry • 21 portrayal of Alexander will require investigation into the figure of the East in the Puritan New England poet's verse. This is true first because, as I noted above, the poem in which Alexander appears most often, “The Four Monarchies,” contains many references to the East, and these references are most prominent in the section of the poem in which Alexander takes center stage, Bradstreet's versification of the third monarchy. Even if, though, Bradstreet had written of Alexander in “The Four Monarchies” without once mentioning any people, places, or things associated with the East, we still would have had to consider the region in some fashion in our analysis of Bradstreet's representation of Alexander given the frequency with which writers in the early modern period connected him to the region. Alexander's connection with the East—both his confrontation with it and the allure that it held for him—were such integral parts of his seventeenth-century image that it was virtually impossible to speak of him without invoking the specter of the region he ultimately failed to bring under Western control. In the early modern world in which Bradstreet lived, Alexander's very identity—the qualities, characteristics, and features with which he was associated and which served to define him as a distinct character—was inextricably bound with the East.

Before we consider the significance of the East in Bradstreet's representations of Alexander, we must first understand the paradoxical qualities associated with the region when Bradstreet wrote. As the dominant political, economic, and military power throughout most of recorded history—at least as Bradstreet and her contemporaries tell the story of human history—the East stands in the way of the desire expressed by many in England and her colonies to extend the range of Protestantism's hegemony across the globe. Indeed, given the Ottoman Empire's attempts throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to bring more of Europe under its political control through military conquest, Bradstreet's brand of Christianity seemed, at least to many of its supporters in Europe, to be in a fight for its very life with its foes to the East.12 Our historical vantage point looks at the late seventeenth century as precisely the period when the Ottoman Empire began its slow decline. This perspective was not available to Bradstreet or her readers. When English Puritans and their allies in the American colonies viewed their plight in light of what was happening around the globe as a whole, they tended to see a world dominated by countries and worldviews they cast as fundamentally “Eastern,” countries and worldviews that had, in their opinion, turned hostile toward the “true” religion of Christianity to which the East had given birth. They still viewed the Ottoman Empire, in other words, as a real, ongoing threat to Christendom's way of life.
But this view of the East as purely or even primarily a threat to the West fails to account for other, more positive ways in which the East was understood by people writing in English around the time Bradstreet composed her poetry. Indeed, we should be careful to avoid reading back onto seventeenth-century New England writing a strict East–West binary that would come into life in the nineteenth century. Bradstreet wrote and revised her poetry before Orientalism came to dominate what in the introduction I called the symbolic spatial economy. As Daniel Vitkus points out, “the East’ was not yet the clearly defined geographic or cultural category that it would become”; an “imaginary construct” that cast East as diametrically opposed to West “was yet to be built.” In this moment of history before Orientalism took hold, Bradstreet and her contemporaries found much to emulate in Eastern people, places, and practices.

For one thing, the East was the birthplace of Christ and the geographic location of the events in the Bible. New England Puritans associated the East, in other words, with God’s representative on Earth, the being with whom all Puritans longed to be one in the afterlife, and they considered the East the holiest of lands by virtue of its being the birthplace of the being they considered humanity’s savior. In addition, for those communities who longed for a seat at the table with the truly civilized nations, the East’s status as the center for centuries of the civilized world provided an image of what it meant for a nation to be truly civilized, an image that had received the sanction of historians and educators for centuries. If, as scholars have long noted, the people in Britain’s American colonies learned what it meant to be refined by aping the ways of their supposed betters in London, early modern Europeans and British Americans looked, in a similar way, still further East for behaviors and practices to emulate that would allow them to claim that they, too, should be counted as civilized people.

In order to explore the ways in which the sometimes paradoxical qualities these issues, ideas, and images attached to the East come to life in Bradstreet’s poetry, this chapter will focus on the two poems in which Bradstreet mentions Alexander the Great: “The Four Monarchies” and “An Elegie upon that Honourable and renowned Knight, Sir Philip Sidney.” Each of these poems appears in the two seventeenth-century editions of Bradstreet’s poetry over which we believe she had some control, The Tenth Muse, issued in London in 1650, and Several Poems, printed in Boston in 1678. “The Four Monarchies” of The Tenth Muse is unfinished. It abruptly ends during the early years of the last monarchy. She was unable to finish the poem before she died, so the version to appear in Several Poems is also unfinished.
This second version of Bradstreet’s longest poem contains relatively minor revisions. The most significant revision can be found at the end of the section on the fourth and final monarchy when Bradstreet attempts to explain, in a 27-line “Apology,” her inability to complete the poem. The London elegy to Sidney, on the other hand, underwent significant revision before it made its second appearance in Boston in 1678. At some point after the poem’s initial publication, Bradstreet substantially revised her memorial to Sidney, trimming it from approximately 150 to just under 100 lines. We will, in the pages that follow, need to consider the nature of some of these revisions as they pertain to Alexander.

The chapter is divided into two sections. First, we need to examine the connection Bradstreet makes in her poetry between Alexander and the East. Therefore, the first section focuses on Bradstreet’s representation of the East in general in “The Four Monarchies.” This discussion is followed by a careful consideration of the way she portrays Alexander in relation to the East in the poem. Our examination of the Great Conqueror reveals that the figure of the East in Bradstreet’s poetry served as both a threat and a model, an object of debilitating fear and intense, unsatisfied, and unquenchable desire. Once we have considered Alexander’s connection to the East in “The Four Monarchies,” we then turn our attention to the implications Bradstreet’s vision of Alexander has for our understanding of the two versions of her Sidney elegy. Bradstreet uses Alexander in both versions of this poem as a way of sneaking the colonists into identity categories from which they were usually excluded. Through the magic of figurative language, Bradstreet engages in what I think can accurately be described as a kind of imaginary grave robbery in which colonial corpses rob classical ones of their very identities. She does this when she represents Britain’s American colonists as being part of the very same body politic as Alexander. Through this rhetorical sleight of hand, she ties to the East all those living on the very far reaches of England’s burgeoning empire and, in so doing, brings colonial British Americans into the realm of civilized nations. In this poem, Bradstreet grounds colonial British American claims to be civilized on classical figures associated with the East rather than, for instance, by turning our attention to the new world that lay before her or the peoples and places she and the colonists had left behind in Europe. In order to see how she accomplishes these rhetorical feats, we need to turn now to the poem, “The Four Monarchies,” in which Bradstreet focuses our attention most often on Alexander and the East.
While figures of the East play a key role throughout Bradstreet’s poetry, the Eastern focus of The Tenth Muse and Several Poems grows primarily if not exclusively out of what is by far the longest poem in either collection and the longest poem Bradstreet ever wrote, “The Four Monarchies.” The poem is divided into four sections corresponding to each of the monarchies that—at least, to seventeenth-century historians—had governed the world from just after the Great Flood until the fall of the Roman Empire. At approximately 3,500 lines, the poem is more than five times longer than Bradstreet’s next longest poem, the approximately 600-line “Of the Four Humours in Man’s Constitution.” We should hardly be surprised that even 3,500 lines of poetry would be insufficient to cover so vast a topic as the history of the world and, in fact, Bradstreet never finished the poem.

Bradstreet explains in what, at first glance, appear to be the final 13 lines of the third monarchy that she is “done” with a poem whose “errors” make her “blush.” Any careful reader of Bradstreet knows better than to take the explanation she offers here—that the “task befits not women like to men”—at face value, and we are even less inclined to do so in this case given that these 13 lines announcing her decision to abandon the poem are followed by another 10 lines in which she proclaims that, after “some days of rest,” she has decided “To finish what’s begun” (1. 3412; 3422–23). Even her newfound energy proves insufficient to the task at hand, though, and the final lines of the version of “The Four Monarchies” in Several Poems announce one last time that Bradstreet will be unable to complete the task. But not for lack of effort. She speaks of the “hours” she spent and the “weary lines” she “penned” in an effort to fulfill her “desire” to “prosecute the story to the last” (1. 3560–65). Try as she might, though, a “raging fire” destroyed her most recent additions to the poem, and, in the end, she decided she could not see the history of the world through to its completion (1. 3566). If nothing else, Bradstreet’s repeated efforts to finish so gargantuan a project after so many years and in the face of so many daunting personal obstacles suggests the great importance she attached to this poem.

If it is to be expected that a poem aiming to versify world history would end up being the longest poem Bradstreet ever wrote, so, too, should we hardly be surprised, given the history of the world up to that point, that “The Four Monarchies” focuses attention on the East. Bradstreet and the histories she adapted and/or used as background for her poem had little choice but to concentrate on matters associated with the Eastern part of the globe, for Europe and the West had played relatively insignificant roles in the shaping of world history up to that point. The Eastern orientation of the historical record in “The Four Monarchies” reminds us of what any
seventeenth-century reader would have known but we might have forgotten: far from being the dominant imperial and/or economic power it would later become, England and its European enemies and allies had long been second-tier communities whose clout on the world stage paled in comparison to the political and economic entities to their East. The very development by Western writers in the middle ages of the concepts of translatio studii and translatio imperii—the march of learning and rule from East to West—indicates that Europeans were well away of the East's historical supremacy over the West, and the continuing invocation of these concepts by Britain's American colonists in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries shows that people of English descent living in the colonies were equally aware of their culture's own inferiority in comparison to those to be found in the East.19 The theory might even be understood as motivated by a deep anxiety about the West's place in the hierarchy of civilized nations. If those in the West found themselves less advanced when they looked back over the historical record, why not lay claim to greater learning and eventual rule in a yet unrealized but no doubt inevitable future?

The greater learning and the vast body of sophisticated cultural products to be found throughout history—learning and products that account in part for the sense of inferiority out of which theories such as translatio studii and imperii grow—confer on the East a cultural sophistication to which those of English ancestry can only aspire. We catch a glimpse of the great cultural power attached to the East in the way Bradstreet’s poem suggests that one can never be East enough. All of the rulers to be found in the first poem’s first book want to control territory to their East, including rulers who lord over what would seem to be the very center of Eastern power. So even though the poem begins in what it calls the East, Assyria, it nonetheless demonstrates the grandeur of one of the very first rulers mentioned, Ninus, by showing how he extended his reign even further east throughout “all the greater Asia” (1. 64). The focus on the East as the object of insatiable desire becomes clear when control of virtually the whole of Asia fails to satisfy Ninus’s successor, his widow Semiramus. She dies leading her armies on “[a]n expedition” even further “to the East” (1. 130).

The poem does not bother to tell us where in the East she led her armies. Instead, the East remains an undefined region here and elsewhere in “The Four Monarchies,” a region whose precise boundaries matter less than its function as a signifier of desire for accumulation, wealth, and status. One cannot be entirely successful, the poem suggests, nor can one ever be entirely satisfied with one’s position in the world, unless and until one conquers the East as a whole, a region that lacks a whole from the Western point of
view because those who seek to master it continually and obsessively fail to offer their own definition of its boundaries. As a demonstration of this, the poem puts on display ruler after ruler from greater and lesser Asia, each of whom embarks on quest after quest in the hopes of conquering some region even further to the East, only to end up defeated because, without fail, some part of the East remains just beyond his grasp.

We might expect the poem to be less fixated on the East once the center of world power moves westward to Greece and Rome. Instead, precisely the opposite turns out to be the case. The poem fixes our gaze even more frequently on the Eastern parts of the world as civilization advances, at least according to translatio studii and imperii, toward its inevitable European home. For the third book in “The Four Monarchies” concentrates almost exclusively on Alexander’s quest to bring the East under his control.

