52. Ibid., Novel V, 285.
53. Ibid., Novel IV, 265.
54. Kristina Straub, *Domestic Affairs: Intimacy, Eroticism, and Violence between Servants and Masters in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 37.
55. Manley, Novel IV, 269.
56. Aphra Behn, "The Fair Jilt," in *Oroonoko, The Rover and Other Works*, ed. Janet Todd (Toronto: Penguin, 1992), 55.
57. Ibid., 55.
58. Ibid., 59.
59. Ibid., 58.
60. Manley, Novel IV, 269.
61. Ibid., Novel IV, 269; 270.
62. Ibid., Novel IV, 271.
63. Painter, 1:248 accessed July 16, 2014, www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/20241; Manley, Novel IV, 271.
64. Blackstone, 1:432–3.
65. Manley, Novel IV, 271; Novel V, 289.
66. Painter, 2:103.
67. Manley, Novel V, 289–90.

3 Vengeance, Vows, and "Heroick Vertue"

Reforming the Revenger in Delarivier Manley's *Almyna: or, The Arabian Vow*

Misty Krueger

After *The Royal Mischief*'s run in April 1696 and *The Female Wits*' parody of the tragedy later that year, Delarivier Manley abstained from writing drama for a decade.[1] In late 1706, she returned to the stage with *Almyna: or, The Arabian Vow*,[2] a drama remarkably different from *The Royal Mischief*. Manley shifted from celebrating a femme fatale's desires to promoting a chaste woman's reform of men's passions. Rather than focusing on licentiousness and hyperbolic violence, *Almyna* privileges reason and restraint over mad ravings and retribution. These modifications align Manley's work with transformations in theatrical taste.[3] While scholars have examined *Almyna* in terms of Orientalism, adaptation, politics, and feminism, they have not explored fully how the play represents Manley's development as a dramatist writing on trend.[4] After the turn of the century, playwrights favored repentance over the Restoration-era trope of blood-as-spectacle, and unlike heroic tragedies, civic tragedies[5] show that "the word" holds greater value than "the sword." Manley realizes this change through her new presentation of vengeance. In part, this essay identifies revenge as the linchpin in Manley's turn from heroic tragedy to civic drama.

In *The Royal Mischief*, Manley reproduces a Restoration-era model of revenge that depicts how revengers threaten an authority figure's rule and endanger the social and political stability.[6] As such, the play chronicles the intrigues of characters driven by lust, hatred, and ambition to commit crimes of passion.[7] Even the Prince of Libardian is motivated by revenge to murder, thus revealing vengeance's power to jeopardize a ruler's ability to be a good sovereign. By the end of *The Royal Mischief* almost every character dies as a result of vengeance. Manley explores revenge again in *Almyna*, but to a different effect. In *Almyna*, Manley's titular female protagonist's carefully articulated logic thwarts successive violence and surprisingly provides the would-be victim and the revenger with a happy ending. Contrary to *The Royal Mischief*'s Homais, *Almyna* shows that a strong female character must not instigate revenge. She must dissuade it. She must become, in the words of Manley's contemporary, playwright John Dennis, "the preserver of Nations,"[8] not the cause of their downfalls. By their good examples, women must help men reject their impulses for vengeance and violence so

that they can rule with compassion. As I argue in this essay, in *Almyna* Manley demonstrates that a woman's heroic virtue is the antidote for vengeance, thus allowing the playwright to rehabilitate rather than punish the revenger.[9] Manley's revision of revenge ultimately offers repentance as a method for securing public good.

Prefacing Revenge and "Heroick Vertue"

While most of *Almyna*'s 1707 preface apologizes for the extenuating circumstances affecting the play's December 1706 run at the Queen's Theater,[10] the preface also provides clues for the play's connections to revenge tales, heroic virtue, and civic duty. Manley states that her "fable is taken from the Life of that great Monarch, *Caliph Valid Almanzor*, who Conquer'd *Spain*, with something of a Hint from the *Arabian* Nights Entertainments."[11] The references to Caliph Almanzor and *The Arabian Nights' Entertainments* provide evidence for Manley's return to revenge. Although the first citation might seem to refer merely to Manley's sultan, it recalls protagonists of the same name from seventeenth-century revenge plays. Examples include George Chapman's *Revenge for Honour*, a revenge tragedy with a plot involving the caliph's directive to punish adultery, and John Dryden's *The Conquest of Granada*, a heroic tragedy that includes also an "Abdalla"—the name Manley gives to the sultan's rebellious brother.[12]

Manley's reference to *The Arabian Nights' Entertainments* further points to revenge. Manley takes more than a "hint" from the *Entertainments*, as she adapts the Scheherazade framing narrative and its revenge plot to form her own: a sultan who has been spurned by an adulterous wife habitually marries young women only to order their executions after the nuptials, and a woman uses language to save her own life and end a vicious cycle of vengeance. In comparing the *Entertainments*' full title with Manley's subtitle, *The Arabian Vow*, we find a second revenge correlation. A look at the 1706 English edition's long title—*Arabian Nights Entertainments Consisting of One Thousand and One STORIES, TOLD BY the Sultaness of the* Indies, *to divert the Sultan from the Execution of a Bloody Vow he had made to Marry a Lady every Day, and have her head cut off next Morning, to avenge himself for the Disloyalty of his first Sultaness, &c.*[13]—suggests that Manley specifically appropriates the sultan's "Bloody Vow ... to avenge himself." Manley interprets this vow as a repetitive act of vengeance, one that she repurposes theatrically in order to highlight virtue's triumph over vengeance.

