The Crescent and the Eagle: The "Turk" as Political Rhetoric in Newspapers of the Early American Republic, 1765-1797

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Amid the rhetorical flourishes and violent clashes of the American Revolution, one might find it surprising how often the popular press referenced Islam. It would not be immediately evident to most that the circumstances surrounding the War of Independence would lead newspaper authors in the early United States to write so frequently about Muslims.[1] After all, there would be no mosque built in the U.S. until the first half of the 20th century, as opposed to Jews and Catholics who, while also receiving negative press, had a visible presence in places like Maryland and New York. Everything was on the line for the Patriots and they needed the people behind them. The Loyalists, too, being outnumbered in their own lands, wished to convince other Loyalists and moderates to be steadfast in their support of Great Britain. The discontent arose from disputations in politics, which included more than taxes and laws, but critical debates surrounding the fundamental nature of their culture. This political flourishing raised questions about gender relations, identity, property, power and slavery. In order to answer these vital impositions and establish a base level of political identity, the popular image of the "Turk" would be used by both sides to define themselves by what they were not.

[1] A search for the word "Turk" between 1765-1800, omitting those results referring to "Turk's Islands" comes out to roughly 10,000 entries; a search for the word "Musselmen" provides 14 entries; a search for the word "Musselman" provides 21 entries; a search of the word "Islam" produces 473 entries, of which only 14 actually contain the word; and a search of the word "Muslim" is omitted because it was not widely used during the period and is more often confused with "muslin," an article of clothing. There are many other terms referring to Muslims in the period (such as "moslems" and "mahometans"), but they could not be assessed due to time constraint.

Reflecting on the war between the Christian Austrians and Germans against the Muslim Turks in 1790, one American author penned an article for a newspaper stating:

> *Both parties, it is true, call each other infidels, dogs, [etc.] and nothing but a farther progress of philosophy and the downfall of the Turkish clergy will ever bring them to look upon the Turk and the Christian as the common children of one father.*

However, he suggested something quite new; that the religious divisions between Christianity and Islam were more political than religious. Despite the centuries' old conflict between the Muslim and Christian worlds, he proposed "neither side seems to be actuated by that enthusiastic religious principle, which inflamed them in past ages." He prophesized that "the wars must consequently be of shorter duration and prosecuted with more rancor than formerly."[2] Here the "Turk", a term synonymous for "Muslim" in the early modern period was put in direct opposition to the "Christian;" not an uncommon comparison in the Western rhetoric of the period. This war highlighted more than simply a contest between faiths, but a battle over political systems. In short, the characteristics of the Turk in political discourse came to represent the least desirable characteristics of a Christian. This particular use of Judeo-Christian religious differences in political philosophy had existed for more than a millennium by the time the article was printed, but it had travelled far from the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, crossing the Atlantic and into the American repertoire.

In a letter from John Adams to his friend and rival Thomas Jefferson in 1815, Adams asked: "What do We mean by the Revolution?"[3] Many Americans today would unwaveringly, and without pause, answer "the War;" the military conflict which lasted from 1775-1783. Adams

[2] *Pennsylvania Packet* (Philadelphia, PA): May 6, 1790
[3] "John Adams to Thomas Jefferson, 24 August 1815," Founders Online, National Archives (http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/03-08-02-0560 [last update: 2015-12-30]). Source: *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson, Retirement Series, vol. 8, 1 October 1814 to 31 August 1815*, ed. J. Jefferson Looney. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011, pp. 682–684.

decidedly contested this notion. Instead, he argued: "The Revolution was in the minds of the People," the actual battles "[were] no Part of the Revolution. [They were] only an effect and consequence" of colonists' discontent with British actions."[4]

To Adams, the American Revolution was a social movement that began not at the battles of Lexington and Concord, but in the turmoil of the 1760s, particularly in 1765 with the passage of the Stamp Act. An emerging solidarity among the cadre of colonial printers started to create a new sense of what it meant to be an Anglo-American, bolstered by a passion for independent enterprise. From that point onward, colonial printers began to unify the individual colonies through the creation of a distinctly American identity that was based on fluid concepts, but with a strict ideological keystone that reflected their common British ancestry.

To unify a diverse population disconnected for the most part by distance and various socio-political traditions, all trying to assert their own sense of personal independence, the printers had to find points of reference to serve as the common grounds for their new movement. Even in an "enlightened age" that endorsed the idea of a secularized government, American printers clearly understood and agreed that the contrast between Christianity and Islam could be an important instrument in the separation of the Colonies from Britain. This juxtaposition would continue to influence Americans' view of themselves throughout the tumultuous years of the early republic.[5] During the "Revolutionary period," newspaper printers were engaged in conversations over a wide range of complex and sensitive topics, from the level and strength of

[4] An essayist, advocating for the adoption of a Federal Constitution, wrote in 1786 (*Providence Gazette* [Providence, RI]: December 30, 1786) that "The American war is over, but this is far from being the case with the American [R]evolution…To conform the principles, morals and manners of our citizens to our republican forms of government, it is absolutely necessary that knowledge of every kind should be disseminated through every part of the United States."

[5] The reader will note that many consider the phase of the New Republic to be longer than the years of 1783-1797, but this paper ends at that date because of the Treaty of Tripoli with the Barbary States.

the government's involvement in private affairs to the concept of a national morality.[6] Printers had the power to shape the fabric of the United States, yet at the same time felt pressured to appeal to a readership that constituted the base of their income. Despite this check of power, or perhaps even because of it, newspapers provide the most conclusive evidence of the early American mindset. As John Adams said in his letter, "Newspapers in all the Colonies ought be consulted…to ascertain the Steps by which the public opinion was enlightened and informed."

The American colonies had a long tradition of influencing public opinions on religion and politics through the printed word. Puritans searching for a way to disperse the Bible more easily to their numbers brought the first printing press to the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1638, which they used to ensure that all literate people had access to the Word of God. As Protestants, the love of God was seen as a personal connection, independent from bishops and popes, whom they looked down upon in contempt as Antichrists. Through this belief, literacy was improved in each new generation, and along with it the desire of new reading materials. The first new materials printed were sermons, which served as teaching materials to influence the faithful. While sermons were seen as purely religious documents, the fear of God's retribution led to the scribing of natural phenomena that were thought to be indications of His displeasure. The observant pastor noted the comet in the sky or the appearance of a disease, eagerly seeking to convince his flock to repent and prepare for the Apocalypse.

