

## OTHERING THE “OTHERSELF”: APHRA BEHN’S *OROONOKO* IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF POSTCOLONIAL CRITICAL THEORY

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**ABSTRACT:** *Aphra Behn’s Oroonoko, or The Royal Slave: A True History, is late seventeenth century fictional work, considered to be one of the earliest English novels. It is centered around the love of its hero, an enslaved African prince in Surinam, and the author’s own experiences in the new South American colony, which was under the rule of England at that time. The author’s claim that it is a true history of the royal slave written impartially is fallacious as Behn adheres to the colonial ideology and maintains her cultural, racial and biological superiority. In this paper, we argue that Aphra Behn’s Oroonoko is a colonial text that has frequent instances of othering and misrepresentation conducted owing to the writer’s Eurocentrism and her use of colonial discourse and narrative strategy. This study mainly draws upon the concepts of othering and representation from postcolonial critical theory, and shows with the help of textual examples that Oroonoko projects colonial agenda more than any other thing, and just as a colonial text, its discourse and narrative strategy provide the writer with absolute opportunity to further colonial agenda.*

**Keywords:** *Othering, representation, postcolonial theory, colonial literature*

### 1. BACKGROUND

In “Introduction” of *Culture and Imperialism* [1], Said has emphasized that authors are not free from the history of their societies and hence their ideas are largely shaped by the social factors they experience in that historical setting. A number of works [for instance, see 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, etc.] investigate authorial treatment of Negro across various genres of literature.

Aphra Behn comes from an English background of sixteenth century. Her works received a wide ranging critical acclaim [see for instance 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, etc.]. It is argued that despite her claim of being an individual and nonpartisan in telling the tragic story of Oroonoko, the former African Prince, she fails to maintain her impartiality or individuality. Anne Fogarty [14] has rightly pointed out that Oroonoko is a surface on to which Aphra Behn projects and propagates her colonial ideology. Moreover *Oroonoko* [15] is a product of colonial period, significantly published in 1688 and it is set in the erstwhile English Plantation Colony, Surinam, which indicates a close connection of this novel to the colonial context. Behn draws polarities to represent the natives as “others”, morally, intellectually, physically and socially inferior to the Europeans’ set-traditions and standard of civilization. It is apparent from the frequent use of the pronouns in her narrative, such as “they” for the “natives”, or “African slaves” and “we”, “us” or “our” to represent her White superior race. Consequently the European or more specifically the English “self” emerges as superior to that of the “natives”.

Said has traced the origin of the genre of novel to a historical narrative that is shaped by the actual history and by the real nations. In his view the novel is basically a product of bourgeois society and it is in fact an integral part of the conquests of the Western world. He goes on to say that without empire there would have been ‘no European novel as we know it’ [1]. In the same way *Oroonoko*, which

belongs to the category of the genre of novel, does carry the imprints of colonial ideology and imperialism.

### 2. Eurocentrism and the “self” in *Oroonoko*

Bill Ashcroft et al. [16] are of the opinion that ‘Eurocentrism’ is a process either conscious or unconscious by which European cultural norms are viewed or assumed to be the normal or the universal. So Eurocentric perspective does not only influence or change rather it actually constructs and produces other cultures. By eighteenth century this concept of a collective “Europe” constructed the European cultural and social norms as superior to the “others” or the third world cultural norms.

*Oroonoko* is a problematic critique of the English colonialism of late seventeenth century, with peculiar emphasis on the slave trade. The story of *Oroonoko* is divided chronologically as well as geographically into two parts. In the first part we see that the hero, whose name was Oroonoko, is a respected warrior-prince in his African country, called Coramentien. He fell in love with Imoinda, but soon his good fortune was disrupted, because his Grandfather, the king of Coramentien started taking interest in his beloved, Imoinda. When the King’s efforts to have Imoinda’s love failed, he decided to sell her into slavery. However Oroonoko was told that she is dead. In the second part the hero himself is treacherously made slave and is brought to the South American English Colony, Surinam, where he joyfully rediscovers his beloved, Imoinda and meets the narrator, tells her his own story, stages an unsuccessful rebellion and is brutally killed by the English colonists.

It is a problematic critique of colonialism because Behn in *Oroonoko* conforms to the idea of Eurocentrism. In her dedicatory epistle in which she also provides a background and introduction to her tale, she considers the native or local things as a source of amusement:

“If there be anything that seems Romantick, I beseech your Lordship to consider, these Countries do, in all things, so far

differ from ours, that they produce unconceivable wonders; at least, they appear so to us, because New and Strange” [15].