As if this were not enough to show the outsize focus Bradstreet here gives the desire to conquer the East, we must remember that the obsession with the East during the Grecian monarchy does not end with Alexander. In Bradstreet’s retelling of the history of the world during the third monarchy, the desire for the East becomes the defining goal not simply of the period’s main character but of all those who follow in his wake. From the moment we are introduced to Alexander until Rome succeeds Greece more than 3,000 lines later, the poem allows us no diversion from its myopic fixation on the East. We are first treated to Alexander’s plans for conquering Persia and Asia, then to the details of his military successes and failures as he aims to bring his vision to reality. When Bradstreet tells us of the various places and peoples he subdues while he leads his army in battle, of the treachery Alexander encounters and the cruelty he inflicts, she never fails to specify where on the globe these deeds occur. We hear of his crossing the “River Granic” and the “Black Sea,” and, when Alexander draws near Persia, she tells us how his order that his ships sail by the mouth of the Indus flood has the unfortunate result of having those boats get stuck upon the flats and mud (1. 1675; 1691; 2360–75). Alexander’s death brings no end to the obsession with all things Eastern. Bradstreet’s treatment of how his descendents, disciples, and enemies seek to realize his vision lasts another 800 lines. Whether or not Bradstreet consciously chose to spend so much more time on a section devoted exclusively to the East, the effect is the same as if it were conscious. When we get to the Grecian monarchy, the focus on the East explodes into a downright obsession from which the reader cannot escape.

Bradstreet’s engagement with her material grows as the story becomes more focused on the East. Of all the monarchies, the Grecian clearly holds the most interest for Bradstreet. Suddenly, in the section on Alexander...
and the attempt to conquer the East, Bradstreet finds her muse. She devotes over 1,700 lines to the Grecian monarchy but only 1,600 lines combined for the Assyrian and Persian. She wrote twice as many lines about the Grecian monarchy, in other words, than she did about any other monarchial period in spite of the fact that the Persian monarchy lasted far longer than the Grecian. Bradstreet thus devotes more verse—1,000—to things of the East in this single section of this monarchy than she does to the various rulers and their travels and concerns in either of the first two monarchies. Indeed, the first two monarchies combined amount to only 1,600 lines. She writes over 1,000 lines about Alexander and the East alone.

Bradstreet’s greater focus on the East in the Grecian monarchy derives, at least in part, from the fact that this is the section of the poem in which a figure claimed by the West as its own—Alexander—comes remarkably close to bringing the East under his dominion. Bradstreet focuses so much attention on the East in this part of the poem, that is, because this is the moment when the West seems capable of defusing the threat posed by the East and absorbing its antagonist’s cultural legacies into its own traditions. To incorporate the East into the West, though, poses a threat as grave as the one Alexander’s political domination of the East wards off: turning Turk. How does one incorporate the cultural legacies of the East into the West without corrupting Western cultural products and practices themselves with Eastern influences? The way to satisfy the desire to incorporate the East into the West, Bradstreet suggests, is to obliterate the distinction between East and West in the first place, and Alexander, according to Bradstreet, does exactly this.

Alexander’s very body, the poem suggests, defies geographic boundaries and cannot be contained by geographic space. It is not just, Bradstreet insists, that Alexander wants to extend his dominion beyond his home country. Alexander does more than simply “scorn” being “confin’d” to “Grecia” alone (1. 1621–23). Bradstreet extends Alexander’s reach beyond the mere globe by insisting that all of geographic space itself would barely contain Alexander’s body parts. The very “universe” itself, Bradstreet informs us, would “scarce bound [Alexander’s] vast minde” (1. 1621–22). Bradstreet associates not only his body but also his very identity with geographic space. His “fame,” she tells us, will “last whilst there is land” (1. 2577–78). At the very height of his power, when he has brought “All countries, kingdoms, provinces . . . From Hellespont to th’ farthest ocean” under his control, Alexander is made to “oft lament” the fact that “no more worlds” remained “to be conquered” (1. 2508–9, 2601–2).

We see this aspect of Alexander’s character as well in the way Bradstreet
highlights the Great Conqueror’s constant motion over geographic space as once-powerful monarchs fall one by one in the face of his seemingly invincible armies. He moves over so much space so quickly that geographic borders themselves—and distinctions such as East versus West—are called into question. Scanning the lines of poetry on any page from “The Third Monarchy” takes us in a matter of seconds across hundreds of miles of often rugged, mountainous territory. So it is that in fewer than 100 lines Alexander moves from Gaza to Jerusalem to Egypt to Syria then back to Egypt until, finally, he ends up in Phoenicia. Even death fails to halt his body’s movements, for Alexander continues his journey even after he dies (1. 2775). His dead body travels for two years before being laid to rest in Macedonia. After so much motion, so much movement over so much space, we are led to ask, how can such a figure be contained within a single geographic region?

Alexander’s ability to obliterate geographic boundaries—boundaries that, we must remember, signify at the same time a cultural divide that prioritizes Eastern cultural history over Western cultural history—provides the very means by which the West can triumph over an East of the West’s imagination. Let me explain how this paradox works in “The Four Monarchies.” We must remember, first, that at the time the poem was written and as the poem itself demonstrates in the people, places, and incidents it describes, only the East could lay claim to a long, uninterrupted history of social, political, and economic dominance. Second, we need to keep in mind that Alexander serves in this poem and elsewhere as a representative of the West. Third, we should recall the paradoxical nature of the Eastern imaginary. It is not that Bradstreet or other early modern writers want simply to adopt the ways of the East so that they can be seen to be just as civilized and refined as those who lived in the communities authorized as truly civilized in world history. After all, the East is both a model for those in the Western world to emulate and a threat to the religious, political, and economic aims of those in the West. Bradstreet wants to use the refinement of the East as a model that can be adapted by those in the colonies so that they can take on the refinement attached to the people and places of the East, but she wants them to take on this refinement while simultaneously retaining their own identities as people of the West. She wants her fellow colonists to use the East so that they can claim to be civilized and English at the same time, all without becoming, through the incorporation of Eastern things, an Easterner herself.

Succumbing to the charms of the East is precisely what trips up Alexander in the end. While he absorbs one group of people after another into
his and the West’s political and cultural orbit as he relentlessly defeats one army after another in the space of only a few lines of verse, he ultimately fails to lead the West to what Bradstreet would have considered its rightful place at the head of the civilized world because he succumbs to the lure of the East. Armies pose no obstacle to him. He defeats each one that crosses his path. Instead, Alexander fails to conquer the East, according to Bradstreet and her sources, because he goes native. We see this in his rejection of what Bradstreet casts as distinctively Protestant moral codes. He behaves more like one of the monarchs of the East from the earlier books than like someone who lives by the Christian God’s laws. Once he has extended “his empire” not only to “th’ farthest ocean” but even more crucially “to the utmost bounds o’ th’ orient,” once the extension of his empire has created an army defined by its “monstrous bulk,” not only does his wealth grow “boundless” by the extraordinary breadth of his rule but also, and more importantly, “Him boundless made in vice and cruelty” (1. 1945–46). Freed from abiding by Protestant moral codes once he has obliterated the distinction between East and West by bringing the people and places of the East under his command, Alexander sets fire to whole towns, puts to death former allies for no discernable reason, and pursues power for power’s sake alone.

It is one thing for Alexander himself to adopt Eastern ways, but it is even more threatening to the purity of the Western tradition to insist, as Alexander does, that his subordinates follow his lead. This, Bradstreet suggests, is the final straw. This is what ultimately brings about the Great Conqueror’s death. Alexander suddenly and without warning, at least according to Bradstreet, adopts the “manners, habit, gestures . . . [and] fashion” of the “conquered and luxurious nation” of Persia (1. 2166–70). Not satisfied with keeping his fashion tastes to himself, Alexander goes so far as to insist that “his nobility” do the same. Lest we miss the implication of his turning Turk, Bradstreet informs us that his “captains” were “grieved” at the transformation these seemingly stylistic changes produce. For Bradstreet claims that his Captains lament the change they see in his very “mind” that these new “manners” bring about (1. 2171–72).²² It should not surprise us, then, that after an evening of drinking, Alexander’s subordinates are able to overtake him. If even so great a leader as Alexander, even so ruthless and successful a military tactician as the Great Conqueror, cannot wrest control of the East without succumbing to the threats posed by its so-called corrupt ways, what hope does the West as a whole have of succeeding where so exemplary a figure has already failed?

In order to answer this question, we must return to an earlier point: that while Bradstreet associates the figure of Alexander with the East, she shows
that his quest for ever more territory to his East ultimately stems from the inability of space to contain Alexander. He conquers because the world cannot contain him, and so he holds open the possibility of space lacking geographic distinction at all. He cannot be contained within the boundaries of the West but seeks to obliterate those boundaries through conquest. Once the world is his, the boundaries that had defined the world—East and West—will be obliterated. In using Alexander as the figure for a space in which geographic divisions no longer apply, though, Bradstreet necessarily claims this philosophical position for the West. The destruction of these boundaries would usher in the continual, never-ending, nevermore threatened triumph of the West over an East that threatens precisely because it has dominated the world for all of human history. We in the West can learn from Alexander’s example, Bradstreet’s representation of Alexander here seems to suggest, to avoid going native by obliterating such geographic distinctions in the first place. Since it is a figure from the West who embodies this position and potentially brings it to life, though, the West gets to define the world after it has lost its divisions. It is in this way that Bradstreet can suggest that the West can eat its geographic cake and have it too. For once geographic distinctions are obliterated, the world becomes one because it is one as the West imagined it. No one need fear becoming Easternized in such a world, for this world owes its nativity to the West.

This is not, of course, the way history went. Alexander failed to conquer the East, and European Christians continued to perceive the East as a threat to their religious and political systems. The European monarchy had yet to occur when Bradstreet wrote, and the Ottoman Empire continued to pose a potent threat to any hopes the West might have. But in spite of Alexander’s failures, the dream lives on in the poem in his descendents. His failure signals not the impossibility of the West’s success but its potential to match the East.

\[\text{“THE FOUR MONARCHIES” makes no explicit connection between the British American colonists and Alexander. None of the few scholars over the years who have analyzed the poem have detected any attempt to use the people, places, and events in Bradstreet’s verse history of the world as allegories for any aspect of New England life.}}^{23} \text{To see the connection in Bradstreet’s poetry between the colonists, Alexander, and the East we must turn to a much shorter of Bradstreet’s writings, “An Elegy Upon that Honourable and Renowned Knight Sir Philip Sidney.” As I noted earlier, Bradstreet} \]
wrote two very different versions of this elegy, one published in 1650 in *The Tenth Muse* and the other in 1678 in *Several Poems*. She dramatically shortened the Boston version of the poem, transforming a 150-line poem into one of barely 95. To achieve this newfound brevity about Sidney, Bradstreet not only removed entire sections of the work but also reworked and reordered other parts. Commentators have generally found both versions unsatisfying—hardly surprising given that this appears to be Bradstreet’s first attempt to write an elegy—but they have been especially critical of the second version. Rosamond Rosenmeier, for instance, finds the “religious and erotic enthusiasm” at the heart of the first version to be absent entirely from the second.24

The changes in the Boston version make Alexander even more central than he was in the London elegy, in spite of the fact that his name appears less often in the revised version of the poem. We see this in the way Bradstreet reduces the number of people to whom she compares Sidney. Since comparisons are one way a poet defines his or her subject, one way, that is, the poet helps us understand the ideals and ideas with which the subject is to be associated, then fewer comparisons means fewer ideals with which to be associated. The narrower range of comparisons thus allows us to see the subject with a sharper focus, and in the process of doing so strengthens the connection between the subject and the person to whom he or she is being compared. We see precisely this sharpening of focus in Bradstreet’s Boston elegy. In London, Sidney merges his identity with two figures, Apollo and Alexander. Sidney, the poem contends, has such a “deep share” of Apollo’s “Deity” that the two become indistinguishable.25 On numbers alone, though, Alexander rates above Apollo in *The Tenth Muse* version of the poem, for Sidney not once but twice becomes Alexander. Bradstreet speaks at one point of “Princely Philip” and later tells us that “Philip and Alexander” lie “both in one” in Sidney’s grave.26 In addition to these two instances in which Sidney becomes someone else, Bradstreet analogizes Sidney with several figures in *The Tenth Muse*. He is directly compared to both Mars and Vulcan in *The Tenth Muse*. For the 1678 version of “An Elegie,” though, Bradstreet removes all but one of these comparisons. She retains only the image of Alexander and Sidney merging in Philip’s grave. He becomes, that is, more like Alexander in Boston if for no other reason than that he is less like anyone else.