In the last two decades of the 17th century, there began to be an active push to shift literature in a more secular direction, as more printing presses, larger populations and European Enlightenment ideas came to the American colonies. Almanacs served as a bridge to transition

[6] This period includes the decade before the separation from Britain and the decade after the ratification of the Constitution.

purely religious material into more useful, mundane matters[7]. Even then, the avid readers in the Colonies maintained a voracious appetite for literature. Books were costly, to the point where a person's status would be calculated by the size of his library; the average reader hadn't the resources to acquire new texts. The solution to the problem of cost and demand lay in the form of the newspaper.[8]

The first newspaper to be printed in the British American colonies was titled *Publick Occurrences Both Forreign and Domestick*, published in Boston in 1690.[9] It was only two sheets long, and it ran for only one issue due to governmental opposition, but the attempt provided a starting point for the printing of true newspapers. The first newspaper to be printed in the American colonies and succeed, reaching government approval and financial stability, was the *Boston News-Letter*, published in 1704.[10] The early 18th century saw an increase in the number of newspapers, but they were heavily regulated by the government, which carefully proctored them in pursuit of "seditious language" or "libel."[11] Regulations in the British colonies began to

[7] The development of almanacs and their importance to the history of colonial newspapers is discussed in: Nord, David P. *Communities of Journalism: a History of American Newspapers*. Chicago, Illinois USA: University of Illinois Press, 2001. Pages 44-47. Print.

[8] Sensationalism was an important aspect of newspapers from the colonial period onwards because of the need to sell papers to cover the cost of printing. For further reading on sensationalism in colonial press see: Copeland, David A. *Colonial American Newspapers: Character and Content*. Cranbury, New Jersey USA: Associated University Presses, Inc., 1997. Pages 69-90. Print.

[9] *Publick Occurrences* was shut down by the Massachusetts council, citing the law that required any printed article to be given a license by the royal government before publication. However, the real reason for suppression was more complicated, involving contemporary Massachusetts politics which debated the level of freedom that would be allowed the colonists. For more information, see: Sloan, William D., and Julie H. Williams. *The Early American Press, 1690-1783*. Westport, Connecticut USA: Greenwood Press, 1994. Pages 5-14. History of American Journalism. Ser. 1. Print.

[10] Nord, David P. *Communities of Journalism: a History of American Newspapers*. Chicago, Illinois USA: University of Illinois Press, 2001. Page 50. Print. See also: Sloan, William D., and Julie H. Williams. *The Early American Press, 1690-1783*. Westport, Connecticut USA: Greenwood Press, 1994. Pages 18-22. History of American Journalism. Ser. 1. Print.

[11] Sloan, William D., and Julie H. Williams. *The Early American Press, 1690-1783*. Westport, Connecticut USA: Greenwood Press, 1994. Pages 97-118. History of American Journalism. Ser. 1. Print.

notably lessen after the Zenger Trial in 1733, but printers still did not try to go too hard against the grain of government.[12]

The 1765 Stamp Act left lasting scars on the relationship between Britain and her colonial subjects even after it was repealed only a few months later.[13] Printers no longer tread lightly for fear of government retribution and even after the battle against the legislation had been won, the Declaratory Act continued to worry the colonists as a whole, and the printers began to test the waters of borderline, if not outright treason.[14] Articles with strong language and fiery anti-British sentiments appeared in newspapers as a protest to these new regulations. To make matters worse, the British Parliament issued the Townshend Duties in 1767, which caused further discontent in the colonies, especially against those who did not identify themselves as Whigs, the dissenters who opposed the Stamp Act the loudest.[15]

A newspaper issued in 1768 held articles with authors directly attacking one another based on their political views. One pro-British author called the Whigs "an unrelenting, persecuting, bigoted faction;" another author attested that the American Whig sought to "[carry] off the Golden Fleece of our religious liberty;" another one still hoped "that the great waters may be a wall of partition between us [the British and the American colonists]."[16] These authors, who proclaimed that they were protecting the liberty of the people by opposing the Whigs, said that working with the British would ultimately prove more fruitful, especially given that they had

[12] Sloan, William D., and Julie H. Williams. *The Early American Press, 1690-1783*. Westport, Connecticut USA: Greenwood Press, 1994. Pages 73-91. History of American Journalism. Ser. 1. Print.
[13] Sloan, William D., and Julie H. Williams. *The Early American Press, 1690-1783*. Westport, Connecticut USA: Greenwood Press, 1994. Pages 123-142. History of American Journalism. Ser. 1. Print.
[14] Sloan, William D., and Julie H. Williams. *The Early American Press, 1690-1783*. Westport, Connecticut USA: Greenwood Press, 1994. Pages 141-142. History of American Journalism. Ser. 1. Print.
[15] Sloan, William D., and Julie H. Williams. *The Early American Press, 1690-1783*. Westport, Connecticut USA: Greenwood Press, 1994. Pages 147-165. History of American Journalism. Ser. 1. Print.
[16] *The New-York Gazette or the Weekly Post-boy* (New York, NY): May 09, 1768

little in the way of protection against hostile powers.[17] They berated the Whigs, stating that some didn't oppose the Stamp Tax, or at least did not oppose it enough to provoke the British. Beset with fear over the limitations of what might anger the Royal government both in the Isles and in the Colonies, these same authors used very strong religious language alongside their secular arguments to highlight the treachery of those who would think about opposing the acts of Parliament. By accusing the Whigs of "[discarding] the Christian religion," and of being "sons of Belial, and grandsons of Beelzebub," they sought to bring the public along with them into the Loyalist camp. To drive the point home, one author suggested that a Whig who turned on the English would just as soon "submit to circumcision and turn Mahometan."

By inserting in the Muslim practice of circumcision, then thought of as abominable to Christians, the author connected Islam to all of the negative imagery of dissention, disharmony and disobedience. It is not surprising that Islam was grouped together with all of the various heresies and demonic practices that were enshrined in the popular culture of fear. The author contrasted the freedom-loving Protestant, attributed to be the true citizen, with the disobedience of those who practiced Islam. The author used the phrase "[turning] Mahometan," to imply a lack of loyalty to one's faith and community; damning all through the actions of one. A newborn child brought into the world to Christian parents is "christened" or "baptized," and a man who adopts the Christian faith in later years has been "saved" or "converted," assuring the freedom and protection of their soul; contrarily, someone who converts to Islam "turns Mahometan" and accepts chaos. As such, the "Turk" (a capacious term used by most colonial writers to describe all Muslim people) did not have a worthy identity; rather, he chose his path, going against God's wishes. In one phrase, the man was called a weakling, having fallen into unforgivable sin,

[17] The taxes themselves had been a result of the recent wars. Colonists would have understood the danger of European, as well as native hostilities much more clearly.

undeserving and undesiring of freedom. According to Loyalists, a man who opposed the recent acts of Parliament should be ostracized as a "Turk" for having chosen a path which would lead to the end of liberty in the colonies, due to their foolish verbal attacks on the suzerain British government.