According to the preface, John Dennis is the source for Manley's turn to virtue. After all, she claims that Dennis's "excellent Pen" and "View of what Heroick Vertue ought to attempt" in his 1706 *Essay upon Opera's* inspired her to create Almyna. In his essay, Dennis argues that "Virtue" has "been the preserver of Nations" and that the English must continue to "teach publick Virtue and publick Spirit."[14] A consideration of the timing of Manley's play contra an opera at a rival theater, as well as the nationalistic language of

Dennis's essay, further suggests that Manley picks up Dennis's charge for playwrights to "defend the English stage" against its "Mortal Foes": foreign entertainment, namely operas, and effeminacy.[15] Dennis calls for a "British Muse" to save the stage (i.e., England), and Manley answers with Almyna's voice.[16] *Almyna*'s prologue, spoken by actor Colley Cibber, echoes this sentiment as it labels *Almyna* "an English PLAY" and criticizes a "high-tasted Age" that prefers operas over home-grown tragedies.

As in Dennis's prose, *Almyna*'s prologue associates foreignness with effeminacy. Cibber labels operas "Strumpet[s]" and "Wantons" who deceive, while English tragedies are cast as "Chast Wives" who represent "Truth." Cibber urges "Patrons" to use their "Manlier Judgments" (possibly a pun on Manley's name, which interestingly doubles as an anagram of Almyna). Cibber calls for playgoers to delight in what "informs the Mind" rather than what "vainly charms the Ear." In essence, the prologue encourages audiences to man up and support edifying English drama, rather than enchanting Italian operas. In a time when opera threatened to displace English tragedy, Manley does her part to bolster the British cause. She gives audiences an English-language play that depicts exotic images while exploring a crisis of male effeminacy. An examination of the play's discourse counters these problems with Almyna's characteristically Christian, civic speeches and invectives against revenge and irrational impulses. At the same time, this analysis allows for a greater understanding of the vastly understudied male characters in the play.

Vows of Vengeance

Manley's handling of this theatrical and even national quandary can be seen in her portrayal of male characters that either physically seek or speak of seeking revenge, namely, Sultan Almanzor, the Vizier (Almyna's father), and Prince Abdalla. Manley opens the play in familiar territory as she depicts prominent images from seventeenth-century drama: vengeance on behalf of injured honor and a vendetta against women. To begin, exposition sheds light on Almanzor's vengeful vow. In a detail taken directly from the *Arabian Nights' Entertainment*, the vizier explains that Almanzor responds to his first wife's adultery (committed with a base "moorish Slave"[17]) by ordering all sultanesses' deaths; to avoid being made a cuckold again, subsequently all of his wives will die the mornings after the nuptials.

Almanzor's vow signals a recurring act of vengeance, one that Rene Girard calls "an interminable, infinitely repetitive process."[18] We know that this process began before the dramatic present of the play with the sultan's brother, the King of Tartary, who discovered his own wife's infidelity, and we learn that a desire for vengeance is passed on to Almanzor, who experiences the same dilemma. Almanzor hails revenge as a necessary path when he explains his brother's history to Abdalla: "Well did he [Tartary] execute, his instant Veng'ance on 'em, / And by his Scymiter unite their Fates."[19] Almanzor's vow affirms and regenerates this act every time the scimitar strikes or Almanzor's mutes strangle a new bride. As Almanzor understands

it, his vow is justified: his first wife dishonored him by defiling the marriage bed and threatening legitimate succession with an illegitimate heir, so he has the right to redeem his honor.[20] Almanzor adapts the language of the Koran to validate his command: if women have no souls, then their deaths bear no moral, social, or religious consequences. The sultan's vow is law not only because of his own juridical power, but also it is a religious rite that excuses him from wrongdoing. According to everyone other than the sultan, this law is an abuse of his authority and their religion, for it punishes innocent people rather than perpetrators of a real crime.

While the community might be willing to validate the sultan's *original* revenge against an adulterous wife, it does not excuse his crimes against women. As the grand vizier explains, Almanzor garners no approval from his subjects for his cruel vow against women who have not proven themselves to be false. The vizier criminalizes the decree in asking, "What is it else but Murther? horrid Murther!" and in calling the vow "Rash," "Cruel," and "most prodigious."[21] He openly associates the mandate with revenge as he ponders:

> For cou'd Youth, Innocence, and Beauty, plead
> Against Revenge, and [Almanzor's] rigid sense of Honour,
> The Sultaness, who but this Morning dy'd,
> Might well have hop'd, to shine her length of Years.[22]

Likewise, the sultan's brother states that "Revenge and Hate" motivate Almanzor, and in a vocalization of his vendetta, Almanzor suggests that men succumb to their passions, including "Jealousy, Revenge, or Treachery," because of "female Falsehood."[23] As the vizier argues that Almanzor's vow epitomizes jealousy and projects a single man's fears onto the entirety of the female sex, the sultan's own words show much of the same. Personal honor, hatred, and dread characterize his leadership.