Bradstreet’s comparison of Sidney with Alexander alone would not warrant our interest. It is the way she uses the occasion of an elegy to Sidney to show how the colonists are part of the same community that includes Alexander that is unique. Before we examine the way she connects Alexan-
der to the colonists in both versions of the poem, before we can appreciate, that is, the remarkable rhetorical feat she accomplishes in using this trope to bring the colonists into the civilized world, we need to understand the level of conventionality that the comparison of Sidney with Alexander had achieved when Bradstreet first began “An Elegie.” By the time Bradstreet started her memorial to Sidney, Alexander had been used so often by other Renaissance writers as to have been rendered cliché. “Sidney’s earlier elegists,” as Raphael Falco points out, “again and again compare the dead hero to Alexander.” Bradstreet even co-opts one of the most common themes among those elegists when she claims that both combined qualities of the poet with those of a warrior, or both were, in her words, “Heire to the Muses, the son of Mars in truth.” Of course, in elegizing Sidney at all, Bradstreet was choosing a topic that itself had long ago become a cliché. Sidney died in Holland in October of 1586, and the elegies began flooding what would pass for a print market in 1587 only to peter out a few years later. Bradstreet finished the first version of her Sidney poem in 1638. This would mean that Sidney had been dead almost fifty years, and the elegiac tradition that memorialized him almost as long. In short, Bradstreet chooses a defunct subgenre to honor a long-dead poet in terms that only replicate the praise the subject had already received.

But if her comparison was conventional, the relationships she posits between colonial, English, and Greek bodies offers a radically different spatial economy that aims at nothing less than the transformation of conventional notions of identity. In other words, she puts a rather tired comparison in a stale genre to work by using it to sneak a new theory of identity into English discursive systems. To see how she accomplishes this remarkable rhetorical feat, we need first to see how Bradstreet obliterates the bodily distinction between Sidney and Alexander. In the “Epitaph,” in the very section of the poem meant to give us the essence of the elegy’s subject, when she conjures up for her readers the figure of Sidney’s “bones . . . interred in stately Paul’s,” we read “Philip and Alexander both in one” (1. 92–95). Through Bradstreet’s figurative sleight of hand, one dead body becomes indistinguishable from another. English bones become Greek bones.

And not just any bones. Bradstreet frames her elegy on Sidney as a meditation on an ideal English identity set during “her halsion dayes” (1. 1). She casts Sidney not simply as exemplary of this period but as a “patterne” that all who reside on “British land” should follow (1. 6). In calling him a “patterne” she draws on the meaning of the term at the time as, in the words of the OED, “[a]nything fashioned, shaped, or designed to serve as a model from which something is to be made.” In this way Bradstreet makes Sidney
a potentially productive figure who serves not only as a representative of an ideal Englishness but also as a force whose very image will re-produce itself and, in the process, continually re-produce the halcyon days in which he lived. The very bones of the pattern of ideal Englishness thus merge their identity with the figure of classical leadership.

Bradstreet does not rest at transforming English identities into Greek ones. If she had, as I noted above, we would simply have another one of the many elegies that compared Sidney to Alexander. Bradstreet, instead, uses the figure of blood to link her own body with the great Alexander and, by extension, the colonists with classical culture. Sidney serves as the pivot point in this link. In order to see how she uses the figure of her own blood to level a figurative attack on the spatial economy that would relegate the colonial English poet to a mere sideshow freak, we must now return to her revision of the “Elegie.” The alteration of one phrase in the poem has generated the most critical interest and is the revision most relevant to the issues of this chapter. In the 1650 version, the speaker of the poem asks potential critics not to dismiss her praise of Sidney simply because she shared with the famous poet “the 'self-same blood.’” The 1678 Boston edition of this very same poem substitutes “English” for “self-same.” Here are the lines in question:

In all records, thy Name I ever see,
Put with an Epithet of dignity;
Which shewes, thy worth was great, then honour such,
The love thy Country ought thee, was as much.
Let then, none dis-allow of these my strains,
Which have the self-same blood yet in my veines;
Who honours thee for what was honourable,
But leaves the rest, as most unprofitable:
Thy wiser dayes, condemn'd thy witty works,
Who knows the Spels that in thy Rethorick lurks?
(The Tenth Muse, 1. 23–32)

In all Records his name I ever see
Put with an Epithite of dignity,
Which shews his worth was great, his honour such,
The love his Country ought him, was as much.
Then let none disallow of these my straines
Whilst English blood yet runs within my veins.
(Several Poems, 1. 38–43)
Critics have generally understood Bradstreet’s use of the term “self-same” in *The Tenth Muse* as a signal of her relation to Sidney and, therefore, an indication that she was born of noble blood. Some members of the Bradstreet family, in fact, at times claimed to be members of the Dudley line. Critics have further wondered whether these lines were revised in a “bow to decorum” that was also a concession to the “outright criticism” she received after making such a boastful claim. Worried that she might be viewed as arrogant or as trying to trumpet her own status in a community with few if any members of noble rank, Bradstreet, critics speculate, shifted the terms of the link the poem makes between herself and Sidney from blood to nation.

Before we examine whether “self-same” was a subtle way of indicating Bradstreet’s membership in the Sidney clan, we should first remember that “self-same” and “English” serve the same purpose in each poem. Whether or not Bradstreet intended her line to be a subtle reminder of the noble blood coursing through her own veins, whether she altered those lines in response to criticism or simply because she felt she had overstepped the bounds of good taste, both “self-same” and “English” obliterate the geographic space that separates the colonists from those they left behind in England in order to include those living in the provinces with people living in England in the same identity category. In obliterating the geographic divide that separates English people living on different parts of the globe, these lines directly address the worry that life in the colonies necessarily and inevitably robbed the colonists of their very Englishness. “Self-same” and “English” do this because each provides a way of connecting the poem’s speaker with the “Country” that owes Sidney its love given all the service he has performed on that country’s behalf. “Self-same” and “English” each refer to “Country.” We know this because each term is part of a clause born out of the very sentence that includes “Country.” “Then” in line 27 of *The Tense Muse* and in line 42 of *Several Poems* turns the phrase to follow into a consequence of the previous sentence. Do not, Bradstreet asks all her readers (“let none”), dismiss my praise, because I am born of English blood and, therefore (“then”), like all English people, ought to praise Sidney. What she has to say in honor of Sidney, Bradstreet insists, is true regardless of her national duty.

The fact that both terms refer to “Country” suggests that “self-same” is not intended to function as a subtle nod to Bradstreet’s family tree. After all, since “Country” serves as the antecedent of “self-same,” it would violate seventeenth-century English notions of national and familial identities. It would, in other words, make no sense to a seventeenth-century reader. To
say Bradstreet shares the same “blood” as Sidney because she belongs to the same family line relies on a biological model of community. Families are made through the literal merging of one body with another, a bodily interaction that produces yet another body out of its very own. Members of a country are not made in the same way. The members of the “English” nation cannot all trace their heritage to the same collection of bodies. They do not share the same family line. Indeed, the purity of the monarch’s body depended on families procreating only with those of their own social rank. Members of the nobility, to be sure, had relations with commoners that produced offspring. These offspring were, at least in principle, excluded from the family so as to preserve the pure blood of the nobility as a whole. Bradstreet’s use of the phrase “self-same blood” in 1650 to refer to all who are subject to the English monarch makes sense only if blood is understood in a figurative rather than a literal sense. It makes sense, in other words, only if she is referring to a diverse community of peoples whose connection to one another as part of a single political and cultural entity comes to life only through acts of imagination.

Before we see how “self-same” and “English” forge a link between the colonists and Alexander the Great, we must first consider one more puzzling aspect of Bradstreet’s revision. Whether we think “self-same” and “English” refer to her family or to her nation, we must ask why she would claim that anyone in her audience in old or New England might “disallow” her praise of Sidney in the first place. When had either of these audiences demonstrated the slightest inclination to dismiss praise by anyone, for any reason, of its national heroes? The impulse to defend her praise of Sidney when no such defense is necessary, and to do so for two completely different audiences, suggests the lines serve a purpose other than to deflect a critical response that is virtually impossible to imagine. Both poems defend themselves against criticisms that will never be made in order to help bring the colonists into the imagined body politic of Britain. The Tenth Muse and Several Poems have very different reasons, though, for staging such rhetorical confirmations of national identity. In the case of The Tenth Muse, it’s not so much that Bradstreet is worried that her criticism of Sidney will be dismissed because she is English. No. What worries Bradstreet is that her praise of Sidney might be dismissed because she is not truly English. The reference to the poem’s speaker as a member of the “self-same” “Country” as readers in 1650 England requires those readers, after all, to confirm Bradstreet’s identity in spite of then dominant theories of identity. Those theories held that Bradstreet and her fellow colonists had forfeited their claims to true Englishness by living so long in America’s degenerate climate. She
uses literary form to counter such claims. Who would claim that a poem in English memorializing Sidney in a way that closely mirrored earlier elegies by authors whose national identity was beyond reproach was not English simply because it was written by a woman of English descent living in America? The very imitative quality of the poem that has drawn so much fire from Bradstreet’s critics over the years serves, in fact, as a testament to her nationality and helps convince her English readers to accept rather than dismiss her praise of Sidney in spite of an Englishness they might not have acknowledged prior to reading the poem.

If “self-same” encouraged readers in 1650 England to reconsider the basis for inclusion in the imagined English body politic, “English” in 1678 called on readers in New England to proclaim their right to be included in the community of English peoples in spite of their living in a foreign environment. Readers in New England who do not cite her national identity as the reason her praise should be dismissed implicitly grant her the very national status that living in America calls into question. Of course, no colonial reader in New England in the 1670s would have challenged Bradstreet’s Englishness. To do so would have meant calling into question the Englishness of a recently deceased member of one of the most distinguished families in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Bradstreet’s father, Thomas Dudley, served four terms as governor and several more as deputy governor. Elizabeth White describes him as “second only to Winthrop among the leaders of the colony.”33 Bradstreet’s husband, Simon, occupied a position of equal esteem, including service as an envoy to the court of Charles II in 1661, where he and others persuaded the king to restore the colony’s charter. Colonists might have disagreed with the Bradstreet family on policy matters. They might have scoffed at the Bradstreet clan’s claim to noble lineage. But cast aspersions on so vaunted and powerful a family’s claims to Englishness? This is simply unimaginable. In using her family’s distinction as a shield to defend her own claims to being as much a part of the English community as anyone living in England, Bradstreet helps defend all colonial readers against similar challenges to their own Englishness. In confirming Bradstreet’s Englishness, colonial readers simultaneously attest to their own national status. After all, if Bradstreet is English even though she lives thousands of miles away on the other side of the ocean, so, too, are those colonists who are capable of reading these lines praising Sidney. When these readers refuse to dismiss Bradstreet’s praise of Sidney because she owes it to him as an English person, they put to rest any doubts they might have had about their own connection to their imagined home across the ocean.
This was a fear that appears to have been more prominent in the colonists’ minds in the latter half of the century when *Several Poems* first saw print than when Bradstreet first arrived in New England in the 1630s. The minister whom Perry Miller identifies as “the intellectual leader of the second generation” of New England Puritans, Jonathan Mitchell, for instance, preached in 1668, just ten years prior to the publication of *Several Poems*, that “wee in this Country being farre removed from the more keep up Learning & all Helps of Education among us, lest degeneracy, Barbarism, Ignorance, and irreligion do by degrees breake in upon us.” In a sermon delivered just over twenty years after Mitchell’s, Cotton Mather, whose father, Increase, was Mitchell’s most distinguished student, used his pulpit to warn his parishioners of the threat they faced in “that sort of Criolian degeneracy observed to deprave the children of our most noble and worthy of Europeans when transplanted into America.” The specter of Indianization, too, haunts New England readers of 1678 in a way that it certainly did not haunt 1650 London readers. Just one year before the 1678 publication of *Several Poems*, the very same publisher printed Increase Mather’s *A relation of the troubles which have hapned in New England; by reason of the Indians there*, and William Hubbard’s *A Narrative of the troubles with the Indians in New England*. Only four years later Samuel Green in Cambridge would print Mary Rowlandson’s *The Sovereignty & Goodness of God*. The almost total annihilation at the hands of the Indians in the recent wars described by Mather and Hubbard would have brought the question of one’s relation to one’s colleagues across the Atlantic into violent relief. In prompting Bradstreet’s audience to call themselves “English,” Bradstreet’s poem directly addresses their burgeoning fears of degeneration by providing a way for readers to establish their membership in a transatlantic English community through simple affirmation of Sidney’s greatness.