The broad application of the "Turk" had particular significance because of the impressive size of the Ottoman Empire and its role in global trade. As a result of conquering the vital trading capital of Constantinople (modern-day Istanbul) in 1453 as well as the major port of Alexandria, Venice and other European entities desirous of international trade began to establish relations between the East and West. Thus, many Europeans and colonists experienced the "Turk" through legal trade or as captives to North African corsairs. In continuation of this intercultural conversation, American printers used articles concerning Turks to promote a specific Turkish identity in the minds of a public, composed of people who had likely never come in contact with the very Turk they were taught to despise.[18]

To do this, they had to create a sort of cosmology for the powerful Ottoman Empire; their rise, and their inferiority despite the fact that they were economically and geographically positioned at the top of the Mediterranean food chain. In one article, dated 1770, the author commented directly on the nature of the "Mahometan government," stating that it was "founded by the sword and established totally upon military principles," as opposed to the peaceful nature of all the Christian political entities in Europe. [19]

[18] The first account written by an Arabic Muslim man in the United States was Omar Ibn Said's slave narrative written in 1837; for more information on the subject, see Osman, Ghada, and Camille F. Forbes. "Representing the West in the Arabic Language: The Slave Narrative of Omar Ibn Said." *Journal of Islamic Studies* 15.3 (2004): 331-43. Web. 19 Apr. 2016.

[19] *The Pennsylvania Chronicle* (Philadelphia, PA): Monday, October 8th to Monday October 15th, 1770.

The author degraded the Turk as an individual whose only "genius" lies in his propensity to make war upon others. Moreover, it is only by the "constant practice" of this warfare that the Ottoman Empire was able to keep its soldiers in check, as it would otherwise be completely inferior to the prowess of European armies led by Enlightened men of warlike Christian peace. Colonists who read about the heated political battles between their American and British brethren also followed the events of the Russo-Turkish War, which began in 1768. The article focused on the recent military failures of the Turks, suggesting that even though their people are of a warlike nature, their lack of discipline and practice had made their defeat certain. The previous thirty years of peace the Ottomans had experienced were considered contrary to their very essence, causing their constitutions to weaken and their military institutions to fall into disrepair.[20] In consequence of their malaise, their only chances of victory lay in the difficult terrain of their frontiers and the bickering nature of the other European courts. According to the author, the lion's claws had dulled and the Crescent lay waning.

The article's emphasis on lost military superiority and the bickering of European courts must have resounded with the angry colonists. They had no love for the Ottomans and considered Western civilization superior, but at a time when Anglo-American colonial subjects began seeing the British Parliament as meddlesome, they started wondering if the Mother Country was becoming like the other more autocratic governments of Europe. The defeat of the Ottomans also gave them hope. A powerful, wealthy, and warlike nation had fallen due to internal discord and failing military discipline. A rowdy New Yorker or an incensed Bostonian

[20] The Ottoman Empire faced many internal and external struggles following the death of Suleiman I (r. 1520-1566), seen as the pinnacle of Ottoman rule. The Ottomans still maintained their status as a fearful military force until the late 17th and 18th centuries, when wars with European powers, especially the Austrians and Russians, began to bring their weakness to light. The 30 years between the Treaty of Belgrade (1739) and the Russo-Turkish War of 1768-1774 was filled with reform efforts, especially by Sultan Mustafa III (r. 1757-1774), but by that time the Ottomans had fallen significantly behind European Powers in both military and administration.

pointed to this type of news as proof that no empire was unbeatable. A Patriot military strategist might have an additional thought when he read the article; an Ottoman victory lay in using their terrain as an advantage. Territorial mastery in one war would be mimicked in another arena.

Not only did the 1770 article explicitly comment on the warlike nature of the Ottoman Turks, it also degraded their form of government to the basest level, surviving solely on military oppression and the playing of rivalries. In terms of their control over the Greeks, it is said that they had only remained in control of the peninsula by making use of the tensions between the Greeks, Venetians and Austrians. The Turkish government would not have been able to hold the obedience of the Orthodox Greeks had they not impressed them first with their might, and then with their relative desirability in comparison to their more manipulative Catholic "Christian neighbors." All lessons for colonial Patriots as their protests led to outright war in 1776.

At the same time as heated and often violent protests began in Britain's colonies, the Ottoman Empire succumbed to humiliating losses in their repeated wars with Russia, which were constant in the second half of the 18th century. Printers and their avid readers in the American colonies and elsewhere were left to wonder at what would become of the Turkish Empire. During the Russo-Turkish War of 1768-1773, one author would even go so far as to suggest that the Ottoman losses to the Russians and the subsequent civil unrest in their provinces, especially Egypt, was the signal for the starting of the Apocalypse as described in Revelations.[21]

Of significant note in the printed letter is the connection between the Islamic Ottomans and the evil barbaric powers mentioned in the Bible. The Turks were made out to be savage

[21] *The Newport Mercury* (Newport, RI): August 24, 1772; This Apocalyptic thinking was a very common tool that Puritan ministers used to convince their followers to consistently repent and follow the political-religious laws of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. The time elapsed obviously had not changed the way in which it was used. (Nord, David P. *Communities of Journalism: a History of American Newspapers*. Chicago, Illinois USA: University of Illinois Press, 2001. Page 84. Print.)

peoples, as compared to the revolting Egyptian leader who, though Muslim himself, was considered to be of higher moral rectitude because he was more tolerant of the Christians under him. The Sultan was no more than the bringer of the End Times, and the Ottoman regime was the evil empire he controlled. The connection between the stories of Revelations is important because it portrayed the Turks as being both weak in front of God (the Russians) and primitively strong because they were barbaric and savage (being the powerful evil empire). The Russians appeared as the Christ-like saviors, which might be considered strange given that they were technically not Protestant, but Orthodox Christian. This is evidence that it was not necessarily the exact sect of Christianity a country represented, as long as they were not idolatrous Catholics or heathenistic Muslims; they were virtuous protectors. We can assume that this same author was delighted at the news of the Ottoman defeat and petitions for peace in 1773. [22]

The same Ottoman defeat was covered by a Bostonian, but instead of a mere statement of the impending nature of the treaty, he made it into an anecdote.[23] In it, the Sultan and his advisors discussed the diplomatic actions they were going to take and the terms of the peace treaty to be signed with the Russians. Before the final decision was made, the Grand Mufti, the highest ranking Muslim priest interrupted, saying that it would be "the most abominable sin in the eyes of the Prophet, and will shake the Ottoman throne, and the Mahometan religion" if the Sultan agreed to any terms that did not entirely benefit the government. The Sultan did not take the priest seriously even though it was said that the people of the Empire hanged upon the divine's words. There was a real fear of revolts in the imperial provinces due to constant defeat

[22] In actuality, many Greeks opposed the Ottomans, as the Orthodox Russians continually proved that they could best the Turkish armies. Through the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca (also spelled Kuchuk Kainarji), signed in July 1774, gave the Russians a legal foothold in the Ottoman Empire, by allowing them to negotiate on the behalf of Orthodox Greeks within the Turkish realm.