Because the sultan is motivated personally by revenge, but officially uses his power to enforce his vendetta, *Almyna* situates revenge in terms of a private/public impasse. Almyna confirms that revenge jeopardizes the sultan's ability to rule well when she explains how his vow tarnishes the public image of an otherwise noble and sensible ruler. When she says that Almanzor appears "wise, and good in all things else; / Brave, Generous, and Just,"[24] she paints a picture of a man whose good qualities are clouded by revenge.

Almanzor is not the only figure in the play to struggle with retaliation, for the vizier and prince vow to seek vengeance, too. If we accept that revenge is a repetitive act, we see that their desire for retribution is linked to the sultan's vow, which was inspired by his elder brother's vow, and so forth. As Girard notes:

> Every time [revenge] turns up in some part of the community, it threatens to involve the whole social body. There is the risk that the act of vengeance will initiate a chain reaction whose consequences will quickly prove fatal to any society of modest size. The multiplication of reprisals instantaneously puts the very existence of a society in jeopardy, and that is why it is universally proscribed.[25]

In Act III we witness this "chain reaction" when the vizier offers to retaliate against Abdalla because he intends to wed the vizier's daughter Almyna instead of her sister. The vizier aims "To make [his] Vengeance sure"[26] by killing Abdalla for breaking Zoradia's heart. Unlike the sultan, who creates a law to inflict his payback, the vizier has no legal recourse. Instead, he fantasizes that he can climb to the Heavens "for [his] Revenge" and "Ransack the Stores of Lightning, Storms and Thunder! / Pluck the Bolts hissing, from the Forger's hand! / And hurl them glowing, on the Traytor's [Abdalla's] head."[27] The vizier's enthusiasm for vengeance reiterates the play's message that men are unable to control their passions and that this effeminacy produces violence.

The same *might* be said of Abdalla's actions near the end of the play. In Act IV he warns Almanzor, "Dare not, for thy own, to touch her [Almyna's] sacred Life, / Whilst I have Breath, Revenge shall be my cry!"[28] Although Abdalla *seems* to offer up another image of an honorific revenger, the reasons behind this revenge cry are questionable. The vizier implies that usurpation rather than Almyna's liberation motivate Abdalla and the mob to storm the castle; thus, Abdalla might not actually be seeking revenge, but political advancement.[29] After all, the vizier defines the "ambitious Prince['s]" quest to save Almyna as "pretence, what ever the Design."[30] If we trust the vizier's opinion, we are forced to recognize Abdalla's manipulation of the language of revenge.

Although scholars of the play have noted that Manley shies away from making overt political gestures in the work, when we consider these characters' charges for revenge, we should remember that "revenge drama," as John Kerrigan claims, is "an opportunistic vehicle for current affairs."[31] Even if Abdalla acts on behalf of Almyna's life, his revenge threatens his ruler's sovereignty and royal succession. Some scholars read hints of James II or the Jacobite pretender in Abdalla, thus drawing a connection between the play and real-life politics, and a handful of scholars have explained that eighteenth-century audience members and readers were concerned about the oaths of allegiance depicted in Act I, as well as the discussion of the crisis of inherited rulership that results from the sultan's inability to produce a legitimate heir.[32] This crisis of bloodline resembles England's own succession problem as Queen Anne, like her uncle, lacked a natural-born legitimate heir to the throne.[33] Unlike the Stuarts, of course, the sultan chooses revenge over progeny. In paying allegiance to vengeance, he dwells too much on the past and intervenes in succession rather than securing a future of royal offspring. It is up to Almyna to convince Almanzor that he must abolish his Arabian vow for his own sake and for his subjects.

"Heroick Vertue" Reforms the Revenger

Through Almyna's magnificent speeches, Manley establishes the kind of civic tragedy promoted by Dennis. Almyna is a forward-thinking (female) hero who brandishes words rather than weapons to restore glory to the ruler and nation. In examining Almyna's language, we find an Arabian character's strikingly English promulgation of a Christian understanding of vengeance, which indicates that final judgment and punishment of crimes belongs to Heaven, not to man. When Almyna first considers sacrificing herself to the sultan's vow in order to show him the error of his ways, her father explains that they must "Leave ... the work to Heav'n, ... / (For Heav'n in its own time, redresses Wrongs)."[34] Here we should recall Bible verses such as Romans 12:19 ("Vengeance is mine") that teach Christians that God will judge men and redress wrongs. Manley shows us, nonetheless, that men do not easily learn this lesson, for moments after having this conversation with Almyna the vizier offers to seek revenge against Abdalla. Almyna, however, takes this proclamation to heart and extends a Christian notion of reforming man's passion for revenge.

In a sense, Manley allows Almyna a practice run in reforming the play's principal revenger; her first attempt comes with Almyna's cooling her father's flames by showing him a reasonable path: "Dry up your Tears, and smooth that furrow'd Brow. / Passions, my Lord, but seldom mend a Wrong; / Where Anger ends, Repentance still begins!"[35] This anti-revenge oratory foreshadows the ultimate outcome for the sultan: repentance. Whereas the vizier's aforementioned tirade imitates the language of seventeenth-century heroic tragedy, Almyna's expressions resemble eighteenth-century sentiments in civic drama and pathos-driven she-tragedies. Almyna represents an early form of what Brett D. Wilson calls a "race of female patriots" in the "civic mode of drama" that comes to govern early eighteenth-century tragedies; she symbolizes "public-spirited women" and "patriotic sentiment" that is popular in plays such as Dennis's *Liberty Asserted*, Catharine Trotter's *Revolution of Sweden*, and Nicholas Rowe's *Jane Shore*.[36] As Wilson remarks, early eighteenth-century tragedies were "recognizing that women can have 'heroick Virtue' in their own right" and that such "civic passion" makes possible a "new regime."[37] In supporting this "new regime"—a new heroic model—for tragic drama, Manley shows the potential for language to combat men's destructive tendencies and for women to champion civil rights. The vizier's rant allows Almyna, in fitting pathetic territory, to offer herself up as a scapegoat for all women, her father's desire for vengeance, and eventually for the sultan's. The play does not stage this sacrifice as mere passive resignation, for Almyna's kind of virtue does not register as submission, as we find in many seventeenth-century tragic heroines.