As was the case in *The Tenth Muse*, the poem asks its readers to confirm the national identity of its narrator. But who among her colonial readers would think of casting doubt on Bradstreet’s English bona fides? In agreeing that Sidney’s merits should be praised, the Boston reader confirms his or her own status as a member of the civilized, English community in the very act of affirming the merits of a member of English nobility who died outside Europe a century before fighting a religious war for England’s survival as a Protestant nation.

Now we can, at long last, see how Bradstreet stitches colonial bodies together with English ones that are, in turn, fused with classical ones. Both “self-same” and “English” ask readers to imagine the English community as a single body in which a colonial poet, and the colonists she represents,
shares the same blood as a national hero such as Sir Philip Sidney. If the colonists are a part of the same imaginary English body as Sidney, whose body, in turn, becomes indistinguishable from Alexander’s when buried at St. Paul’s cathedral, then the colonists’ bodies are just as much “one” with Alexander’s as they are with Sidney’s. They, too, can claim figurative kinship with the body buried in that grave. Since Alexander’s very identity in both the 1650s and the 1670s was inextricable with the East, through this simple figurative magic Bradstreet connects not only Sidney’s heroism with the West’s complicated, indeed contradictory, feelings toward the East but also, and more strikingly for our purposes, colonial New England as well. Readers are thus invited to imagine the colonists—and, in 1678, this means that readers are invited to imagine themselves—as fundamentally linked to the West’s obsessive struggle to best the East militarily and culturally.

While the differences in the ways Bradstreet’s 1650 Sidney elegy and her revision of 1678 ask their very two very different audiences to affirm the national status of English colonists living in America are very important, we should not let those differences blind us to the fact that the link between the colonists and the East through Alexander remains precisely the same in each poem. Much had happened on both sides of the Atlantic in the temporal space that separates The Tenth Muse from Several Poems. One English king had been beheaded only to have his line restored some nine years later after a period of Puritan rule. London had been essentially destroyed by fire only a few years after yet another plague has devastated the population. The newly restored monarchy had passed a licensing act in 1662 that fundamentally altered the nature of English print culture as it had developed during the Civil War. New England had undergone an only slightly less tumultuous twenty-eight years. The nature of church membership had seen a drastic alteration when the Half-Way Covenant took effect in 1662, John Eliot published the first Indian bible, and thousands of colonists were killed in a war with their greatest local antagonist, the Native Americans, who suffered even greater losses. It is no exaggeration to say that New England was a different place when “An Elegie” was published in 1678 than it had been in 1650, much less 1639, when Bradstreet completed the first draft of the poem.

Yet in spite of so many momentous changes, the link Bradstreet forges between the colonists, England, and the East through Alexander remains unchanged. In each instance, in spite of so much that has transpired in the world around her, Bradstreet turns our attention to the confrontation between East and West as a way of linking the colonists with their supposedly social betters across the Atlantic. This is a confrontation that signals
an attempt to better the West by showing how it can conquer the very model of civilized behavior that is, at the same time, a threat to all things a Christian held dear. It is, in other words, a connection that holds out as much danger as it does promise: danger in what might become of the colonists and England in general if they become too much like the East, promise in what hope it offers British American colonists in their quest to be accepted into the community of civilized peoples. To protect the colonial body threatened by exposure to the corrupting environment of America, Bradstreet reaches backward on the temporal axis while simultaneously stretching our imagination eastward across the globe for a figure who can protect her and her fellow colonists from whatever threat awaits them in the wilderness of America. We in the colonies are English, Bradstreet seems to say in these poems, not because we are not Indian. We are English, the elegies of both 1650 and 1678 insist, because we, like Sidney, are blood relatives of Alexander the Great. The figuration of a civilized, English identity by a colonial writer threatened by the specter of degeneration looks as much to the corrupted yet powerful conqueror of the East, then, for its sense of itself as it does to the supposedly savage lands and peoples immediately imagined to be—perhaps hoped to be—somewhere to its west.
INTRODUCTION

1. E. Emerson 45.
3. Heimert and Delbanco 130; Caldwell 28.
4. “In Honour of That High and Mighty Princess Queen Elizabeth of Happy Memory,” line 90, Hensley 195.
6. Bosco, “A Song of Emptiness, To fill up the Empty Pages following. Vanity of Vanities,” lines 48–52, page 84. For the most complete discussion of the publication and reception history of The Day of Doom, see Bosco, “Introduction” and “Michael Wigglesworth.”
8. The most thorough discussion of the search for a Northwest Passage by European powers remains Williams’s Voyages of Delusion. One of the writers I cover in this study, Benjamin Franklin, showed particular interest in the possibility of the passage’s discovery. Williams mentions Franklin only in passing (212, 263, and 276). Chaplin mentions Franklin’s interest in the Northwest Passage in The First Scientific American, 146–47. Solis-Cohen provides a thorough discussion of Franklin’s interest. Mapp offers a particularly useful and convincing discussion of how efforts to find a Northwest Passage relied on a profound ignorance about the geography of North America. Mapp’s analysis has quite provocative implications for the study of symbolic spatial economies of the period.
9. Bushman provides perhaps the classic study on the various ways—including but not limited to decorating, dressing, speaking, and reading—by which Americans sought to demonstrate their refinement, a refinement based largely on European models.
10. In studies of related topics outside of literary studies, see, for instance, Bushman's study of efforts by British American colonists to produce and display their own gentility; Bowen provides a more focused discussion of the ways in which elite members of British American colonial society sought to live up to the "gentlemanly ideal"; see Bowen 125–46. For a more extended discussion of attempts to display their ability to live as gentlemen, see Rozbicki; Tchen's study also provides great insight into efforts of British Americans in the period to demonstrate their gentility.

11. India, of course, is a particularly problematic signifier during the period this study covers. To take just one example of the problems this word raises, the word "India" in English did not correspond to a clearly defined region on the globe in the earliest years this study examines. See Raman's discussion in the opening pages of Framing "India" 1–3.

12. Meriton's A Geographical Description of the World (London: 1671) provides one instance of the way Greece presented a classificatory problem. In the list of parts of the world in the opening section of the book, Greece is included in the section on "Asia." The introductory section to the portion of the book devoted to Europe, though, discusses Greece as a part of Europe (123).

13. Lee makes a similar point in discussing The Scarlet Letter on page 949.

14. Lewis and Wigen 54.

15. Inden 49–50 and Hegel 173.

16. On the other hand, Berman argues that it was during the early years of the nineteenth century that one finds "the formation of an American antebellum discourse on Arabs, one that distinguished the image of the Arab from the image of the Turk or the Persian and from the conglomerate image of the Islamic oriental—and then elaborated the stakes inherent in these distinctions" (3–4).

17. The relative dominance of communities in what we term the "East" versus what we now call the "West" or, more precisely, "Europe" in the early modern period is a source of some controversy. The so-called California school of historians, for instance, argues that Asia's powerful role in the world economy in the early modern period has been drastically understated in traditional histories of the period. For a powerful and important discussion of these controversies that argues that "we cannot understand pre-1800 global conjunctures in terms of a Europe-centered world system; we have, instead, a polycentric world with no dominant center," see Pomeranz, The Great Divergence. 4. Gunder Frank, on the other hand, sees Asian communities as the dominant economic powers in the world prior to 1800. He writes, for instance, of "the predominant position of Asia in the world economy" prior to the nineteenth century, and he contends that "Christopher Columbus and after him many Europeans up until Adam Smith knew" that "the entire world economic order was—literally—Sinocentric" (11 and 117). Hobson makes an even more forceful case for Asia's economic superiority in comparison to Europe before 1800. Hobson provides a discussion, as well, of the historiographical tradition that helped produce a conception of a mutually exclusive and historically separate "East" and "West" in twentieth-century studies of world economic development. See esp. 1–28.

18. Brotton is hardly alone in pointing this out. See, for instance, Shankar Raman on the shift from medieval to early modern conceptions of the world, particularly as they relate to the notions of "East" and "West," in Framing "India." For a broader discussion of the history and significance of ways of imagining the world in terms of East and West, see Lewis and Wigen.
20. Ibid., 97.
21. Ibid., 34.
22. See Foerster, *The Reinterpretation of American Literature*, for the most concise series of arguments by these scholars of the 1920s. In addition to having a chapter devoted to “The Frontier,” written by Jay B. Hubbell, the four “factors” Foerster lists as “most important” in the development of American literature “may be comprised,” he claims, “under two heads: European culture and the American environment” (26).
23. For a discussion of the role geographical considerations have structured some important works of scholarship on American literature, see C. Porter. For a discussion of the possibilities the new cultural geography holds for scholars of American literature, see S. Blair. For a broader discussion of the study of American literature in relation to geography, see Brückner and Hsu. For a discussion of the spatial at work in the distinction between the domestic and foreign as it plays out specifically in nineteenth-century works, see Kaplan, *Anarchy of Empire* 23–50. For a critique of the restrictive effects of the continent as a defining trope in the field, see Dimock, “Hemispheric Islam,” “Planet and America,” and *Through Other Continents*.
25. A number of theorists of space, as well as literary critics writing about geographic space, have also had a profound impact on my thinking about spatial matters in this book, though I rarely engage direct with these writings in the body of my analyses. Among those works that were the most influential, I would list Aravamuden, *Tropicopolitans*; Bauer; Brückner; de Certeau; Foucault, “Of Other Spaces”; Lefebvre; Raman, “Re-viewing the World: Cartography and the Production of Colonialist Space” in *Framing ‘India’* 89–154; and Soja.
27. Other relevant book-length studies of the Orient in American literature before 1860 include Luedtke and Yu. Isani’s dissertation remains one of the most thorough and illuminating studies of pre–Revolutionary writing on the Orient. See also Isani’s “Mather and the Orient” and “Edward Taylor and the Turks.” Among the notable essays that either offer broad overviews of American literature of the period and the Orient or provide more specialized examinations of particular issues within the broad topic, Kamrath provides an illuminating analysis of the Oriental tale before 1800 that focuses on an important American magazine. Hayes offers an informative discussion of the importance to the *Koran* in various of Thomas Jefferson’s more famous intellectual projects. If one uses the definition of the Orient or East that I use here—that is, the operative definitions of the eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century—one might also include analyses of the Barbary captivity narrative in American culture. If one looks to the discipline of history, Tchen’s stands out as an excellent examination of the notion that “[t]he use of Chinese things, ideas, and people in the United States, in various imagined and real forms, has been instrumental in forming this nation’s cultural identity” (xv).
29. Ibid.
30. Miller provides no footnote in *Errand to the Wilderness* to indicate just what scholarly works he has in mind.
31. Ibid., 187.
32. Ibid., 186.
33. William Spengemann has, perhaps, produced the most extensive writings on the problem of continuity in American literary studies in the last twenty years. See *A Mirror for Americanists* and *A New World of Words*. R. C. de Prospo has also written some provocative material on the problem of continuity in “Marginalizing Early American Literature” and *Theism in the Discourse of Jonathan Edwards* 9–56.