[23] *The Massachusetts Gazette; and the Boston Post-Boy and Advertiser*: June 14th, 1773.

in military engagements and the success of a series of uprisings in Egypt. Secular affairs took precedent over religious ones when it came to the proper administration of an empire.[24]

This author, unlike the one in the previous article, did not place the Ottomans in any state of real power; instead, they were the unfortunate losers of a war, unable to fight on, even when discontent would mount in the citizens after the accession of defeat. It is the addition of the Muslim priest, however, which made the greater statement. He was the highest religious authority in the land, and his words were considered divine, but the Sultan conceded to the reality of the situation, forsaking the theological duties imposed upon him as the Caliph of the Turkish Muslims. The Sultan and his advisors were losers of the war, but the priest lost his spiritual influence over the affairs of the State, likely to the chagrin of all loyal Turks. The priest represented Islam itself, and his words were divine, yet their neglect was a metaphor for the weakness of the religion as a whole. Moreover, the Grand Mufti's influence over the population was a commentary on the weakness of the Ottoman government, whose primitive power rested upon the base militant nature of the average Turk.

A Western reader would have seen this article in two ways. The first is the implication that Islam had less power to provide realistic advice. The Mufti is, after all, the highest ranking religious authority in the entire Empire, capable of holding sway over the populace, making divine law merely by speaking. The Protestant reader would have been very attuned to this point, already being experienced practitioners in anti-papal scribing alluding to the much-despised power of the Pope, the tradition of Papal Infallibility. The anecdote serves as a warning against blind faith, and to this point the separation of religion and politics, an idea that would have been

[24] It is notable that Mustafa III died in 1773, leaving an already weakened empire in the hands of his nephew,

readily accepted by Enlightenment readers, as well as the more conservative flocks of rural pastors.[25]

The Mufti's suggestion stemmed from national and religious pride that was already centuries old and engrained within the dominant Turkish cultural consciousness, but the Sultan had to make his decision based on worldly realities. His armies suffered heavy losses and the people were restless. It was his duty to maintain the empire and for this he had to sacrifice the advice of his most esteemed theologian. If a ruler remained beholden to religious leaders in all of his decisions, he would fail to make the best choices. To a populace that had grown out of a dislike for absolute Church authority, this was a way to once again gain glory in their freedom from religious leaders like the Pope, long likened to the Antichrist, or King George III, who led the Church of England. If the Sublime Porte could be forced to bow, why not the mighty British Parliament; the world seemed ripe for drastic change.[26]

A British colonist in 1774 could draw parallels from what was happening in the Ottoman Empire and to what was happening at home. Their freedom had been shocked by the Declaratory Act (1766), soon followed by the Townshend Duties, beginning in 1767. In 1774, Parliament passed the Quartering Act which allowed British soldiers to stay in citizens' homes freely, and the Administration of Justice Act, which allowed British officers to bypass colonial law.[27] That same year, the Boston Port Act shut down the most important part of the local economy in an effort to punish anti-British sentiment, and the Massachusetts Government Act, which revoked

[25] In the less-developed Southern Colonies, especially the far-flung Georgia, the traditional link of pastors and newspapers was preserved. With more limited presses and the lack of a social culture emphasizing literacy, most people got their news from newspapers read by the more learned population, especially clergymen.
[26] The Sublime Porte was an epithet for the head Turkish government, seated in Constantinople. The "Porte" also became synonymous for the city of Constantinople itself. These metonymic constructs were very commonly used in articles referencing the Ottomans.
[27] It would not go too far to call this an example of martial law.

the Massachusetts charter, thus making it a royal colony once again. All of these so-called "Intolerable Acts" made it seem like the type of repression extant in the Ottoman Courts rose up in the American colonies.

Antipathy towards Muslims was not always overt. An article, dated 1774, after the Russo-Turkish War, appears to have shown a more balanced view of the workings of the Turkish government and Islam.[28] The author described the Islamic religion as "very equitable." However, this was mediated by the example of a traitor who was executed in what the author thought was an unjust manner. The author goes into detail about the experience, and stated that there were very few times when an accused was allowed to form his own defense, to call for witnesses, or know the name of his accusers. In a time when acts of Parliament sought to put more control in the hands of judges they had appointed, the fear of an unjust trial was a very real concern that was much closer to home than Constantinople.

The description of the execution was vividly expressed in highly sensational words, and the reader would have been terrified by both the denial of regular legal proceedings in addition to the gruesome nature of the death. Alternatively, the reader was left to admire the exotic nature and great riches of the Sultan, the Prince and the court. Rather than resorting to the typical rhetoric of anti-Islamic sentiments, the author noted the weakness of the Empire, but blamed it on the corruption of greedy ministers and judges. The Sultan became less threatening an individual; more like a tourist attraction than the ruler of a mighty empire and political head of the Islamic Faith.

Although British colonies were largely consumed by the war itself after armed conflict began in 1775, the Turk remained a rhetorical tool as printers loyal to either side used

[28] *The Essex Gazette* (Salem, MA): April 19, 1774.

propaganda to garner support. The Tory-influenced presses attempted to connect the rebellion to Islam, as a movement that challenged the established order and would replace it with despotism. The play *Mahomet, the True Nature of Imposture*, a work based off of a 1697 biography of the Prophet Mohammad written by the English clergyman Humphrey Prideaux, was put on in British-occupied New York in 1780.[29] The actors were British soldiers who played for an audience of British sympathizers. The play portrayed Mohammed's deceit in forcing a brother and sister to kill their father, neither of whom had known about their familial ties. In mourning, the two siblings kill themselves crying out "How coulds't thou damn us thus?"[30]

The connections between the characters and actions in the play were directly relatable to the conflict at hand. The brother and sister represented the colonial subjects, with Great Britain as their father and the Prophet Mohammed represented the errant leaders of the Revolution. At the end of the play, all of the characters were dead, leaving Mohammed (i.e. George Washington) exclaiming that he had brought suffering to everyone, all because he was a liar.