On the contrary, Almyna's self-sacrifice reads as a new kind of masculine female heroic that draws on a rhetoric of reason and virtue. Almyna first attempts to change her father's vengeful state-of-mind by appealing to logic: "You have already been in part reveng'd, / Just at the Altar, dashing

all his hopes; / He suffers more from Grief, than you from Rage."[38] If his rationale holds up, the vizier already achieved retribution through his satisfying knowledge of Abdalla's grief; therefore, he need not commit a reckless act of violence. While he recognizes her good judgment in saying, "Wisdom is in thy heart, but Rage in mine," the vizier's mind is not easily changed, for he concedes, "I am not fit to hear, tho' thou to speak; / Unless to Vengeance, thou coud'st tune thy Voice."[39] Of course, Almyna does not alter her tune; the vizier's resistance encourages her all the more to break down his rage. Dennis's *Essay* comes to mind as Almyna explains in the voice of a "British Muse":

> We that want Reason's force, to check the Passions.
> Expecting all things, from their Vows, and flat'ry
> In nothing answer'd, but in Disappointment.
> But I to Glory have resign'd my Life,
> That Spiritual Pride of Noble hearts!
> And not to be as Love, Cloy'd with Possession.
> Glory the strongest passion of great Minds![40]

Rather than accept defeat, Almyna rejoices with her father in "the Heroick Deeds" that they can "perform" in stopping the vizier's vengeance.[41] In her first victory over vice, Almyna truly embodies the part of a virtuous hero. Her father admits, "Glory shines around [her] lovely Face"; to him she is "Something Divine"; and she "gives [his] Soul an awe."[42] At last, we know that the vizier has been converted when he says, "Speak on Prophetick Maid, thy Father hears."[43] More evidence of this realization comes at the end of the play when the vizier criticizes that initial desire for revenge that led Almyna to sacrifice herself:

> Curse on the fury that did lead me on.
> Curse on my Ill tim'd Vengeance on the Prince;
> Revenge stills turns on the Avenger's head,
> Oh! better were it much to suffer Wrong,
> Leaving to Heav'n, the time and means of Vengeance.[44]

In echo of his own statement in Act II, the vizier's words in Act V confirm the cyclic nature of vengeance and reiterate that it is better left to God's judgment. The vizier can only articulate this problem now because Almyna suppressed his desire for vengeance.

With one revenger down, Almyna's true test comes in trying to assuage another to replace his vow of vengeance with her own vow of glory. This task is both civic and religious, selfless and self-righteous. Almyna behaves as a "female Christ figure," as Jean I. Marsden notes, who has been summoned by a higher power to die for her country, and a pseudo-missionary looking to convert the sultan.[45] According to statesman Alhador, Almyna's self-ascribed "noble Work" receives divine endorsement: "Fate ordain'd

[Almyna] to do its work, / And make a Convert, of our mighty *Sultan*."[46] If we follow the analogy, the sultan is a heathen that needs deliverance, and Almyna seeks to bring this to him by reforming his barbaric, or read here as *foreign*, passion for revenge. Alhador's prophecy that Almyna's "Vertue" will lead the sultan to cry, "Here ends our Vow! for here *Almyna*'s Reign begins!"[47] suggests that he will be redeemed and that she will one day rule over (or with) him. Certainly Alhador indicates that Almyna can usher in political stability and a future free from Almanzor's revenge. Before this can happen, however, the Scrooge-like sultan has to face the ghosts of his past and his future; he has to learn how to listen to reason in order to save his soul.

Almanzor's nightmare in Act IV solidifies the play's warnings against revenge first by confirming a higher power's opposition to his actions, and then by preemptively strengthening Almyna's argument for redemption. In the dream-vision, Almanzor passes a lake "laden with all [his] sins," sees his prophet on the other side judging him for his actions, and faces the dead queens who point at him "with revengeful Rage."[48] Almanzor recognizes that he murdered these women "in the fear of Jealousy," that he is "Charg'd with the Blood of Innocents," and that he must atone for his "rash Vow."[49] He witnesses the punishment for his crimes in saying: "Deep in the horrid River I was plung'd, / My strugling Soul, already tasting Torments. / Our Queen's aloud, shouting revengeful Joy!"[50] Manley not only paints a picture of the sultan's future if he does not repent and repeal his vow, but also uses his dream to lay the foundation for Almyna's great debate with Almanzor.