34. For Anderson's argument regarding the use of the dead in nationalist movements, see “Memory and Forgetting,” in *Imagined Communities*, esp. 198.

35. While I focus here on Ballaster's work on tales involving the Orient in British literature of the period, other scholars working on the same material operate on the same assumption when discussing the relation between this material and empire. Aravamuden, for instance, offers some of the most revealing analysis of the Oriental tale, and he, too, approaches these tales with the same assumptions about a British readership.

36. I am referring here to the sense of inferiority often expressed—sometimes implicitly, sometimes explicitly—by provincial and/or postcolonial writers. For an analysis of American literature of this period as a postcolonial literature, see Hulme; Kaplan; Madsen; Schueller; Schueller and Watts; Schmidt and Singh; Warner, “What's Colonial About Colonial America?”, and Watts, *Writing and Postcolonialism* and *An American Colony*.

37. Buell uses the term “cultural dependence” on page 415 of “American Literary Emergence”; he casts American literature as “the first postcolonial literature” on page 434 of the same essay.

38. Lefebvre 42.

39. Ibid., 46.

40. My decision to focus exclusively on works written in English by British American colonists and by writers of European descent in the new nation requires some explanation. As to the question of language, my decision to analyze only works written in English grows out of my sense that such a focus would allow me to make comparisons between texts from different historical moments without having to wrestle with the conceptual problems that translations necessarily produce. Much valuable work has been done that examines work in different languages during the period this study covers. My own training, research, and interests, though, led me to concentrate on works in English produced in Britain’s North American colonies that would go on to stage a revolution. I hope, in fact, that my analysis of this particular category of figures will prompt other scholars either to investigate similar categories in other literatures or to examine comparisons between languages.

CHAPTER 1

1. Eberwein 140. As evidence for her claim that Alexander dominates “The Four Monarchies,” Eberwein points out that Bradstreet gives Alexander “24 pages of text in contrast to 19 for all his successors in the Macedonian line, 15 for the Assyrian monarchy that ran much longer, 26 for the Persian, and a pitiful 3 for the Roman” (134).

2. One other reason why “The Four Monarchies” has received little critical analysis is also worth noting: “The Four Monarchies” is bad poetry. Virtually every literary critic for at least the 150 years considers “The Four Monarchies” to be an aesthetic failure. For
instance, Elizabeth Wade White calls it “tedious” (237), while Wendy Martin characterizes the lines as “doggedly written and mechanically rhymed” (48). McElrath and Rabb say one “can easily sympathize with [Bradstreet’s] exhaustion, perhaps boredom” (xxx). While “The Four Monarchies” has received little critical attention, some scholars have examined it. See, for instance, Eberwein; Tamara Harvey 37–40; Maragou; Rosenmeier 61–70; Stanford, *Anne Bradstreet* 65–70; Emily Stripes Watts 10–13; White 228–38.

3. Critics before me have also noted that Bradstreet’s poetry favors things of the Old World over those of the New. In her introduction to a modern edition of Bradstreet, Jeannine Hensley points out that although Bradstreet “shared the frontier experiences, she ignored most of the signs of a New World to write of the lore of the Old World and of hope for the next. She praised God and ignored the Indians; she eulogized her husband and ignored colonial politics” (xxiii).

4. “The Prologue” 33; “A Dialogue Between Old England and New” 284 and 282. For reasons explained in note 15, I have chosen to use *Several Poems* as the authoritative Bradstreet text.


6. Ibid., 1295, 1494, and 1488.

7. Ibid., 2169–70.

8. Ibid., 2287.

9. “In Honour of that High and Mighty Princess Queen Elizabeth of Happy Memory” 90; “Four Monarchies” 2512.


11. Bradstreet’s interest in the East has received little scholarly attention, but her interest in Alexander has not escaped scholars’ notice. Helen Maragou provides a thorough and informative discussion of Bradstreet’s representation of Alexander in “The Portrait of Alexander the Great in Anne Bradstreet’s ‘The Third Monarchy.’” For analyses of representation of Alexander in literature in English before Bradstreet wrote “The Four Monarchies,” see Barbour; and Gilles. For analyses of Alexander in English literature in the latter part of the seventeenth century, see Orr. Ng provides a very useful and insightful reading of the figure of Alexander in the early modern period more broadly.

12. Goffman provides an overview of the relationship between the Ottoman Empire and Europe during the seventeenth century. For a much more concise overview of the Ottoman Empire’s composition and influence at the end of the seventeenth century, see Treasure 601–20. For an analysis of the views of the West toward the Ottoman Empire during this period from which I have learned a good deal, see Woodhead.

13. I take the phrase “before Orientalism” from the title of Richard Barbour’s work, from which the analysis in this chapter greatly profited.


15. It is not entirely clear just how much control Bradstreet had over the poems in *The Tenth Muse* or in *Several Poems*. John Woodbridge, her brother-in-law, had the poems published in London without Bradstreet’s knowledge or consent, though just how much or little she knew about or acceded to their publication we do not know. We know little, too, about the circumstances surrounding the publication of *Several Poems*, though it is clear that John Rodgers edited the book. Just what differences between the 1650 and
the 1678 editions are Bradstreet's doing and which are Rodgers's is unclear. We do have evidence, however, that Bradstreet revised the poems after 1650 and that these revisions appear in the Boston edition. McElrath Jr. and Robb consider the 1650 edition the authoritative one in their Complete Works. As Schweitzer points out, “[T]his represents a conservative choice that prefers versions of Bradstreet’s published poems, which we know to have been published without her supervision, over versions of the poems that we have some evidence to indicate she revised to some extent” (The Work 261n8). For this reason, I have chosen to use Several Poems rather than The Tenth Muse when citing lines of poetry.


16. Maragou provides the most extensive analysis of the various sources Bradstreet used, in addition to Raleigh’s history, to help her write “The Four Monarchies.”

17. Other Bradstreet poems in which figures of the East play a significant role include “A Dialogue Between Old England and New,” “In Honour of Queen Elizabeth,” “David’s Lamentation,” and “To My Dear and Loving Husband.”

18. “The Four Monarchies” 3408, 3416, and 3414. Further references to this poem are made parenthetically.

19. John Shields provides a thorough and illuminating discussion of the significance of the theory that the cultural center of civilization moves west in The American Aeneas (3–37). Shields argues that this theory should be labeled “translatio cultus” rather than, as it has been traditionally known, “translatio studii.”

20. Bradstreet’s interest in Alexander can also be seen in the way she adapted her source material. Maragou, for instance, argues that Bradstreet’s history of the world diverges most sharply from its sources in its portrayal of Alexander. “Bradstreet’s approach to Alexander” represents, Maragou writes, “a clear departure from Raleigh’s History” and shows “a striking divergence” from the character of Alexander found in “the histories of Plutarch and Curtius” (78; 75).

21. Maragou and Eberwein also read the poem as demonstrating Bradstreet’s interest in Alexander in particular. Maragou speaks of Bradstreet’s “fascination” with the Greek leader (76), while Eberwein notes “Bradstreet’s disproportionate concentration on Alexander” in “The Four Monarchies” (136). Harvey, too, provides an illuminating discussion of the significance of the figure of Alexander in support of her argument that Bradstreet mounts a feminist critique in her poetry. See T. Harvey 37–40.

22. Eberwein offers a very different reading of these lines. See “Civil War” 134–35.

23. Eberwein does argue, though, that the poem shows Bradstreet’s views on the Civil War in England in particular and on monarchy in general.

24. Rosenmeier 95. For alternate readings of Bradstreet’s Sidney elegies, see Rosenmeier; Round 177–78; Stanford, “Anne Bradstreet’s Portrait” and Anne Bradstreet, esp. 12–17; T. Sweet 157–61; and N. Wright 243–52. Oser does not discuss Bradstreet’s Sidney poems but does read her poetry in relation to the work of Sidney’s own writing, as well as that of Edmund Spenser. Schweitzer offers a very different reading than I do of the differences between the two versions on page 298–303 in “Anne Bradstreet Wrestles. . . .” Cavitch’s reading touches on issues of identity that are related to what I discuss in this chapter. He reads the poem as showing how “Bradstreet seems to feel the thread of her Englishness slipping away,” and he goes on to argue that Bradstreet, in this elegy, “finds [that] the link between mourning, writing poetry, and being English in America is dif-
ficult to maintain for a poet writing in America” (57).

26. Ibid., 81 and 137.
27. Falco 120. For a discussion of the many elegies about Sidney as well as the use of Alexander the Great in those elegies, see Falco, esp. 52–94.
28. “An Elegie,” Several Poems 95. Falco discusses these conventions at length. Further references to this poem are made parenthetically, except when it is necessary to refer to the version published in The Tenth Muse. References to this version of the poem appear in the notes.
29. The date is listed in The Tenth Muse immediately after the poem’s title with the line “By A.B. 1638.”
30. Stanford provides an illuminating discussion on the elegy from which Bradstreet drew her inspiration, Sylvester’s elegy on Sidney.
31. The most comprehensive discussion of the case for a familial link between Bradstreet and Sidney can be found in White 12–17. Stanford provides further evidence in “Anne Bradstreet’s Portrait of Sir Philip Sidney” 97–100.
32. White, for instance, argues that the revisions show that Bradstreet recognized the poem’s flaws in “taste” (148). In “Anne Bradstreet’s Portrait of Sir Philip Sidney,” Stanford argues that the revisions show that Bradstreet “bowed to decorum” though she never “retracted” her “claim to kinship” with Sidney (98). In her later literary biography of Bradstreet, Anne Bradstreet: The Worldly Puritan, Stanford finds evidence to suggest that more than mere decorum was at issue in these changes. She contends that the “change was not made merely . . . for reasons of decorum, but because of outright criticism” (120). In making this argument, Stanford traces the argument that decorum was responsible for the changes to Augustine Jones, the nineteenth-century biographer of Bradstreet’s father, Thomas Dudley.
33. White 158. Simon Bradstreet’s service to the colony was much more extensive than I have listed here. For instance, he also served on the Massachusetts Bay Company for more than thirty years, including a stint as secretary. From 1638 to 1643, he played a key role on the committee that worked to form “The United Colonies of New England,” a confederation of Massachusetts, Plymouth, Connecticut, and New Haven. And, after serving as deputy governor, he became governor in 1686 and then, when Andros was overthrown, was acting governor of the colony until May of 1692, when William Phipps took over.
34. Miller, The American Puritans 109; Mitchell 311.
35. Cotton Mather 137.

CHAPTER 2

2. The Earl of Egmont’s diary entry for the meeting (pages 285–86 of Volume 1 of Perceval, Manuscripts of the Earl of Egmont) contains no discussion of the approval of the seal.
3. I have found no contemporaneous records that describe any discussions over what images to use for the colony’s common seal. In Creating Georgia, Baine provides
a transcript of a meeting among the Trustees of Bray’s Associates at which “Oglethorpe reported, that he had receiv’d Proposals from several Persons for making a Common Seal, one ask’d an hundred Pounds, another sixty, another thirty, and another eight, and Mr. Oglethorpe was desir’d to agree for that of eight” (114). This is an especially provocative note in that it leads one to wonder just who made these proposals and what they might have looked like. Alas, the minutes provide no further details.