Mohammed was an easy target for the British people; he was seen as the reason why the East had become so lazy and stagnant.[31] The comparison would have been a confirmation to New York Tories and British redcoats that liars and imposters duped the subjects of the colonies, while the loyalists avoided the fate of the brother and sister. Mohammed's lamentation "All conq'ror as I am, I am a slave…. I might deceive the world; myself I cannot" implicated that even if the patriots won the Revolutionary War, they would create a government no better than

[29] Advertisement for the play can be seen in *The Royal Gazette* (New York, NY): November 8, 1780. It should be noted that portrayals of the "deceiver" Mohammad were a part of popular culture; Dante Alighieri placed him in the lowest ring of his "Inferno," a place reserved for traitors.
[30] Allison, Robert J. *The Crescent Obscured: The United States and the Muslim World 1776-1815*. New York, New York, USA: Oxford University Press, 1995. Pages xiii-185. Print.
[31] This was a very common myth perpetrated by many authors over the centuries to highlight Western exceptionalism.

the authoritarian regimes Mohammed's followers had created. The new America would be a tyrannical place where the people would be betrayed by their own leaders and society would remain stagnant or even regress to the level of Turkish despotism.

Fears that the Revolution would lead to despotism as described in *Mahomet, the True Nature of Imposture* raised questions about the relationship between government and individual rights that would engross the political rhetoric during the aftermath of the American Revolution and the first decades of the early republic. Upon the conclusion of the war, new American citizens faced the challenges of expressing their own national identity while debating the power relations between the state, religion and individuals. Facing something like an identity crisis, the printers would become the leaders in creating the new nation.

Three months after signing the Treaty of Paris that officially ended the war, an article in *The Independent New-York Gazette* relayed the adventures of a man known as the Mustapha that articulated many of these anxieties.[32] The most telling part of the article was the juxtaposition we see concerning the first sentence; "The Mustapha is an Englishman" with the following text having him relocated outside of England, taught by Frenchmen and, finally, coming to the Ottoman Empire where he learned the Turkish language and customs. The military expertise that he had acquired through his time with both English and French soldiers garnered him a good deal of fame, and it is said that he was consulted on almost every matter relating to artillery. Furthermore, to raise his rank higher in the court of the Sultan, the man known as Mustapha converts to Islam. Nevertheless, the author of the article states that "it should not be omitted, that the indulgencies allowed by Mohammed and his disciples are plentifully enjoyed by our countryman, for he keeps a Harem of wives."

[32] *The Independent New-York Gazette* (New York, NY): December 06, 1783.

The author is clear throughout the article that the man known as the Mustapha, whose name he divulges at the end as Benjamin Swinbourne, is an Englishman. How can this be? A man who had not been in England for several years, who had adopted the customs and the language of the Turks, who had been helping the Ottoman army, who had raised the ranks in the Ottoman Court, and who had converted to Islam was still the author's "countryman." It does not seem that the author is saying it in jest, as it is so very clearly and beautifully affirmed in the first sentence, so it must then be something else which causes him to hold onto this Englishman as a brother of the same homeland.

The article stressed one of the primary ideologies of nationalism: the feeling of superiority and exceptionalism based solely on the inherent nature of the State and its effect on the people born therein. The Mustapha was born an Englishman, his efforts and accomplishments must then be a part of the English identity. The Mustapha's successes reflected that an Englishman possesses resourcefulness, an ambitious nature, leadership potential, wisdom, simply because he was born in England. No amount of time, distance, cultural assimilation or religious conversion could, in the eyes of the author, revoke the natural brilliance brought on by a man's origins. More than merely being an adjective, the author used the example of the Mustapha to create an insurmountable category which maintained a level of "Britishness."

The article was a political statement. Having been written during the American war for independence, the British people must have felt the need to solidify their historical identity. The Americans had only recently shed their English mantles, and to some they did not have the authority to do so. Even though the majority of military hostilities had ended at Yorktown in 1781, until Treaty of Paris was signed in 1783 the Revolution could still technically be

considered an open rebellion in Britain.[33] Like the Mustapha, the Americans were, for the moment, "Englishmen." Secession from the Empire was much like the Mustapha's choice of converting to Islam, abandoning his past life.

The nature of the Mustapha's birth is highlighted, but the article also states that "it should not be omitted, that the indulgencies allowed by Mohammed and his disciples are plentifully enjoyed by our countryman, for he keeps a Harem of wives." The inclusion of this comment was meant to insult the Mustapha for giving into sinfulness and lust as a result of his conversion and newly found freedoms. This one particular aspect was highlighted by the author for a reason, namely to affirm the notion that Islam is a religion of "indulgence."[34] Just as the Mustapha's actions were against religious law, the acts of the Americans went against British law.

The patriot reader, feeling a sense of exceptionalism themselves, must have had a very different take on the anecdote. The Mustapha had left his homeland in search of better opportunities, having found no viable options to elevate his position or his fortune by remaining in England. The post-colonists must have looked back on their own roots, seeing the likeness of their founders' mission to move away from the strict laws and strife of the British Isles and search for their own path to happiness in the New World. It must have been amusing or even pitiful to the American audience that the Mustapha would resort to such lengths as abandoning his religion and his culture to remain in the backwards and authoritarian Ottoman Empire. This added to the idea that such a choice was still better than remaining in his homeland.

[33] International law dictated that in order for some sort of help to be given freely to rebels, they must first declare their recognition of the rebels as a sovereign nation, after which they would be considered a belligerent power rather than a neutral one. France hesitated to give the American rebels supplies and men until after the battle of Saratoga because they were hesitant to enter another war with Britain so soon after they had lost the previous one. This same rationality was used much later during the American Civil War, when the Union considered the Confederate States as Union territories in open rebellion, rather than a sovereign nation.

[34] The association of the indulgences of Muslims and the indulgences given out by the Catholic Church before the Reformation movement could have made this a double quip.

The Turks are portrayed as passive and weak, needing the military advice of a Western man who wasn't even born in the Ottoman Empire in order to better their armies. Additionally, the adoption of Turkish culture, language and religion by the Mustapha didn't make him "turn Turk," a phrase commonly used as a way to refer to a Christian person who pledged loyalty to a Muslim power and converted to Islam. He "embraced the Mahometan religion," implying that the Ottomans could not force him to convert; he made the decision himself. Although the Mustapha's life was a unique occurrence, the printing of such an articles tells us much about the concerns of the English at the time.