While Almyna has no knowledge of Almanzor's dream, she clairvoyantly evokes images from the dream in her argument. She capitalizes on the sultan's fear of his murdered wives' revenge against him and reinforces the providential nature of her goal to reform him. As examples, she questions the sultan's vow by invoking his fear of God's judgment, and she refers to the "Queens, [who] shall urge him, to revenge 'em," and the "horrid River" that he will "never! never! ... cross."[51] In her discourse, Almyna not only taps into the sultan's fear of a vengeful God who denies him passage, but also exposes the dangers of Almanzor's perversion of sacred texts. She argues that Almanzor's jealousy and revenge motivated his misreading of the Koran, and in acknowledging this fallacy Almyna exposes the sultan's use of religious authority to sustain an impious revenge:

> Suppose I take an Oath to slay the Innocent,
> The Crime were less, much less to break the Vow,
> Than by performing it, to run on Murder.
> But thou securest thy self, from thoughts of Sin:
> For that our Prophet, in his *Alcoran*,
> As thou explain'st says Women have no Souls,
> But mighty Sultan, tell thy heart but this;
> Had not thy beautious, faulty Queen done Ill?
> Woudst thou the Letter, e're have so expounded?
> Revenge, and Jealousy, arrests the Text:
> Thus taught to speak, to put a gloss on Murder.
> Oh, horrid Crime! Murder of Innocents![52]

Here Manley highlights an example of male "irreligious" speech, to quote Marguerite Corporaal, where there is a "contrast between men's deceitful, dishonourable speeches, on the one hand, and the female character's honest, virtuous words, on the other."[53] Like a cross-examiner in a courtroom, Almyna links revenge to eternal damnation, revealing that the sultan's afterlife appears grim if he continues to uphold his irreverent Arabian vow: "Dost thou not tremble; Sultan, but to think? / How fatal to thee, the Mistake may prove? / What will our Prophet say, at thy last day?"[54] Again, Manley draws upon the sultan's dream and familiar Christian rhetoric about God's final judgment against revengers.

As with the vizier, Almyna draws on multiple logical approaches to convince Almanzor to change. Beyond inducing the fear of an angry god, Almyna appeals to Almanzor's sense of justice. She acknowledges that he had the right to "dispise" the "inconstancy of a weak Woman" and "punish" his first wife for her crime, but she also urges him to "forget" the past and "so end Revenge; / Not hold a trembling innocent World in awe, / For Crimes that are not theirs."[55] Yet she asks him to stop thinking about himself as an injured man and to start thinking of himself as a respectable leader. This transition is difficult for Almanzor, and he questions if he has "become so monstrous to [his] People" or if they believe that his "Revenge was just."[56] Clearly he identifies his vow as one of vengeance, yet he considers it just *because* he made it. Only through debating with Almyna can Almanzor see that he has been a monstrous rather than a fair monarch. Almyna opens his eyes to what his vow represents—a recurring act of revenge that is a crime against women *and* all of his subjects. Ultimately, Almanzor changes his view because Almyna frames the argument about his corrupt rule in sensible terms: his people *do* see the murders of innocent victims as unlawful acts against women and their families, not as a justified reprisal for a monarch's injury. The original murder of a guilty wife satisfied that injury to the sultan's honor, but the successive murders are interpreted as tyranny. Even if the play does not make overt partisan claims, this passage imparts a dramatic critique of unchecked power.

As it turns out, the debate on revenge and rulership addresses the problem as much as the solution: even unyielding monarchs are capable of change when good subjects guide them. We see the beginning of this transformation when Almanzor claims that he will stop marrying and murdering women. First he states that after Almyna dies "the remainder of [his] Life will waste, / In Penitence for [his] rash Vow, and [her] fair Loss."[57] Luckily, Almanzor demonstrates the full realization of his conversation and saves Almyna when "the Mutes are going to strangle her," according to the stage directions.[58] If Almanzor's logic is to be believed, he designed her death

scene as a "Tryal" to test "How far [her] bravery of Soul cou'd reach."[59] Regardless, we should notice that Almanzor recognizes that Almyna has a soul and that he claims to have been "vanquish'd, by [Almyna's] heroick Deeds."[60] Finally, we see rewards of "Heroick Virtue": no more women will fall victim to the sultan's vow, and Almyna gains glory and a long marriage to the sultan.

While the audience is surely happy with this outcome, the play has one more thing to accomplish. It must illustrate how the sultan has become that wise, good ruler that Almyna described in Act II. The final act transfers its anxieties from Almanzor to Abdalla, who represents a foil to a ruler who has learned from his mistakes and is finally capable of maintaining justice. In contrasting the sultan's repentance with Abdalla's death, Manley uses Almanzor as a mouthpiece to give his subjects, and the English audience, two lessons about repentance and recklessness: first, "Thus are we punish'd for our rash Resolves. / Our cruel Vow, be expiated here," and second, "*For Heav'n no Hopes, but Penitence allows. / Either for cruel, rash, or perjur'd Vows.*"[61] In the play's final message about rebellion and vengeful vows, Manley demonstrates that penitence is the best method for ensuring a rehabilitated, secure state. If we read tragic drama as a sign of the political sphere, as Lisa Freeman claims we should,[62] we find in *Almyna: or, The Arabian Vow* a happier forecast for the nation, one endowed with natural succession and responsible leadership.