4. Martyn, Some Account of the Designs

5. Silk was not the only product associated with the East, and with China in particular, that Georgians tried to produce. Some English experts believed the American soil contained clay of the very type used to make Chinaware. The men, Edward Heylyn and Thomas Frye, to whom the “first Bow patent” granted in England was issued—that is, the first patent given for making Chinaware in England rather than having it imported—had 20 tons of clay shipped from the Carolinas to London in 1743–44, though what precisely became of this clay has never been determined. For a discussion of English efforts to use American soil in the production of English attempts at replicating Chinaware, see Emerson, Chen, and Gates, Porcelain Stories 160. For a discussion of the history of the attempts by colonial Georgians to promote the use of Georgian soil in the European production of porcelain, see Barber.

6. W. Calvin Smith offers perhaps the most provocative way of describing the appeal of silk to the Trustees when he attributes its “vitality to the magic, mystery, and romance connected with the word ‘silk’ itself.” He goes on to describe silk as a “magic word” to eighteenth-century Georgia promoters and colonists. See Smith 25 and 34.

7. See the introduction and pages 31–33 for further discussion of the changing notions of the “East” in British and British American writing of the period.

8. I have focused my attention in this chapter on the British and British American perspectives on the commodities associated with what they considered to be the “East.” Many analyses are available now of this trade from the perspective of these “Eastern” countries. For a brief analysis of the way in which this trade was understood in just one of these communities, see Vainker, “Luxuries or Not?” and Chinese Silk. For a more detailed economic analysis that covers a broad section of what we now call Southeast Asia, see Chaudhuri.

9. For a history of the movement that came to be known as “chinoiserie,” see Appleton for a study focused specifically on England. For a more recent treatment of chinoiserie in England, see Porter, especially chapter 3, “Chinoiserie and the Aesthetics of Illegitimacy” (133–92). For treatments that extend beyond England to include all of Europe, see Honour; Jacobson; and Vainker, Chinese Silk. Willis provides the most detailed, imaginative recreation of the way in which Asian commodities became an integral part of everyday domestic life in Great Britain. He begins his essay on European consumption of Asian products in the period by imagining a “fine summer morning in 1730” when a “prosperous London merchant flings back the chintz quilt, very old-fashioned but a beloved family heirloom, straightens his muslin night-shirt and puts on his Chinese silk dressing-gown as the maid enters with the tea, milk, and sugar.” Immediately following this scene, “the newly bought matched blue and white china tea service is smashed” (133).


11. In contrast to my argument that the emphasis on silk—not to mention other products to be discussed later in the chapter—in promotional documents led to the
colony’s association with the East, some commentators on Georgia have used Martyn’s remark that the colonies will produce goods from the “Southern Countries” as a way of categorizing how the promotional material cast the products geographically (See Greene, *Forty Years* 281). I find this a provocative phrase for Martyn to have used, but I believe the evidence indicates that it is quite the exception rather than the rule. Indeed, whereas I can find only one use of this phrase in all of the promotional literature related to Georgia, the promotional documents are littered with instances in which the very same goods that Martyn casts as “Southern” originate somewhere in what they refer to as the “East.” Martyn himself, in fact, points his readers toward the East more often in those tracts he authored when discussing the original places of production of the goods he says will be made available by the colonization of Georgia. Oglethorpe, too, links Georgia with what he refers to as the “East Indies,” and its products with what he calls “Asia.” See, for instance, Oglethorpe 18, 20, and 54.

12. I do not aim in this chapter to provide a history of the early years of the Georgia colony, regardless of whether one considers those early years to be the colony’s first ten, twenty, thirty, or forty years. I did consult a number of histories of the colony in my research. I relied in particular on material in the following: Coleman’s *Colonial Georgia*; Greene; Ready, “Philanthropy and the Origins of Georgia”; and Reese, *Colonial Georgia.* Crane provides a thorough background to the years leading up to colonization, *Southern Frontier* (303–25). I have also learned much from the first two chapters of Stewart’s “What Nature Safers to Groe.” For an informative discussion that looks at the importance of the London business community in the initial stages of the colony’s promotion, see Meroney. For more specifically literary histories, see R. Davis 59–64 and 1503–5; and Shields, “Literature of the Colonial South” 183–84, “Eighteenth-Century Literary Culture” 444–66, and *Oracles* 45–55.

13. For analyses of the significance of environmentalist theories of identity as they relate to early American literature and/or culture, see Bauer; Canup; Chaplin, *Subject Matter*; Eden; Egan, *Authorizing Experience* and “The ‘Long’d-for Aera’ of An ‘Other Race’”; Finch; Kupperman, “Fear of Hot Climates” and “The Puzzle of the American Climate”; and Parrish. For the perspective on these issues from scholars of British literature, see Feerick; Floyd-Wilson; and Wheeler. For an analysis that does not rely on climatological theory in examining the way early Southern colonists were said to behave but that nonetheless provides a potentially useful perspective, see Bertelson 88–96.

14. The poem appeared in the *Gazette* without a title. For the sake of convenience, I refer to the poem by the title under which it appears in the *Gentleman’s Magazine.* I have also listed the date as 1732 even though, according to modern calendars, the poem was published in what we would term “1733.” Since England did not adopt the Gregorian calendar until 1751, though, I have chosen to list the date as it would have been known by Kirkpatrick and his contemporaries in England.

15. The poem was published in three different periodicals in the eighteenth century. It was published first in the *South-Carolina Gazette* and again two months later in the *Gentleman’s Magazine,* and finally it was reprinted from the *Gazette* in the April 4, 1734, issue of the *Pennsylvania Gazette.* See Lemay, items 245, 256, and 300 from *A Calendar.* The only difference I can see in the three printings of the poem has to do with the way each is framed. The *South-Carolina Gazette* version prefaces the poem with a brief passage from Horace’s Epistle II. We do not know whether the editor of the *South-Carolina*
Gazette inserted the epigram or whether Kirkpatrick requested that it be included. The choice of Horace is hardly surprising, though, given the poet’s popularity among eighteenth-century British writers. See Goad. I discuss the way in which the other two printed versions of the poem are framed in the body of this chapter. See Shields’s discussion of Kirkpatrick’s poetry in *Civil Tongues* 292–95.

16. My discussion in this paragraph thus focuses exclusively on British attempts to cultivate silk in the colonies, omitting entirely the even longer and no less important history of attempts by other European nations to produce silk in their American colonies.

17. Gray puts it most provocatively: “In selecting silk as the most desirable commercial product, the promoters of the Georgia Company either were unaware of or disregarded the numerous unsuccessful attempts that had been made in the older Southern Colonies” (186). I do not mean to suggest, however, that the colony enjoyed no success in producing silk. Georgia experienced a short but nonetheless noticeable boom in silk production in the early 1750s. See Smith, “Utopia’s Last Chance?”

18. For a discussion of attempts to produce silk in British America, see Brockett 26–34; Chaplin, *An Anxious Pursuit*, esp. 158–64; Craven; Hertz; and Gray 1:184–87. Gray provides an especially clear, concise summary of Georgia’s activities in particular (186–87). He notes that “[f]or twenty years every encouragement was employed to stimulate the industry” (186). More recent discussions of attempts to produce silk in Georgia in particular include Coleman, *Colonial Georgia* 113–16; Greene; McKinstry; and Stewart, *What Nature Suffers to Grow*, esp. 53–86.


20. For a thorough discussion of the history of attempts to produce silk in colonial Virginia, see Hatch.

21. Ashe, 8.

22. Oldmixon 378.

23. For very brief discussions of the common seal of Georgia, see Greene, *Forty Years* 294; Preble 630–31; and Reese, *Colonial Georgia* 137n2.

24. For a discussion of the legal significance of common seals in the corporate law applicable to the British American colonies, see Joseph Davis 34–35.


26. Ibid., 14 and 85.

27. Ibid., 85.


30. For more detailed statistics on English imports and exports during the period, see Schumpeter, “Table XII: Values of the Principal English Exports of Woolen Goods for the Years 1697–1771, 1775, and 1780”(35–38); “Table XIV: Quantities of the Principal English Exports of all Textile Goods for the Years 1697 to 1771, 1775, and 1780” (44–47); “Table XV: Values of Selected Imports into England and Wales for the Years 1700 to 1771, 1775, and 1780” (48–51); “Table XVI: Quantities of Selected Imports into England and Wales for the Years 1700 to 1771, 1775, and 1780” (52–55); “Table XVIII: Quantities of Imports, Re-exports, and Retained Imports of Selected Commodities for England and Wales from 1700–1808” (60–62); and “Table XXXV: Exports of Wrought Silk by Geographical Division, 1700–1800” (67). For a discussion of silk imports from Asia to Great Britain from 1700 to 1760, see Chaudhuri 343–58. For a synthesis of scholarship on trade
between Great Britain and Asia during the period, see Marshall. For a different perspective, see Pomeranz.

31. Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure* 50. Berg and Eger contend that “Eastern or oriental imports were part of the classical, western definition of luxury.” They go on to note, “From Pliny onwards, arguments made against eastern luxury items were based on a fear of financial ruin in the West, as silver and gold flowed east to purchase the treasures of the Indies” (Berg and Eger 8). Just how much silk was imported from China during the period? As Berg notes, “Silk, pepper, spices, and textiles made up three-quarters of total imports before 1740; towards the end of the period tea and coffee were among the prominent imports” (Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure* 56).

32. For a fascinating discussion of the origin of the name “China” in English, see Liu, *The Clash of Empires* 75–81. See also Liu, “Robinson Crusoe’s Earthenware Pot,” for a discussion of the use of the word “China” in English in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. One way to see the instability of the meaning of the word “China” as it pertained to specific geographic matters is to look at how the word was used on maps of the period; see Szczesniak.

33. Baine argues that Oglethorpe “evidently subsidized the appearance” of *A Compendious Account*, and he contends that Boreman’s book should be read as “the final promotional pamphlet” in the initial promotional campaign (105–6). Baine notes as well that “the trustees evidently stored copies and distributed them to the colonists” as late as 1747 (106).

34. Boreman 11. Boreman did not invent this etymology. Indeed, a number of his contemporaries make similar references to “Serica” as the ancient name of China. For a very brief discussion of the significance of the history of the word “Serica,” see Honour 30 and Berg, “Asian Luxuries” 228.

35. Boreman 10.


37. Gee, 96.

38. Honour 50 and 52.

39. Ibid., 50.

40. Ibid., 125.

41. D. Porter 134.

42. Ibid., 136–37.

43. Ibid., 166.

44. Ibid., 135.

45. Ibid., 137.

46. Leath 56. British American colonists, like their counterparts in Europe, sought to incorporate products marked as “Chinese” into their daily lives as a way to display their sophistication and taste. See Barber; Denker; and Leath.

47. Berg 50–51.

48. Ibid., 50–51.


50. For a discussion of Kirkpatrick’s medical career, see Waring.


53. Ibid., 26
54. The poem has drawn virtually no attention from literary critics in recent years, and the author to whom we ascribe the poem perhaps only slightly more. Shields writes, for instance, that Kirkpatrick’s writing has, like this poem, “languished in [a] limbo of neglect” (“Dr. James Kirkpatrick” 39). While an untold number of poems from the British American colonies remain equally if not more neglected than this one, the deafening silence from critics in relation to Kirkpatrick’s work is surprising given that the praise I quote above is by a scholar of such respect and influence as Shields. A. Franklin Parks is the only scholar I can find to have examined Kirkpatrick’s poetry at any length recently. He does not list “An Address . . .” among Kirkpatrick’s work. Parrish also mentions Kirkpatrick’s *The Sea-Piece* and “The Non-Pareil,” 207–9. No entry exists for Kirkpatrick in the *Dictionary of Literary Biography*. As for the poem I discuss in particular, Cohen provides a very brief analysis in “Two Colonial Poems” (131); Shields provides brief analyses of the work in “Literature of the Colonial South” (183–84) and in *Oracles* (47; 51–52). R. B. Davis mentions the appearance of “An Address . . .” in the *Gentleman’s Magazine* and the *South-Carolina Gazette*, but he does not analyze the poem. Boys also mentions the poem without offering an analysis, and he lists only its appearance in the *Gentleman’s Magazine* (23).