This extract clearly shows that whatever is not according to the European standards of beauty, is a “wonder” or “strange”, at the same time the phrase, ‘differ from ours’ does express her desire to divide the world into two different compartments, that is into the colonizer and the colonized.

This division of the world into two distinct categories of “us” and “them” is what Said has also explained in his Orientalism:

“This universal practice of designating in one’s mind a familiar space which is “ours” and an unfamiliar space beyond “ours” which is “theirs” is a way of making geographical distinctions that can be entirely arbitrary” [17]. Said is attentive enough to point out that this distinction is totally arbitrary. Because this imaginative geographical distribution of the different regions, “our land-barbarian land” variety does not guarantee that the barbarians also affirm this division.

The narrator of the novel under study that is the author herself depicts the South American Islands inhabitants Eurocentrically; though they are a “wonderful figure to behold”, yet their color is not fit for the perfect beauty:

“Some of the Beauties which indeed are finally shap’d, as almost all are, and who have pretty Features, are very charming and novel; for they have all that is called Beauty, except the colour, which is a radish Yellow” [15].

It is clear from this extract that the narrator is deliberately involved in the process of creating her “others” on the ethnic and racial grounds. In the meanwhile her own “self” emerges as superior and carrying all the necessary elements of the beauty. Therefore the “self” of the colonized people seems to be carrying an inherent ‘flaw’ that cannot be diminished.

Frantz Fanon in *The Wretched of The Earth* has argued that in the colonial context we see the imposition of a dichotomy being exercised upon the whole surface of the globe [18], which ultimately results in the solid division of the world in the form of “us” and “them”. He further elaborates on the same point that under the settlers or the colonists the native feels a “presumed guilt,” nevertheless he does not seem to accept this guilt and thus in his/her innermost spirit, he never seems to admit such accusations [18]. In this regard it is to be noted that although the narrator endorses that the natives were the representative of the “first state of innocence” before the mankind even came to know the idea of sin. Moreover, they were simple and plain in their nature, having their own culture and a “native justice” as well, yet the narrator is not willing to grant them the equal status to herself.

According to the narrator the natives were in the absolute stage of purity and also “very useful” to them on all occasions, therefore they treated them as their friends and did not make them slaves to work on the plantations. It is quite interesting that the reason for treating them as friendly and brotherly is that, they were simply useful to the

European self-interest; Robert L. Chibka has very aptly remarked:

“The true European perception of human or subhuman is quite irrelevant; it is revised from moment to moment to serve the colonialist agenda” [19].

It is clear that Aphra Behn is clearly projecting her colonialist agenda in *Oroonoko* trying to Europeanise Oroonoko and depicting him as someone who is attractive and familiar, yet at the same time strange and exotic:

“His Nose was rising and Roman, instead of African and flat. His Mouth, the finest shap’d that cou’d be seen; far from these great turn’d Lips, which are so natural to the rest of the Negroes. The whole Proportion and Air of his Face was so noble, and exactly form’d, that, bating his Colour, there could be nothing in Nature more beautiful, agreeable and handsome” [15].

Behn tries to reduce Oroonoko’s “otherness” insisting that his “color” cannot be ignored. Paradoxically, the more she attempts to erase the difference of Oroonoko’s body, the more significant it becomes. It is not only his color that is definite and fixed but also his sexuality and masculinity.

It can be argued that the very effort on part of the colonial narrator to domesticate her hero indicates his “otherness,” likewise the use of word, “Negroes” is again an index of her “racial superiority” because she does not seem to acknowledge any diversity that may exist among the Negroes; she presents them as a uniform creature, denying any trace of their separate identities. Fanon has highlighted the same racist attitude of the colonists to the Negroes:

“Colonialism, which has not bothered to put too fine a point on its efforts, has never ceased to maintain that Negro is a savage; and for the colonist, the Negro was neither an Angolan nor a Nigerian, for he simply spoke of ‘the Negro’” [18].

On the basis of her racial attitude towards her hero, we may say that she is actually propagating her colonial ideology. Bill Ashcroft et al. are of the view that “race thinking and colonialism” both extend the “binary” opposition to draw a line of demarcation between the civilized, the Europeans and the primitives, the colonized. And it was on the basis of racist description that the “Negros” or Black Africans were placed at the bottom [16].