From Royal Mischief to Rewriting Revenge

By weaving a series of plots that address the ramifications of revenge, *Almyna: or, The Arabian Vow* at first evokes conventional revenge elements from seventeenth-century drama but finds a way to provide a revenge tale's morals without murdering the revenger. While revengers in heroic tragedies typically refuse to convert from being an avenger to a penitent, Manley's Almyna—like a theatrical messiah—shows Sultan Almanzor the way to redeem himself through repentance, trust, and true love. By the end of *Almyna*, the protagonist's "noble Work" corresponds with that of the playwright's. As Almyna reforms the revenger, Manley re-forms revenge. Manley's new staging of revenge-conquered-by-virtue reflects the tenets of Dennis's *Essay* as *Almyna* develops a dramatic, civic project that anticipates plays' focus on reform and revenge later in the century, such as Edward Young's 1721 *The Revenge* and John Brown's 1755 *Barbarossa*.[63] Manley's play, a precursor for such dramatic hits, demonstrates the potential for a revision of the bloody seventeenth-century revenge tale, the type Manley first imitated in *The Royal Mischief*. In the end, "Reason rein[s] the Passions," as Almyna puts it, and Manley's play provides the lesson required by Dennis as it both "teach[es] publick Virtue and publick Spirit," and purges effeminacy and corruption.[64] In this eighteenth-century manifestation of the vengeance tale, audiences learn that reason trumps revenge, masculine wisdom must reign over effeminate passion, reform is possible,

and the nation can be governed by sensible leaders who rule with the people's best interests in mind. These lessons reflect not only a new, happy ending for the revenge tale, but also a transformation in Manley's drama, which now uses powerful words rather than hyperbolic stage spectacle to entertain audiences.

Notes

1. Delarivier Manley, *The Royal Mischief. A Tragedy. As it is Acted by His Majesties Servants*. London: R. Bentley, F. Saunders, and J. Knapton, 1696. Fidelis Morgan, *The Female Wits: Women Playwrights of the Restoration*. London: Virago, 1981. Beyond a theory that Manley abandoned drama because of negative reactions to *The Royal Mischief*, it is uncertain why Manley left off writing for the stage. Perhaps she was absorbed in her personal life, including amatory liaisons with John Manley and John Tilly. Perhaps her friendships with other writers, such as Sarah Egerton or Richard Steele, diverted her attention; maybe her profitable assistance in legal cases kept her from the stage. Possibly she was making her first foray into scandal writing and composed *Queen Zarah*, although Rachel Carnell argues in *A Political Biography of Delarivier Manley* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2008) that Manley did not write the work. For more information on Manley's biographical details and political secret history, readers will find Carnell's essay in this current collection very useful. For additional studies on *The Royal Mischief* and *The Female Wits*, see Bernadette Andrea's, Katharine Beutner's, and Chris Mounsey's essays, which are published also in this book collection.
2. Delarivier Manley, *Almyna: or, The Arabian Vow. A Tragedy. As It Is Acted at The Theatre Royal in the Hay-Market, by Her Majesty's Servants*. London: William Turner, 1707.
3. Studies of John Dennis's and Nicholas Rowe's tragedies mark this change in theatrical taste. See Lisa Freeman, *Character's Theater: Genre and Identity on the Eighteenth-Century English Stage*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002; Jean I. Marsden, *Fatal Desire: Women, Sexuality, and the English Stage, 1660–1720*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006; Alfred Schwartz, "An Example of Eighteenth-Century Pathetic Tragedy: Rowe's *Jane Shore*," *Modern Language Quarterly* 22, no. 3 (1961): 236–47; and Brett D. Wilson, *A Race of Female Patriots: Women and Public Spirit on the British Stage, 1688–1745*. Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell UP, 2012.
4. In many of the following examples *Almyna* is briefly mentioned, while in a few cases the play receives significant attention. See Rachel Carnell's *A Political Biography of Delarivier Manley*; Jean I. Marsden's *Fatal Desire*; Ruth Herman's *The Business of a Woman: The Political Writings of Delarivier Manley*. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2003; Pilar Cuder-Domínguez's *Stuart Women Playwrights, 1613–1713*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010; Bridget Orr's "Galland, Georgian Theatre, and the Creation of Popular Orientalism," in *The Arabian Nights in Historical Context Between East and West*, Saree Makdisi and Felicity Nussbaum, ed. (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008), 103–130, and *Empire on the English Stage, 1660–1714*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001; Su Fang Nu's "Delariviere Manley's *Almyna* and Dating the First Edition of the *English Arabian Nights' Entertainments*," *English Language Notes* 40, no. 3 (2003): 19–26; Margarete Rubik's *Early Women Dramatists 1550–1800*. New York: St. Martin's, 1998; Jacqueline Pearson's *The Prostituted Muse: Images of Women & Women Dramatists 1642–1737*. New

York: St. Martin's, 1988; Constance Clark's *Three Augustan Women Playwrights* (New York: P. Lang, 1986); and Patricia Köster's "Humanism, Feminism, Sensationalism: Mrs. Manley vs. Society," *Translations of the Samuel Johnson Society of the Northwest* 4 (1972): 42–53.