55. While no one in colonial Georgia recorded any explicit response to the poem in the 1730s, the Malcontents cite some of the very passages analyzed in this chapter in *A True and Historical Narrative*. Their remarks suggest, further, that they, at least, believed the poem had an audience up and down the Eastern Seaboard as well as on both sides of the Atlantic.


57. Lemay considers it “unlikely” that the *Gazette* “could have been the source” for the poem published in April 1733 of the *Gentleman’s Magazine* (Men of Letters 43). I am not so much concerned with the problem of where the magazine got the copy of the poem it published as I am with the way in which they framed that poem—regardless of its source—as a specifically colonial product.

58. See Hall 417.


60. The magazine does not identify the author of the poem, though we now know it to have been written by the Maryland poet and schoolmaster Richard Lewis. In fact, Lewis published a number of poems in English periodicals, and his authorship might very well have been recognized by readers at the time in spite of not being specifically identified.

61. Berry 126. For his extended discussion of “luxury” in the eighteenth century, see 126–76.

62. I do not mean to suggest here that earlier discussions ignored the issue of luxury but, rather, that the issue of luxury was represented very differently in these earlier debates and operated on and was organized in relation to a different set of assumptions.

63. For a discussion of chinoiserie in America specifically, see Denker; C. Frank; Leath. For a discussion of interest in what might be called “the China taste” in the latter half of the eighteenth century, see Blaszczyk and Tchen, especially xv–59.

64. Landa, “Pope’s Belinda . . .” 234.

65. Ibid.

66. In contrast to my reading of the word “India” as a reference to the East, Shields
reads the line “savage India” as a playful twist on its Eastern referent that aims to call our attention to Oglethorpe’s sympathetic relationship with the local Indians. For a thorough discussion of the history of the colony’s relationship with local native populations, see J. Sweet.

67. Shields offers a different reading of the closing lines of the poem. He reads these lines as an “exercise in wishful projection.” What is “revealed” in these lines, he argues, “is the global consciousness that mercantilism had engendered.” Rather than seeing Georgia here figured as a substitute for the East, he argues that it has been “transmuted into the world in the poet’s imaginings.” As in his reading of “savage India” as referring to the land of the American Indians, Shields argues that “Indian Groves” refers to the local orchards. Once these orchards have been “cleared,” Shields continues, they “will . . . mix the cultivars of the several continents” (Oracles 51–52). He makes a similar reading in “Literature of the Colonial South” 183–84.

68. Ralph 37–38.
69. Laura Brown 118.

70. This is one reason, I would suggest, that the poem could be printed on both sides of the Atlantic without any changes being made.

71. I think it is important to add that such in a figurative system, women not only, as Laura Brown points out, bear responsibility for the imperial acts that result in the importation of silk into Great Britain but also bear the burden of an entire culture’s imagined deficiencies. I say this because the logic of this figurative system depends on British women being deficient in and of themselves, and because British women are here not merely figures for their gender within the nation but, in fact, figures for the nation as a whole. So while it is true that the system grants women representative status by placing the figure of the woman as the sign for British culture writ large, it does so by casting largely male acts of violence as the products of what it casts as specifically feminine desire while holding this very desire responsible for the ills of an entire nation.


74. Reasons appeared in at least three separate printings. Six hundred copies were printed in March 1733, followed by six hundred more in April as a petition for additional funds in support of the colony was making the rounds of Parliament with the stipulation by the Trustees that “one of them be deliver’d to Every Member of Both Houses of Parliament.” A second edition with further changes and additions appeared later in the same year. For a discussion of the various issues, see Crane, “Promotion Literature” 289–90.

75. The reference to Pope occurs in each of the three printings of Reasons. As for why Martyn chose Pope’s poem from among the many possible works on luxury he might have cited, his relationship with Pope might have influenced his choice. We know that Pope and Martyn were, at best, acquaintances. The two worked together, for instance, to raise funds for a monument to Shakespeare in 1737–38, but there is even speculation that they co-authored Martyn’s play Timoleon, performed in January 1730 to some acclaim and published in the same year. For a discussion of Martyn’s life, see Alexrod; and Reese, “Benjamin Martyn. . . .” Since at least the nineteenth century, the consensus among critics has been that Pope did not contribute to Timoleon. See, for instance, Griffith, who includes
Timoleon in his bibliography of Pope’s writings but notes, “Probably nothing here by Pope” (292). In the most distinguished biography of Pope to date, though, Mack chooses to qualify but not dispute Pope’s claim to co-authorship when he writes that Martyn “is thought to have received contributions by Pope.” See Mack 925.

76. “The Uses of Riches” was first published in London in 1732. For a discussion of the history of the poem’s printing, see Griffith 215–16 and Mack 522. For a modern edition of the first printing of the poem that reproduces the original spelling and punctuation, see Wasserman. Given their relationship, it might be that he had access to Pope’s poem even before it was published, since Pope might have completed it a year before having it published. See Mack 522.

77. Many previous commentators on Georgia have remarked on what seems to be the discrepancy between the colony’s philanthropic goals of helping those in debt and its focus on producing the very luxury items that, some would say, had led to an increase in such debtors in British society in the first place. Shields, for instance, says the “irony of the philanthropic myth was that the commodities the colonists would be producing in Georgia were in many cases the luxuries that fueled temptation in the Old World” (Oracles 51). To take another example, Greene reads the colony’s philanthropic effort as a sign of the feelings of “guilt” on the part of elite members of society whose efforts to acquire more wealth and luxury items might have, they felt, also contributed to the growth of Great Britain’s indigent poor (Imperatives 119–20).

78. Nicholson makes a similar case for the way in which Pope figures paper money. In Pope’s poem, Nicholson argues, paper forms of payment “substituted a material insubstantiality for the dimensions of the commodities they thereby circulated” (144). The “shift,” he continues, “from perdurable quantities of metal specie to the promissory note of paper money signifies a powerful threat to once-solid foundations for trade and commerce,” which, in turn, “constitutes a clear and present danger to wealth-sustaining landed property and its associated virtue” (144–45).

79. For discussions of the relevance of postcolonial theory to the study of early American literature specifically, see Hulme; Schmidt and Singh; Schueller and Watts; and Watts, Writing and Postcolonialism and An American Colony.

CHAPTER 3

1. Benjamin Franklin: Writings 1084.
2. Ibid., 1084–85.
3. Franklin’s reference to China in a letter that has become rather well known to historians has itself received relatively little attention. Olson connects the rhetorical strategies that Franklin employs in the opening of the letter to criticize the membership requirements of the Order of Cincinnati with Franklin’s objection to the bald eagle as the symbol for the Great Seal, but he does not mention the reference to China.
5. Quoted in ibid.
6. See Aldridge for the most detailed treatment of each of these interests. Tchen, too, provides a brief discussion of Franklin’s interest in using Chinese practices as models for American behavior (17).
I have not included in this list Franklin’s references to the British Empire and, later, the Confederation as “China Vase[s]” that I mentioned in the introduction. The figure of the China Vase in these instances differs from those on which this chapter focuses. Indeed, I suspect that an examination of Franklin’s use of this phrase deserves its own, independent analysis, one that would begin by investigating just what “China Vase” refers to. After all, the term was used at the time to denote Chinaware produced not simply in China or even in Europe, and it appeared at precisely the time when British Americans began in earnest their own attempts to produce Chinaware in the colonies. These attempts allowed the phrase “China Vase” to resonate in ways that called to mind issues of the value of tasteful goods in the colonies in relation to the production of those same goods abroad. Franklin himself was intimately involved in these efforts. Frelinghuysen provides a brief discussion of Franklin’s involvement (8–9). Beurdeley provides a brief description of early U.S. interest in porcelain (130–34), which includes a brief history of the society of Cincinnati’s commissioning of an emblem on a china service, to be made in China, in the society’s honor (134). Barber provides an excellent collection of selections from eighteenth-century newspapers, primarily advertisements and announcements, in Pottery and Porcelain; these collections demonstrate the extent of American interest in Chinaware. Mudge offers a thorough discussion of the importation of porcelain in eighteenth-century British America, while Frelinghuysen thoroughly explores attempts to produce porcelain in the eighteenth-century British colonies and the new United States. Klamkin shows that in the final years of the eighteenth century and the early years of the century following, Americans demonstrated a great interest in having their china adorned with patriotic displays.

7. “The Ephemera,” published as a bagatelle on Franklin’s press in Passy in 1778, might also qualify as an Oriental tale. The didactic goals of the story about a man coming to understand the vanity of human political achievements when he overhears a conversation among flies parallel those of the standard form of the Oriental tale of the time, but the lack of references to the Orient or to “Oriental” characters has excluded it from the genre. E. W. Pitcher has demonstrated, though, that the story might have started as an Oriental tale. Pitcher has identified a work, “The Walk of Al Raschid, the Arabian Philosopher,” published in the New York Weekly Museum, xv, No 29 [whole No. 768] (July 16, 1803), that bears such similarities to “The Ephemera” that it must be considered either an “Orientalized” plagiarism of Franklin’s work or a “translation of an original used by Franklin for his work” (236). If “The Walk of Al Raschid” represents a translation or reprint of an unknown source for Franklin’s essay, this would seem to indicate that Franklin’s story might very well represent his attempt to, as it were, de-Orientalize his story.

8. None of the works has been the subject of much scholarly analysis. “Sidi Mehemet Ibrahim” has drawn the most attention, no doubt because of its focus on slavery. Allison provides a brief analysis of the tale (103–6), and Baepler discusses the story in his introduction to White Slaves, African Masters (8). Also see Marr 142–43; Peskin 85–86; Schueller 48–49; Waldstreicher 238. “An Arabian Tale” was the subject of an essay in PMLA in 1942; see Pitt. Berman mentions the tale (5), as does Schueller (26). “A Turkish Apologue” has never received sustained literary analysis.

9. Outram 1. For a discussion of “reason” in The Enlightenment in America in particular, see May.

10. Mott 42.
11. Mott provides the most extensive discussion of each of these magazines in *A History of American Magazines*. See Kirsch for a discussion of *Massachusetts Magazine*, and R. H. Brown for a discussion of *American Magazine*.

12. I have used Pitcher’s list of fiction in early American magazines as the basis for estimating that one in ten works published in American magazines before 1800 was an Oriental tale. I came to this estimate using the following figures. Pitcher lists approximately 2,880 tales, 215 of which he further classifies as “Oriental.” Pitcher provides no general subject index of the stories, though he does provide an “Author, Signature, Special Subject” index of his catalog. The three “special subject” categories are “Indians,” “Slavery,” and “Oriental.” Of these three subjects, “Oriental” contains 215 entries, compared with only 68 for “Slavery” and 56 for “Indians.”

13. Pitcher cites the publication date of “The Meditation” as 1727. In the catalog entry that this chronological list cites, A1653, though, Pitcher lists the first publication date as 1746, the same date Mukhtar Ali Isani assigns the tale in “The Oriental Tale.” Pitcher’s note to catalog entry A1653, however, cites Bruce Granger as crediting Mather Byles with having first published this tale in the *New-England Weekly Journal* of September 1727. If one takes a broader definition of the Oriental tale than Pitcher does, though, some of Cotton Mather’s discussions of Asia in his various writings might qualify as even earlier British American instances of the genre.

14. The chief rival to *The Turkish Spy* for first to attain popularity in America would seem to be Anton Galland’s *The Arabian Nights*, first published in translation in London in 1704. We will examine the history of this text in the next chapter when we consider Poe’s spoof of the collection of tales.