The same practice was carried out during the Spanish rule in the Americas. Claire Taylor has described the Royal Orders of 1523, which created two authorities in the Spanish Indies: first one being the *Republica de los indios* (Indian Republic) and the second one was *Republican de los espanoles* (Spanish Republic), however this division does not mean that the indigenous communities were accorded equality or independence, contrarily it meant that the Amerindians was inferior to the Spanish and also that the members of Amerindian community could be more easily controlled. The Blacks who were brought as slaves to the Spanish America during the initial conquest and settlement were still lying lower in the hierarchy.

This shows that the racial discrimination was a general practice in the European colonial societies, to which Behn conforms and consolidates further on her ideological

footings. Studying the relationships between West/ Europe and its dominated “others” not only we discover the underlying inequality that has long existed between the two, but also that it is a method of formation of meaning in the Western cultural practices themselves [1].

Behn’s Eurocentric perspective does not end with her ethnic or racial depiction of Oroonoko, rather she goes on to use him as a tool or medium to take forward her own political and religious ideology. She tells us that Oroonoko mourned for “the deplorable death of our great Monarch.” After listing some of his good and unique qualities such as his being well-learned, and having even the knowledge of the “Civil Wars in England,” she moves forward to represent him Eurocentrically:

“He had an extreme good and graceful Mien, and all the Civility of a well-bred great Man. He had nothing of Barbarity in his Nature, but in all Points address’d himself, as if his Education had been in some European Court. This great and just Character of Oroonoko gave me an extreme Curiosity to see him” [15].

This gaze of “curiosity” is central to the colonial discourse, which the author places on Oroonoko throughout her novel in order to sexualize and eroticize him as well as to control him. Despite her emphasis that she is a nonpartisan observer, the narrator constantly uses the fetishizing language and expressions of the colonizers.

The narrator does not seem to rise above the biases of her own culture. Because of her refuting any innate African good quality in Oroonoko, the African Royal Slave, it is beyond her imagination that African continent may produce such a unique man, therefore she mentions her own “European Court”, as if it was assumedly the source for producing or breeding this great person, Oroonoko. Laura Brown comments:

“The failure of Behn’s novella to see beyond the mirror of its own culture in this opening characterization of its hero raises the question of the nature of Behn’s relationships with African slaves” [20].

As a result we see that the world of *Oroonoko* is permanently divided between “us” and “them” dichotomy, in which the narrator celebrates her own ‘self’ as refined, educated, normal, civilized and intelligent.

Said has therefore pointed out in “Introduction” to his *Culture and Imperialism* that it is a striking feature of colonial discourse to construct the stereotypes regarding “the African mind” and then the notion of bringing civilization to the barbaric peoples’ lands and at the same time severely punishing them whenever they misbehaved because they understand violence best. In a nutshell, “they” were not like “us” and for that reason deserved to be ruled” [1].

During the course of the time, the narrator is able to minimize the “otherness” of her hero, and she presents him as a transformed figure, who has completely accomplished the standard qualities of European humans. The “greatness of soul,” well-refined concept of true dignity and “absolute generosity,” are some of the characteristics that the hero has. Even for these qualities, the narrator gives the credit to

hero’s French tutor, who taught Oroonoko, morals, language and science:

“Some part of it we may attribute to Care of a French-Man of Wit and Learning; who finding it turn to very good Account to be a sort of Royal Tutor to young Black, & perceiving him very ready, apt, and quick of Apprehension, took a great pleasure to teach him Morals, Language and Science” [15].

To a great extent it is because of the French tutor that the hero is able to get knowledge and be enlightened in the light of European civilization. Without French tutor’s endeavors, the hero would have remained a flawed individual, just like his other countrymen.

### 3. The Colonial Discourse in *Oroonoko* and the “self”

Bill Ashcroft et al have pointed out that “colonial discourse” is a system of statements in which colonies and colonial people are represented. This system shows the relationship between the colonizers and the colonized:

“Rules of inclusion and exclusion operate on the assumption of the superiority of the colonizers’ cultures, history, language, art, political structures, social conventions, and the assertion of the need for the colonized to be raised up through colonial contact” [16].

Behn has emphatically maintained her cultural and intellectual superiority by the appointment of a French tutor, who obviously represents European cultural norms, for raising up her hero. Laura Brown has aptly put forward the idea that as Oroonoko was educated by a French-man, he is therefore admirable because of having close-connection with the European civilization not-distance from it [20]:

“Oroonoko, who was more civiliz’d according European Mode, than any other had been, and took more Delight in the White Nations; and, above all, Men of Parts and Wit” [15].