5. Brett D. Wilson discusses this subgenre at length in *A Race of Female Patriots*.
6. For a discussion of revenge as a theatrical phenomenon, see Misty Krueger, "'The Last Dear Drop of Blood': Revenge in Restoration Tragic Drama." PhD Diss, University of Tennessee, 2010, and Misty Krueger, "Revenge in Early Restoration England and Sir William Davenant's *Hamlet*," *New Perspectives on the Eighteenth Century* 8 no.1 (2011): 31–50.
7. For a discussion of *The Royal Mischief* in terms of empire, place, and other Restoration writings, see Bernadette Andrea's essay included in this book collection.
8. John Dennis, *Essay upon the Opera's After the Italian Manner, Which are about to be Establish'd on the English Stage: With some Reflections on the Damage which they may bring to the Publick* (London: John Nutt, 1706), 8.
9. We might consider Manley's choice in *Almyna* to save her revenger a contrast to her decision to punish her rake in *The Lost Lovers*, as Victoria Joule explains in her essay in this collection.
10. Certain issues prevented the play's success—namely, Anne Bracegirdle's retirement three days into the play, Robert Wilkes's illness, the high price of admission (to account for costume expenses), and the competition from the popular opera, *Camilla*, which was staged simultaneously at Drury Lane. While the preface claims that the Queen's Company intended to stage the drama again in the following season, the play did not enjoy return performances. The preface claims that Manley was not in London when the play was staged. Rachel Carnell, *Political Biography*, 146, argues that Manley's finances and desire to avoid creditors is likely a cause for her absence. Also, see Constance Clark, *Three Augustan Women Playwrights*, 172, for information on the play's staging.
11. Delarivier Manley, *Almyna*, n.p. The preface and prologue are on unnumbered pages.
12. George Chapman, *Revenge for Honour. A Tragedie.* London: Richard Marriot, 1654. John Dryden, *The Conquest of Granada by the Spaniards in Two Parts: Acted at the Theatre Royall,* London: Henry Herringman, 1672. Manley also composed poems for *The Nine Muses*, a collection published in honor of the late Dryden; thus, his work might have been on her mind when she considered writing a drama again. Delarivier Manley, *The Nine Muses, Or, Poems Written by Nine Severall Ladies Upon the Death of the Late Famous John Dryden, Esq.* London: Richard Basset, 1700.
13. The oldest copy in the *Eighteenth-Century Collections Online* database is the 4th edition: *Arabian Nights Entertainments: Consisting of One Thousand and One Stories, Told by the Sultaness of the Indies, to Divert the Sultan from the Execution of a Bloody Vow He Had Made to Marry a Lady Every Day, and Have Her Cut off Next Morning, to Avenge Himself for the Disloyalty of His First Sultaness, &c. Containing A Better Account of the Customs, Manners, and Religion of the Eastern Nations, viz. Tartars, Persians, and Indians, than is to be Met with in any Author hitherto Publish'd. Translated into French from the Arabian Mss. by M. Galland, of the Royal Academy; and Now Done into English* Vol. 1. 4th ed. London: Printed for Andrew Bell, 1713. Su Fang Nu argues that Manley probably draws upon the 1706 English translation instead of the 1704 French one. Nu, 24, points out that the play's vocabulary for "exotic" items, such as "dervish" or "Alcoran" shows "the French influence." Nu further suggests that Manley's fascination with exotic tales might derive from the work of her father, Sir Roger Manley, a translator and publisher. For scholarly work on eighteenth-century translations of *The Arabian Nights*, see Saree Makdisi and Felicity Nussbaum, ed., *The Arabian Nights in Historical Context Between East and West*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008, and Yuriko Yamanaka and Tetsuo Nishio, ed. *The Arabian Nights and Orientalism: Perspectives from East and West*. New York: I.B. Tauris, 2006.

14. Dennis, *Essay upon Opera's*, 8 and 7.
15. Ibid., 2.
16. Ibid., 3.
17. Delarivier Manley, *Almyna*, 1.i, 3. Because the original play text's lines are unnumbered, citations to this text will refer to act, scene, and page numbers.
18. Rene Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, Trans. Patrick Gregory. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1977), 14.
19. Delarivier Manley, *Almyna*, 1.i, 11.
20. Earla Wilputte's essay, also included in this book collection, addresses a similar plot point found in Manley's later fiction, the *Husband's Resentment* novels from *The Power of Love: In Seven Novels* (1720). As in *Almyna*, a *Husband's Resentment* tale (Novel IV) depicts a wife's infidelity and a husband's revenge. According to Wilputte, Manley's *Husband* tales shows that there is a fine line between what society considers just and unjust behavior, i.e., revenge, when a husband's honor is concerned.
21. Ibid., 1.i, 1, and 1.i, 3.
22. Ibid., 1.i, 4.
23. Ibid., 1.i, 4, and 1.i, 9.
24. Ibid., 2.i, 20.
25. Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, 14–15.
26. Delarivier Manley, *Almyna,* 3.i, 26.
27. Ibid., 3.i, 27.
28. Ibid., 4.i, 51.
29. This reading aligns with Bridget Orr's assertion in "Galland, Georgian Theatre, and the Creation of Popular Orientalism," 108, that the play "mount[s] a high-Tory critique of disloyalty."
30. Delarivier Manley, *Almyna*, 5.ii, 64.
31. John Kerrigan, *On Shakespeare and Early Modern Literature: Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 242. Most critics tend to read Manley's work as Tory propaganda, but Rachel Carnell, 150, argues that the play contains "multiple and conflicting ideologies." Ruth Herman makes a similar argument in *The Business of a Woman: The Political Writings of Delarivier Manley*, 179.
32. For more on this allegorical reading, see Rachel Carnell's and Bridget Orr's work on the play. Ruth Herman's and Rachel Carnell's biographies provide ample context for interpreting the sensitive issue of oath taking in 1706. It is well known that the extended ceremony and staging of oaths offended the play's Whig dedicatee, Elizabeth Montagu, Countess of Sandwich (the Earl of Rochester's daughter).
33. For additional context, see Rachel Carnell, *A Political Biography*, and Pilar Cuder-Domínguez, *Stuart Women Playwrights, 1613–1713*.