16. Quoted in L. Wright 319.


18. Ibid.


20. Quoted in ibid., 7.


23. Ballaster, “Narrative Transmigrations” 76.


25. Histories of the various conflicts that took place between the United States and North Africa during this period abound. Allison provides the most thorough discussion of the relations between the Barbary states and the new United States. See also Baepler’s introduction to *White Slaves, African Masters*, as well as Lambert and Leiner. Peskin explains how information about Barbary slavery, including narratives of captivity, circulated in the early United States, and he discusses the impact this information had on the formation of ideas about national identity in the new republic. For a very brief history of the early U.S.–Barbary relations set within the much larger context of a history of the Barbary Coast at large from 1500 to 1800, see Wolf 311–13. Hayes provides a very interesting discussion of the way Jefferson’s reading of the *Koran* played a role in his negotiations to free Barbary captives in 1786. Hayes, “How Thomas Jefferson Read the *Qur’an*” 256.

26. *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, vol. 31, 310. Subsequent passages from this story are
taken from the same page.

27. See Baepler’s introduction to *White Slaves, African Masters* for a discussion of the fear expressed by colonial and early national Americans that they might convert to Islam. He extends this into later time periods in “The Barbary Captivity Narrative in American Culture.” For a discussion of an earlier instance of the fear of “turning Turk,” see Vitkus.

28. Stephen L. Carr calls it a “commonplace” that Blair “was the most widely published rhetorician of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries” (75). Blair’s *Lectures* were, Carr tells us, especially popular in America. They “far outpaced the circulation of any comparable rhetoric,” he writes, “up through the 1820s” (83). See Tennenhouse for a discussion of the popularity of Blair’s writings and their significance in understanding the history of American literature in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, esp. 35 and 137n31.


30. All references to “An Arabian Tale” are from *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, vol. 31, 309.

31. Lovejoy 201. Arthur Pitt points out this contradiction as well when he remarks, “The reasoning employed by Belubel amounts to a scientific demonstration of the goodness, greatness, and wisdom of God, and therefore allows one to cherish a happy faith in the ultimate goodness and rightness of things” (165).

32. Lovejoy makes a similar point when he discusses the evidence used by a wide variety of eighteenth-century writers in support of their belief in the Great Chain of Being: “[T]he notion of a Chain of Being, with the assumptions on which it rested, was obviously not a generalization derived from experience, nor was it, in truth, easy to reconcile with the known facts of nature” (183).

33. Douglas 122.

CHAPTER 4

1. Quoted in Lawson-Pebbles 221–22. For a thorough discussion of Poe’s reaction to Transcendentalism in general, see Casale. For a discussion on the same topic that is more specifically directed at Poe’s views on Emerson’s writing, see Carlson.

2. Quoted in Lawson-Pebbles 218.


4. Poe’s use of the term “Arabesque” has received considerable attention from scholars. See, for instance, Cecil. For the most comprehensive discussion of Poe’s use of the term, see Thompson, *Poe’s Fiction*. See also Hoffman; Irwin 276–77; and Rippl 124–26. For a discussion of the terms “grotesque” and “arabesque” in literature in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, focusing on Europe, see Kayser. Naddaff offers a discussion that focuses on the significance of the “arabesque” in relation to the *1001 Nights*. Hansen and Pollin provide a brief but informative discussion of how Poe uses the term to fend off charges of “Germanism.”


7. Cecil provides a thorough and convincing analysis of the considerable “impor-
tance” of the Arabian Nights’ “literary influence” on Poe’s writing. Indeed, Cecil goes so far as to say that Poe’s late works show a “preoccupation with the Arabian tales” (61 and 62).

8. Mabbot makes the case that this reference to Montgomery constitutes one of the sources for Poe’s “The Thousand-and-Second Story of Scheherazade” (1150).

9. Poe produces an almost identical entry in Marginalia 19.

10. Said discusses the way in which Pickering’s address suggests, in subtle ways, America’s imperial ambitions in the East. See Orientalism 294.


13. Scholars have recently examined nineteenth-century American literature in relation to Orientalist discourse. See, for instance, Lee; Obenzinger; and Obeidat. Scholars have also examined nineteenth-century American literature in relation to Asian religion. See, for instance, Dimock; Versluis.

Scholars have paid some attention to Poe’s Orientalism in particular. In Literary Culture and U.S. Imperialism, for instance, Rowe argues that the “Orientalist fantasy” one finds underlying much of Edgar Allan Poe’s work serves an explicitly “racist and imperialist” function. Erkkila explores in Mixed Blood and Other Crosses “the ways Orientalism intersects with Africanism and a whole series of social subordinations . . . in the formation of Poe’s poetics of whiteness” (126). Schueller finds Poe “a particularly interesting” writer of the period to study in terms of his representation of the East, for in his work one finds, she argues, “a parodied Orientalist discourse, critical of imperial nationalism” that “intersects with raced discourses on Southern nationalism, resulting in epistemological crises of gendered and raced hierarchies of imperialism” (110). Trafton discusses Poe’s work in relation to the mid-nineteenth-century Egyptology craze. Lyons analyzes the “American Pacific Orientalism” in Pym.

14. I do not offer a detailed reading of any of the translations of the Nights. Instead, I focus my analysis on Poe’s use of the work in his story. For readings of the Nights in their eighteenth- and nineteenth-century English contexts, see Ballaster, esp. 101–13; Mahdi 127–63; and Sallis 108–42.


16. For a discussion of the controversy over the first publication of an English translation of the Nights in England, see MacDonald.

17. Caracciolo 6. Indeed, the nineteenth-century Nights differed from its eighteenth-century forebears in that, among other reasons, new translations appeared based on so-called more authentic material than Galland used in making his translations. The early nineteenth century saw several new translations, most notably one by Edward Lane that emphasized a more scholarly approach and considered the tales more as windows into life in the Arab world than as fantastic stories whose direct relationship to Arabian cultural practices was ambiguous at best. For a discussion of four different editions from the nineteenth century that claim to be translated from more “authentic” sources, see Mahdi 87–126. For a discussion of various English translations from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see Sallis 43–64.

18. Sallis 44.

19. Quoted in Ali 42.
21. Ibid., 69.
22. For a thorough discussion of the critical reaction to the Nights in nineteenth-century England, see Ali. For a brief discussion of the importance of these tales to English writers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see Caracciolo, “Introduction.” See also the essays in The Arabian Nights in English Literature. Irwin examines the influence of the Nights on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century English and American literature; see especially 237–92.
23. Timothy Marr sees the American reaction to the Nights differently. He argues that the “negative tradition of islamicism had long been conditioned by the counterstrain of romantic exoticism, which arose from the imaginative opulence of the hugely popular The One Thousand and One Nights (known as The Arabian Nights' Entertainments)” (13).
24. For a discussion of the interest of nineteenth-century American readers in narratives relating to the Middle East as well as to the “East” more broadly conceived, see B. Harvey. For an analysis of nineteenth-century Americans’ interest in materials dealing specifically with Islam, see Marr.
25. For a discussion of the influence of Melville’s reading of The Arabian Nights on Melville’s writings, see Finkelstein 26–41.
26. Ibid., 289.
27. Literary World (May 13, 1848): 284.
28. English commentators shared this view of the Nights. See Ali.
29. On the question of the way that the Nights taught Americans about Arabian culture and, in particular, about Islam, Marr calls the “book as important as the Qur’an for its influence on Western attitudes toward Islam” (13).
30. Nance argues, in fact, that Americans imagined themselves as Arabs with such frequency and in such a way before the 1930s that works such as The Arabian Nights can be said to have played a crucial role in Americans’ self-understandings.
32. Ibid., 614.
33. For a detailed discussion of the movement for literary nationalism in the United States, see McGill 187–216; Miller, The Raven and the Whale; Spencer; Widmer.
34. Hawthorne 3.
35. Simms 1.
36. Spencer 74.
37. Duyckinck believed the situation for American authors to be so dire that he spent three years working to convince a publisher to establish a series devoted solely to works by native authors; in 1845 he finally found a publisher willing to take the risk of issuing books that would be called the “Library of American Books,” described by Ezra Greenspan as “the most important series of original works of American literature ever published to that date or since” (678).
38. Poe, Selected Writings 632.
39. Ibid.
40. Ibid.
41. Ibid. For a provocative, informative, and insightful reading of Poe’s relation to the “Young America” movement that argued for a national literature, and with whom Poe was arguing in the passage I have cited, see McGill 187–217.
42. Denuccio argues that the story interrogates not the American literary scene in particular but the fate of the author in general. He equates, for instance, “[t]he fate of Scheherazade” with “the fate, in other words, of both author and story” (369). The story, in Denuccio’s reading, has less to do with the particular historical moment at which Poe was writing, and more to do with the relation between author and reader in fiction in general.

43. Mabbott 1151. Further references to this text are parenthetical and are indicated by “M.”

44. *Collected Writings of Edgar Allan Poe*, vol. 2, 8–9.

45. See “The Prose Writers of America,” in Headley 284–98.

46. I have chosen not to discuss the personal animus that might also have driven Poe’s rather odd reference to Griswold’s work here. The relationship between Poe and Griswold has long been the subject of much analysis, especially given Griswold’s behavior as Poe’s literary executor. Their rivalry with and dislike for one another—and their attempts to undermine each other’s work—are well documented. In this particular instance, I think it is important to note that Poe and Griswold were in the midst of a bitter exchange of letters about whether Poe would be included in an anthology of American prose writers then being compiled by Griswold.

47. Even so sensitive a critic as Denuccio can make a slip at precisely this issue. He claims, for instance, that Poe “summarizes the usual version of the *Arabian Nights* tales in which Scheherazade . . . stays the executioner’s hand for one thousand and one nights, thereby inducing the king to repeal his vow to marry and have killed the next morning the most beautiful young women in his kingdom” (365–66). I have found no translation that Poe might have read that describes the king’s vow as one in which he promises to execute “the most beautiful women in his kingdom.”


49. Ibid.

50. Ibid.

51. Ibid.

52. Ibid.

53. Ibid.

54. Ibid., 34.

55. Ibid., 31.

56. Ibid.

57. Marr also reads the story of the more conventional translations in family terms. He writes, “After the despot witnesses the three sons whom Scheherazade had borne [sic] during the telling of the tales, he acknowledges her as a queen—an act that reconstitutes a stable family structure, redeeming both the brutal violence of the fraternal despots and the sensuality of their former wives” (45).


EPILOGUE

1. Scholars have begun to investigate the connections between sexuality and the East in relation to the Oriental tale in eighteenth-century American writing. See, for instance, Battistini; Kamrath, “An ‘Inconceivable Pleasure’ and the *Philadelphia Minerva*;
and Schueller, *U.S. Orientalisms*.

2. For work that begins to examine figures of the East in early American writing in relation to specifically American imperial and expansionist modes of thought, one might look at Schueller.

3. Marr's work, for instance, points in precisely this direction.

4. See C. Frank.

5. Transatlantic approaches to early American literature have come to dominate the field. Indeed, transatlantic approaches are so numerous that it would take far too much space to list them all here. For a list of instructive examples, see Slauter 180n2. Dimock's notion of "deep time" leads her to argue for a "planetary" approach. Burnham and Shapiro each argue for the applicability of Wallerstein's "world-system" theories to early American literature. For essays that focus specifically on hemispheric and various forms of global approaches to the study of early American literature, see "Special Issue: Projecting Early American Literary Studies," *ALH* 22. For studies that investigate the implications of hemispheric, global, and transnational approaches in American literary history more broadly, see *Hemispheric American Studies*. See also Arac; Boelhower; Doyle; and Giles. For a provocative discussion of the possibilities of global studies of early American history, see Coclanis.
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Jim Egan