So slowly and gradually, the narrator has brought her hero to her own European ideological dimensions, the phrase; “the White Nations” clearly indicates her duplicity and complicity with the colonists. It is yet to be explored that how far the narrator is true in claiming that her royal slave took or expressed his great inclination to the “White Nations”, whom he prefers to call “Dogs” [15], when the real or actual face of the “Whites” is disclosed to him. However the narrator is deeply rooted in her colonial ideology and cannot get rid from her imperialist attitude. Though the narrator wants to reduce her hero’s “otherness” by domesticating him, yet while doing this she is actually involved in the process of distorting his native and domestic African identity. Fanon has remarked:

“Perhaps we not sufficiently demonstrated that colonialism is no simply content to impose its rule upon the present and the future of a dominated country. Colonialism is not merely satisfied with holding people in its grips and emptying the natives’ brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted [*sic!*] logic, it turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures and destroys it [18].

This is what is happening in this novel. Oroonoko’s own country is not able to teach him good morals and intellectual values; rather his country is shown as a blank page in the

history of human beings. It is the colonizers who know that what is best for the colonized peoples.

Janni Ramone [21] is of the view that the barbaric images are the recurring themes of the colonial literature, which work to maintain the long-cherished claims of the colonizers imperialist ideology, that the colonized races were not able to have self-government to govern their own societies because they were undisciplined and undeveloped. In addition to that the portrayal of the colonized is often reinforced in the depiction of the governed communities as highly emotional and unstable characters, so that the colonizers may justify their presence in the other world on the basis of "humanitarian endeavor" [21]. As whole we may conclude that Oronooko's character is constructed on the narrator's own imperialist and colonial ideology, which consequently results in the ethnic superiority of the white woman over the black native. In this way the Black Royal Slave becomes the narrator's "silent other".

This is what Said has suggested in *Orientalism*:

"There are Westerners, there are Orientals, the former dominates the later must be dominated, which usually means having their land occupied, their internal affairs rigidly controlled their blood and treasure put at the disposal of one or another Western power" [17].

Despite the fact that *Orientalism* is mainly concerned with the Arabs and Islam, who constituted the Orientals for hundreds of years in the British, French and American imperialism, nevertheless the concept, as Janni Ramone has argued, may be "applied far more broadly to other locations and peoples, especially once colonialism is taken into consideration" [21]. This same demarcation between "self" and "others" may be regarded as one of the prominent themes in *Oroonoko*, which finally leads to the deculturation and dehumanization of the natives.

However there is a moment in the novel when the narrator becomes conscious of her own strange looking in the eyes of the natives. This took place when the narrator and her travelling party including Oroonoko went to an Indian village, upriver, on a daring expedition. Here the narrator undergoes an experience that forces her to describe herself for the very first time in the novel. When she meets the Indians who have never seen a white creature before, she immediately becomes attentive of her own so-called superior "self", because now she saw herself through their wondering eyes:

"They had no sooner spy'd us, but they set up a loud Cry, that frighted us as first; we thought it had been for those that should Kill us, but it seem it was of Wonder and Amazement. They were all Naked and we were Dress'd, so as is most comode, for the hot Countries, very Glittering and Rich, so that we appear'd extremely fine; my own Hair was cut short" [15].

Here again she reinforces her racial superiority as the phrase "we appeared extremely fine" suggests. She seems to be comparing her appearance with that of the native Indians. It occurred to her suddenly that even though the natives have cast a sight of surprise and wonder on her body, yet she is a symbol of a refined appearance.

To some extent the natives were able to force her to describe herself and revisit her bodily structure or color. What she conceives of herself from this outlandish viewpoint is directly reported in the natives own language; "we shall know whether those things can be speak", the natives enquire either they have "sense and wit" or can they "talk of affairs of life and war" as they (Indians) can. Therefore in a reversal position it is the colonizers who are first turned into a worthy-sight to behold and then are judged and qualified on the basis of their visibility and color differences.

In this perspective, William C. Spengemann [22] has argued that because of this visit to the Indian tribe, the narrator is given a new perspective like her predecessors on the world as a whole, and the Indians' words, which are altogether innocent, assume a great role in this context, in shattering the Europeans' cultural or racial superiority:

"Seen from this American coign of vantage, Europe is no longer the center of the circle of lands. It is merely one more place on globe as backward in its way, as are the barbarous nations in theirs, a relative thing rather than the seat of absolute values by which the rest of the world may be judged" [22].