34. Delarivier Manley, *Almyna*, 2.i, 21.
35. Ibid., 3.i, 26.
36. Wilson, *A Race of Female Patriots*, vii–viii. See John Dennis, *Liberty Asserted. A Tragedy. As it is acted at the New Theatre in Little Lincoln's-Inn-Fields.* London: George Strahan and Bernard Lintott, 1704; Catharine Trotter, *Revolution of Sweden. A Tragedy. As it is acted at the Queens Theatre in the Hay-Market.* London: James Knapton and George Strahan, 1706; and Nicholas Rowe, *The Tragedy of Jane Shore. Written in Imitation of Shakespear's Style.* London: Bernard Lintott, 1714.
37. Wilson, *A Race of Female Patriots*, 94.
38. Delarivier Manley, *Almyna*, 3.i., 27.
39. Ibid.
40. Ibid.
41. Ibid., 3.i, 28.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid., 5.ii, 60.
45. Marsden, *Fatal Desire*, 128.
46. Delarivier Manley, *Almyna*, 2.i, 21, and 3.i, 29.
47. Ibid., 3.i, 29.
48. Ibid., 4.i, 39. Because this scene asks the audience to gaze upon Almanzor's body in his bedchamber, Marsden, *Fatal Desire*, 127, reminds us that the opening of Act IV provides a reversal of discovery scenes from she-tragedies.
49. Delarivier Manley, *Almyna*, 4.i, 39.
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid., 4.i, 45.
52. Ibid., 4.i, 44.
53. Marguerite Corporaal, "'Will You to My Discourse Vouchsafe an Eare?': Women Dramatists' Negotiation of Gender and Genre on the Public Stage around 1700," *Journal of English Studies* 4 (2003–2004): 45.
54. Delarivier Manley, *Almyna*, 4.i, 44.
55. Ibid., 4.i, 46.
56. Ibid., 4.i, 46, and 4.i, 47.
57. Delarivier Manley, *Almyna*, 4.i, 47.
58. Ibid., 5.i, 63.
59. Ibid., 5.ii, 64.
60. Ibid.
61. Ibid., 5.ii. 68.
62. Lisa Freeman, *Character's Theater*.
63. Edward Young, *The Revenge A Tragedy. As It Is Acted at The Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane.* London: W. Chetwood, 1721. John Brown, *An Account of Barbarossa, The Usurper of Algiers. Being the Story on Which the New Tragedy, Now in Rehearsal at The Theatre Royal in Drury-Lane.* London: W. Reeve, 1755.
64. Delarivier Manley, *Almyna*, 5.ii, 62, and Dennis, *Essay upon Opera's*, 7.

4 "Through the Black Sea and the Country of Colchis"

A Geocentric Approach to Delarivier Manley's *The Royal Mischief* (1696)

Bernadette Andrea

During the second half of the seventeenth century, both the suppression of the public stage and its "restoration" along with the monarchy were represented through shifting signifiers of Islam, most of them distorted by English ignorance and prejudice.[1] Such signifiers range from Oliver Cromwell's depiction as a "Turkish tyrant" to Charles II's portrayal as the polygamous "Grand Signior."[2] The first production to test the ban on public performances—William Davenant's *The Siege of Rhodes* in 1656—featured a Muslim character as its protagonist. John Dryden's *The Conquest of Granada*, which launched the genre of Restoration heroic drama in 1670, followed Davenant's lead. Within this ideological framework, English women found new opportunities for public expression as actresses, patrons, and playwrights. While other women penned and even performed plays during the Restoration, the sustained professional career of Aphra Behn, who bore the orientalist epithet "Loves great *Sultana*," set the stage for the groundbreaking season of 1695/96 that debuted a cluster of female playwrights dubbed "the female wits."[3] Their plays include Catharine Trotter's *Agnes de Castro*, Manley's *The Lost Lover; or, The Jealous Husband* and *The Royal Mischief*, and Mary Pix's *Ibrahim, The Thirteenth Emperor of the Turks* and *The Spanish Wives*. The pseudonymous "Adriane" also staged a play, *She Ventures and He Wins*, and a posthumous production of Aphra Behn's *The Younger Brother: or, The Amorous Jilt* appeared.[4] By this count, "[o]ver one-third of all the new plays that season were by women or adapted from women's work," which in Paula Backscheider's assessment made it "unique—absolutely unique—in British theatrical history."[5]

Equally significant, two of these plays contain explicitly Islamicate themes, whereas none of the male playwrights for this season followed suit.[6] Launched in April 1696, Delarivier Manley's *The Royal Mischief* drew on *The Travels of Sir John Chardin into Persia and the East Indies*, a French Huguenot's eyewitness account from the 1660s and 1670s of the Persian Safavid dynasty and its client states. Staged in June 1696, Mary Pix's *Ibrahim, the Thirteenth Emperor of the Turks*, relied on the British consul Paul Rycaut's *History of the Turkish Empire, From the Year 1623 to the Year 1677*, another eyewitness account. Additional plays by "the

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