The date and origin of the article may also provide insights into the author's purpose. The Treaty of Paris, signed by the United States and Great Britain was signed on September 3rd, 1783, officially ending the American Revolutionary War, as well as putting to paper the defeat of the British. Taking into account the roughly two months required for sea travel between Britain and the United States, the fairly quick transit of news and the political situation, a date of December 6th, 1783 could, in theory, have come at the same time as the news of the Treaty.[35] If this were so, an author aware of this situation would want to show that English culture still reigned supreme, even after the rebellious colonists achieved official Independence.

An American reading this could have had a very different take on the article. Would they take this as an insult to their Independence (we are still Englishmen even if we are our own country), or would they take it as a confirmation of their overall supremacy (we maintain our powerful English heritage, made morally superior by justly ending British tyranny)? The question is quite an important one, and reflects the identity crisis that a country faces when it first

[35] "Packed Densely, Like Herrings." History Matters. George Mason University, et al., 19 Oct. 2015. Web. 19 Dec. 2015. <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5713>.

manifests. How would the new nation define itself? By its own culture? By their comparison to English culture? By their common greatness over other foreign powers?

A final question to consider is whether or not this article is an actual account, or merely a moral teaching. The man's name is Benjamin Swinbourne, which could be a mock name implicating that he was born with a lesser moral character. If this account is one which did not happen, but a fictitious anecdote meant to influence the audience, it is important to ask why the author would create such a history. Perhaps it was a commentary on the weakness of the English government after having lost the Revolutionary War; or could it have been something more?

Maybe it was to serve as a way to show the inherent greatness of the English, as even a mere citizen could raise through the ranks of the Ottoman Court, eventually reaching one of the highest positions. In relation to such a thought, perhaps the author meant to say that a man born in liberty would be much more likely to reach the highest position of power in a tyrannical society. As support for this, the article does not mention that the Mustapha had ever been seized or enslaved or oppressed by Turkish tyranny. He became Muslim and adopted Turkish customs of his own free will, and as such was no mere "renegado."[36]

Political references to the Turks in this early period went beyond the question of identity and state tyranny, expanding into conversations regarding the political power and social relationships associated with gender. As has been discussed, the Turks were seen as hyper-masculine and uncivilized, in cultural, religious and political manners alike. However, this portrayal was sometimes used as a way to bring peoples' attention to what were deemed moral

[36] "Renegados" were men captured by North African ships, forced to go through circumcision, convert to Islam, and work on the ship as a pseudo-slave.

shortcomings within Western societies. One man saw fit to mock the way Western men dressed, which he believed was closer in relation to the way women were dressed.[37]

The anecdote began by stating that an English ambassador had come into a discussion with a Turkish man while in Constantinople. The ambassador questioned the man as to why Muslims had so much disdain for Westerners and Western culture in general. The man replied that it was because Westerners dressed in a very immodest fashion, especially the men, whose clothes he said suggested a level of "effeminacy." The article then listed various aspects of Western dress which the author said illustrated the Turk's point:

> *…what would the honest Mahometan say were he to see our race of clipped macaronies with their tight nankeen breeches and waistcoats, hardly coming to their waistband? What can make the manners of the day appear more contemptible, than to see even our aged sires hobbling along with a little clipped coat, curtailed waistcoat, and a-la-mode tight buff coloured breeches?*

The writer is defining not only the dress of the men, but of the women too. The point of the article is not to flatter the Turk for his culture or even his honesty; rather, the writer uses the masculine symbol of the Turk to demonstrate his point that the men of his day dress in a way that is contemptible by being "womanly." The author's listing of different articles of clothing that compose his grievances allows us to pinpoint the codified dress for men and women in the period, as well as the differences in gender roles and identity. A man's masculinity is questioned through observation of what he wears, which in turn determines how respectable he seems to other people. The clothes quite literally make the man, and as a result, the identity of American manhood began to arise.

Clothing is not merely a part of everyday life; to the author it was a statement to the world. Before a person speaks, (except in the case of blindness) clothing is the first thing another

[37] *Pennsylvania Packet* (Philadelphia, PA): January 3, 1786.

can judge. The writer used the Muslim man to implicate that if corrections are not made, Western men are bound to lose their respect and power. The article's secondary effect is that it berates women, equating them to powerlessness and implying that they have no role in diplomacy or other affairs of high importance. The anecdote shows that even the most mundane aspects of life are governed by moral rules that separate people into categories and define the way they are allowed to act. In effect, clothing was a symbol of power as well as a limitation of individual liberty, not only in terms of class distinctions, but gender as well. While this article is only one man's opinion, it is an outspoken opinion of an often silent conversation, which makes it more explicit than subtler discussions. At a time of change and solidification of a national morality, even the most minute of things could create an identity.

The theme of Turkish hyper-masculinity was common in discourses of gender-based power relations. Male Turks were barbarous and warlike, but Turkish women were seen as oppressed, one of the main complaints being that they were forced into polygamous marriages. The earlier example of the Mustapha and his acceptance of the Muslim "indulgence" of having multiple wives was part of the larger discussion of Western Christian superiority that began to expand in importance during the early formation of American identity. Instances mentioning the harems of high-ranking Ottoman officials were extremely prevalent and the Sultan's Seraglio became a metonym for the royal harem itself.[38]

An anecdote of 1786 demonstrate the ways in which the Western world viewed the Sultan.[39] The anecdote related the story of three nuns who wanted to marry and leave the monastery, but who also wanted to remain close to each other. Because of the patrilocal nature of

[38] The Seraglio was a common epithet for the Topkapi Palace, or the Sultan's palace in Constantinople, constructed by Mehmed II after the Conquest in 1453. It was meant to be a political statement, affirming the power of the city's new rulers.
[39] *Connecticut Gazette* (New London, CT): February 3, 1786.

most Western marriages, they would have to go where their husband and his family lived, which realistically meant that they would be separated. According to the article, they wished to avoid "so dire a fate in a country where a man is doomed to one wife." The eldest, and "best read of the three," though only fourteen years of age, proposed their solution. Having heard of the opulence of the Ottoman Sultan and his harem, she advised the other two that they should send word to him of their wish to become his wives. They decided to send him a letter, which was innocently addressed to "The Grand Signior, Constantinople" and held notice of their "high birth and fortune." The head clerk intercepted the letter due to the peculiarity of its destination and recipient, and then passed it on to his superiors. Having read the request, the magistrate gave a roar of laughter and goes about finding men whose houses were very near each other so as to marry off the three nuns while remaining true to their wishes.