In the above given discussion, we have seen that three different cultures and societies: that are the native Surinamese, the setting of the novel, the European and that of Coramantien, Oronooko's African home are compared to one another, but the narrator's own cultural norms are celebrated and considered superior to those of Coramantien and Surinam. Therefore the narrator continuously draws a solid demarcation between her "self" and the "self" of her 'silent others' in order to show and consolidate her inherent superiority to the other races.

All the above cited extracts from *Oroonoko* show that Behn's "others" whether this being her hero, Oronooko or the natives, are depicted as Said has argued; "something one judges," "something one studies," "something one disciplines" or "something one illustrates." So the key point here is that in any case the narrator's "others" are "contained" and "represented" [17], by her own imperialistic framework. Fanon is worth-quoting in this regard:

"The settler makes history and is conscious of making it and because he constantly refers to the history his mother country, he clearly indicates that he himself is the extension of that mother country. Thus the history which he is to write is not the history of the country which he plunders but the history of his own nation" [18].

Behn herself proclaimed in the dedicatory epistle to her tale, that the story she is going to compose or narrate is "a true Story", moreover the complete title of the novel runs as: *Oroonoko, or The Royal Slave: A True History*, which is an ample proof that she was writing the history of Oroonoko's life. But as Fanon has pointed out that the settlers are conscious of their mother history and therefore they cannot go beyond their ideology. The same is true of Behn. On one hand she says that she is composing, "a true Story", while on the other she serves the colonial agenda, which shows that she is also an extension of her mother country.

It is therefore right to say that the world of her novella is clearly categorized in the dichotomy of “us” and “them”, in which her own “self” emerges as rational, cultured, civilized, normal, and dignified.

#### 4. Behn’s narrative strategy and the “Self”

It is a “zero-focalized narrative” that Behn has employed in her novel to narrate the events. As Peter Berry has pointed out that this type of narrative is not identified at all as an autonomous character with name and personal background history. Rather it a “tone” or a “voice”, which serves as a mere “telling medium”. Such type of narrators may be categorized as “effaced”, “covert”, “non-dramatized”, or “non-intrusive”. Therefore it is called “authorial persona” [23].

Said has highlighted that how the authority of novels’ consolidation, which is in part, “self- validation” during the process of narrative, is determined. It is not simply connected to the social powers and governance. First, there is the authority of the author who writes definitely following some conventions and patterns and his ideas are deeply embedded in his or her own society. Second, there is the authority of the narrator, whose narration obviously anchors in some recognizable and referential circumstances. Finally there is the authority of community, according to Said, whose representative is the family or more broadly speaking the nation, the particular setting or the concrete historical moment. Together all these factors contribute to making the novel. In Said’s own words; “The novel is thus a concretely historical narrative shaped by the real history of real nations” [1].

In what follows we would investigate that how this type of narrative serves Behn’s colonial agenda. See the following lines:

“Those then whom we make use of to work in our Plantations of Sugar, are Negroes, *Black- Slaves* altogether; which are transported thither in this manner” [15].

The choice of using personal plural pronouns “we” and “our” that refer to her personal involvement in the process of enslavement. She seems to own the plantations as well as slaves, who are mostly Negroes. In addition to this, the story of Oroonoko is told in a “zero-focalized narrative”, that is when the narrator freely enters in the characters’ minds and feelings as if privy to their perceptions and emotions. This sort of narration or what is generally called an “omniscient narration”, is peculiar to the “classical or traditional narration” [23].

In the earlier stages of *Oroonoko*, we are told the narrator’s company charmed Oroonoko, and also that he had a complete trust in her “Great Mistress”. The narrator even goes on to the extent to remark very proudly that her “Word wou’d go a great way with him”. But soon after, when Oroonoko shows the signs of rebellion, the narrator immediately becomes aware of her class and persuades him not to doubt her words, for this would force the colonists to treat him cruelly, which might result in Oroonoko’s “confinement”. Here again the narrator uses the phrase; “we wou’d break our Words with him” [15]. So the personal

plural pronoun ‘we’ directly reflects her own association with the colonists.