Several key ideas are presented in this article. The first having to do with the innocence of children. The girls lived in a time when marriages were decided for them. The actions of the three young nuns presented an anecdotal reason as to why this tradition was in the best interests of children. One way for them to avoid the separation was to remain in the nunnery and forego marriage. However, they did not wish to be forever confined within the walls and rules of the congregation, instead hoping to enter into matrimony. Their response reflected the view of the Sultan of the Turks as a man who had both fortune and many wives, both of which appealed to the young women. If all went as planned, they would live in luxury and in the same place. The author implies that they have no notion of the fact that they would be converted to Islam for the marriage to even occur, which may have been the first thing to consider after having lived as Catholic nuns.

The article goes beyond mere innocence, however, as the ending suggests. The notion is so ridiculous to the magistrate that he bursts into a roar of laughter. That any woman would willingly give herself up to the Turkish Sultan, a Muslim and a polygamist, they must surely have no idea what their request actually meant. This is so striking that he decides that he must go and seek out husbands for them, removing any semblance of agency that they had tried to act upon. While their requests of not being separated and yet also entering matrimony were fulfilled, in the end it was not their decision to whom they would be married.

The Turks were not always viewed as ultra-masculine, and the examples of their emasculation was equally, if not more important. As a barbaric group, their main attribute in the eyes of the Western worldview was their brutality, courage and fighting ability. Any time a Turkish army lost a battle or even more drastically a war, their reputation was made weaker in the eyes of the world. After having lost the Russo-Turkish War of 1768, Western Europe was reinvigorated. No longer were the Ottomans a nearly unstoppable fighting force, but a mortal army who could be defeated. The resonance of this victory was not only talked about in terms of political news, but in articles that indirectly or directly showed their weaknesses.

A short article printed in 1786 shows one instance where a Turkish corsair was defeated in part due to a French woman.[40] Madame du Frenoy and her husband set out from Marseilles heading toward the port of Genoa. After they had reached the open sea, they unfortunately saw that they were being chased. After they had come to the realization that flight would be impossible, the ship prepared to fight. The article states that Monsieur du Frenoy did his best to persuade his wife to go below deck, but after many refusals on her part, he gave up. The merchant ship put up a good fight against the corsairs, but the article states that none fought as

[40] *Charleston Evening Gazette* (Charleston, SC): March 22, 1786.

hard or as bravely as Madame du Frenoy herself. Running at the invaders with a sabre, she fended off a wave of attackers and inspired the crew. After her husband was shot in the leg and therefore incapacitated, Madame stood over him and protected him, "[leveling] in one stroke of the sabre, a young Turk who advanced to attack her." Amazingly, the crew was able to cause the corsairs to retreat to their ship, and after a short gun battle, the attackers fled, leaving the ship. They were not without deaths and casualties, but they were able to return to port where the courageous Madame du Frenoy was celebrated for her actions.

The popularity of this article is marked, having been printed in many papers from South Carolina to Massachusetts.[41] The citizens of the United States were in awe at the notion that a woman such as Madame du Frenoy could accomplish such a feat. It must have been a moment of reflection not only on the power of the woman, but also the femininity of the attackers. Madame du Frenoy had not only fought a group of corsairs, but prevailed felling at least one "Turk." The word Turk is important because there is no mention of where the ship and its crew had actually come from. It did not matter if the ship had come from Tunisia, Morocco or Algiers; they were Turks. This is not surprising, as the term had become very frequently used to describe Muslim peoples of any culture. The author makes a link between the failure of a man to defeat a woman and the weakness of a Turk.

An article which equally displays this point is an anecdote of the conversation between and English woman and a Turkish ambassador.[42] The lady, merely referred to as Lady C. asks the Ambassador if the Koran did in fact permit a Muslim man to have more than one wife. His

[41] This article first appeared on March 22, 1786, but 31 other articles concerning Madame du Frenoy were printed, the last of which appeared in *The Pennsylvania Mercury* (Philadelphia, PA): May 22, 1788; under the title of "Female Valour." For the Frenchwoman's actions, she was presented a crown of laurels by a French nobleman as well as a large ruby bracelet from the king of Malta.
[42] *Pennsylvania Mercury* (Philadelphia, PA): July 21, 1786.

answer is that it did indeed permit a man to have many wives. He says that this is so a man may have many wives with varying accomplishments, so that together they would have all the accomplishments that "many Englishwomen like [her] ladyship, singly possess."

Both the anecdote and the article of Madame du Frenoy show that the Turkish people, both men and women, are inferior to those of Western European nations. Madame du Frenoy's account shows the weakness of the Turks in battle, feminizing them. The anecdote shows not only the failing of the men in having many wives, but further expounds the idealization of Turkish women as weak and inadequate. The Muslim women are lowered to a status inferior to that of Christian women, who are more accomplished, cultivated, and by being only one of their husband's many wives, less virtuous; victims of a state that did not foster personal cultivation. The identity of female liberty in America and in England seemed to be becoming more libertine in nature.

The constant concerns of Americans over gender and power relations showed the general turmoil prevailing over all other aspects of period politics. After winning Independence from Britain, the United States faced the problem of creating a government and a system of laws the likes of which had never been attempted before. The world watched to see if the fledgling nation would survive or fall into anarchy. Fears of British absolutism led to the adoption of the Articles of Confederation in 1781 and a weak central government. After the Shays' Rebellion in 1786 and persistent commentary on the characteristics of a successful nation, some American statesmen came to realize that the federal government had too little power to effectively govern. One of the proponents for the modification of the current government was John Adams. In a letter which

began to be published in American newspapers in 1787, Adams puts forward his views on proper governance.[43]

Among other aspects, one of his key points revolves around the power of the State in regards to property. To Adams, property was an extension of power, and a very important factor in maintaining a functioning, effective, yet free nation. He discusses the various forms of imperial governments and their power over the people by giving examples. His primary example throughout the article is Rome, which Adams believed was the most apparent model to follow, providing a balance between the power of nobles and the ability of the people to hold property. This plays in beautifully to the Western myth of their natural superiority, showing that they wanted to plant themselves firmly within the narrative of European progress.