Robert L. Chibka [19] has noted down that the narrator manipulates pronouns masterfully to set herself half in and half out of the European community. For instance if the assurances of freedom are suspected, then ‘they’ are solely responsible for them: “They fed him” [15], with the promises, so Oroonoko began to “suspect them” [p. 41], of their being untrue. Similarly if the personal trust is to be stressed to discard and exterminate any possibility of suspicion, then “I” evoke it [19]: “I was obliged... to give him all satisfaction I possibly cou’d” [15]. Here “I” is used to shed off any doubt ,leveled against her personal dignity, because the narrator wants that her hero should not injure her personal grandeur, that her “self” may not be tainted with falsehood, so that she can safely project her colonial ideology, using Oroonoko, as an effective means or instrument to propagate her own imperialist thoughts.

However when the narrator feels that the dignity of her race is being endangered because of Oroonoko’s doubt, then she employs the singular umbrage of personal pronoun on behalf of plural race: “I took it ill he should Suspect we wou’d break our Words with him” [15]. We see how her claim of being non-partisan and neutral, while telling the story of her Royal Slave is being torn into pieces; because she regards it against the glory of her race to be considered deprived of moral values. Thus she is compelled to make appearance on the stage to defend her race by using pronoun, “I”. And this in turn, provides a clear-cut proof that how Behn’s narrative conforms to her own ideology.

She warns Oroonoko that if he continues doubting her race or more specifically, the European colonists, governing the colony of Surinam, he would face dire consequences. Like the other colonists, she intelligently uses her own mistrust to convince him not to mistrust her, urging him to give her a solemn promise of non-aggression. This further leads us to look into the ‘narrative patterns of control’ through language. To a large extent, this was Oroonoko’s blind faith in the narrator, the “Great Mistress”, that she holds a firm devotion to truth, which eventually induces him to relinquish any doubt and suspicion.

It was only in the closing-scene of the novel, that it was revealed to Oroonoko, that all these lies were white-lies. For the narrator’s dual policy lingers on till the end of the novel. It is apparent from her reaction to the attempted escape of Oroonoko, which exhibits that how much she trusted in her hero’s promises:

“We were possessed with extreme Fear, which no persuasions cou’d Dissipate, that he wou’d...come down and Cut all our Throats. This apprehension made all the Females of us fly down the River, to be secur’d” [15].

The selection of the pronouns, ranging from, “we”, “our” to “us”, all absolutely point out to permanently categorizing the world into two halves; that is of the White race and its “Others” ,the latter one being inherently primitives and barbarous. The narrator is not willing at any cost to separate herself from her White superior race; rather she seems to be cementing her “self” with her own race on solid basis.

Therefore her absence at the most tragic moment in the novel, when her hero, Oroonoko was being terribly whipped, demonstrates that she did not trust her hero anymore; since he has been transformed from the status of Royal Slave to that of beast-like Monster. So the narrative technique that Behn has employed in her novel is quite fit for her colonial ideology, which results in the constant division of the globe into “us” and “them”.

The ‘omniscient narration’ provided her the opportunity to brilliantly mould the plot of her novel according to her own personal motives. In this perspective, Said has maintained: “One must connect the structures of a narrative to the ideas, concepts, experiences from which it draws support” [1].

## CONCLUSION

In this paper, as a background, we discussed how Black Studies have increasingly investigated attitudes towards the Negro and how fiction on/by them received academic acclaim, particularly works by Aphra Behn. The background is followed by a study of Eurocentrism in *Oroonoko*. In the section that follows discussion on Eurocentrism, study of colonial discourse in *Oroonoko* has been conducted. The penultimate section of the paper critically reviews the narrative strategy employed by the writer.

The basic argument of this study draws upon Saidian framework that conceptualizes literature and writers as captives of history. The study, thus, challenges Aphra Behn’s claim regarding her seminal work *Oroonoko* that it is a true history of the royal slave written impartially as Behn adheres to the colonial ideology and maintains her cultural, racial and biological superiority. Textual examples show that *Oroonoko* is a colonial text that has frequent instances of othering and misrepresentation conducted owing to the writer’s Eurocentrism and her use of colonial discourse and narrative strategy.

As a whole, we may conclude that this kind of narrative provided Behn an absolute opportunity to project her thoughts with finality and singularity of perspective, dispelling any alternate viewpoints. Summing it all up, we may safely assert that *Oroonoko* is predominantly a colonial text that supports and furthers colonial agenda by sticking to colonial standards of civilization, beauty, education, intelligence, and mannerism.

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