To contrast the practices of Rome, Adams gives examples of other nations with different levels of autocracy as seen by their policies on holding property. In a state where there are nobles who control all or the great majority of the land, Adams considers a "mixed monarchy," like the ones in Spain or Poland. He explains that a state in which the aristocrats or higher classes control the same amount of land as anyone else is a commonwealth. Adams's most vivid example is that of the empires which employ absolute monarchy. According to Adams, in an empire with an absolute monarchy, the rights to most, if not all of the land is held by one person. The example he gives for this type of state is the Ottoman Empire. Adams says that the Sultan controls at least three quarters of the lands within the Empire in his own right, which is the reason that the Turkish government is absolute. This article makes it clear that to people like Adams, having property equates to having power, and so the degree of liberty and autonomy one has is determined by his holdings. While he could have also included women in power like Catherine

[43] *Pennsylvania Mercury* (Philadelphia, PA): July 27, 1787.

the Great of Russia, he does not; thus confirming that the identity of a property owner is closely linked to the male identity, giving them the most liberty to participate in politics and government.

In responses to arguments like Adams's, the Constitutional Convention convened in 1787 to rethink the current government and increase its power to obtain stability. Even as Adams was considering the balance of power between the people and the state in favor of a strengthened, yet not overpowered government, some worried that the federal government would come to have too much power. An article from October of 1787 reflects the views of someone who opposed the adoption of the new constitution, fearing that it would lead to oppression and tyranny.[44]

The extreme satire of the article is overt. The author breaks down each of the aspects of the new federal Constitution and compares them to the administration of the Ottoman Empire. He declares that the President will take on the qualities of the Sultan, the Senate would equal the Divan, a standing army would replace the Janissaries, and the court system would be like the Cadies.[45] The Ottoman Empire was seen as the supreme tyrannical government, so this author's remarks would have resonated deeply with the readers.

The fears of an absolute monarchy coalesced into the comparison of the Constitutional President to the Sultan. In the Ottoman Empire, it is the Sultan who maintains the rights to all the land, merely allowing the people to work and live on it. These rights were mostly nominal, and any action of the Sultan to enforce these outstanding rights would have been met with outright and fierce rebellion, to the average American reader, even a nominal right to all land was a sign

[44] *Independent Gazetteer* (Philadelphia, PA): October 10, 1787.
[45] A group of elite soldiers, originally filled by Greek boys taken through the devshirme system. In its earliest days, the Janissaries were made eunuchs and forcefully converted to Islam. As time went on, the Janissaries grew more powerful, and they ceased to be castrated, and entrenched themselves as permanent noble families. As they were the elite soldiers of the empire, the less powerful and effective Sultans would become beholden to them; pressured to follow their guidance.

of absolutism. Understanding the mindset of a citizen in the newly-formed United States in relation to property is integral to capture a glimpse of the development of power relations and freedom. To take away their land would be on the same level as taking away their liberty, as they feared George III might have done.

The Divan of the Turks, much like the Roman Senate, was a body that listened only to the Court and the aristocracy. In that body, the majority of people and their wishes would not be represented. Given that one of the arguments for starting the Revolutionary War was the reality of unequal representation in Parliament, this would have struck the reader as a step backwards. Furthermore, to those who had fought for the Patriot cause or had lost relatives in the War, a measure that limited their representation in government would lead to outrage. Why had they fought the War and suffered so much only to have nothing changed?

The Janissaries represented the power of the Sultan over the people. Comparing a standing army to the Janissaries implies that the author feared the creation of a standing army would negate the rights of the people. The Revolution had started with the help of militia throughout the 13 colonies, and the creation of the Continental Army would never have come to pass without their help. However, the Continental Army was only meant to be temporary, and it was disbanded once the War was over. A standing army would cost money, paid by taxes; freedom, in the form of soldiers' service, something not unlike the conscription of British soldiers; and the limitation of rights due to fear and oppression.

The cadies of the Ottomans were symbolic of the lack of the Sultan's power over those who worked in his government. The cadies were the minor judges of the Ottoman Empire,

usually only having jurisdiction over a small number of people.[46] They worked for their own benefit, and their sentences were harsh and quick. Their rulings are suggested to be unfair and unequal, unchecked by a jury of peers. Given the long history of this right in English Common Law, a precedent going back even before the settling of the colonies, the author is suggesting that the citizens of the United States would be regressing to a point where they had less freedom than they had 200 years before. While the cadies nominally worked to uphold the laws of the Empire and it is suggested that they followed the wishes of the Sultan, their real allegiances were seen to be more swayed by their personal ambitions and greed.

As if anyone doubted the satirical and harsh nature of their critique, the author ends his article asking what the printer thought of the federal Constitution, calling him a "*Christian* dog [sic]." By the addition of this phrase, the author attacked the printer. To be Christian was not merely to adhere to the Christian faith, but it also meant that the person had and desired freedom. A Muslim or "Turk" as the writer calls himself, is one who willingly subjects themselves to a perpetual tyranny, much like the article we saw earlier. As such, they equate someone who accepts the new Constitution to be like a Turk; someone who is willing to live under the tyranny of a strong government.

While the reactions of Western powers towards the Ottoman Empire changed after their defeat at the hands of Russia in the 1770s, it was during the 1790s that newspaper journalists began to see the Turks as truly inferior. Writers submitted many more articles to newspapers portraying the Ottomans not only as weak, but as a political entity that had failed in its own right, needing the help of other Western courts. Big players on the developing European stage such as

[46] "Cadi, n." OED Online. Oxford University Press, December 2015. Web. 21 January 2016.

England and Prussia pushed for the sovereignty of the Turks, vehemently opposing the idea that they should be completely expelled from the Continent.

"This power [the Ottomans]…must not be allowed to be crushed," one journalist would write, "and Prussia, Holland, and England must inevitably and suddenly interfere."[47] Not only was this remark striking for its expression of sentiments that an alliance between the Turks and the other Western States, but that it also is concerned that without their help, the Ottomans would be crushed. The Christian nations would have to "inevitably and suddenly interfere" to save the Muslim power from destruction at the hands of Russia and Austria. While the alliance between Russia and Austria would be powerful, especially in light of the fact that the Ottomans had been beaten not long before, the author expresses a great urgency, as if destruction would come tomorrow.

"The Turk, if still unfortunate, must do as many other powers have done before him—must knuckle under, and make the best terms he can." The Ottomans were being portrayed as a people who are constantly being pushed backwards towards a great defeat; a weakness from which they would never recover just like many other large states that had come before them. The image of the barbarous and ferocious Turk was replaced by the sad, unfortunate Turk. If there was ever a time when a change in language had shifted so drastically in the discussion of the so-called "Eastern Question," it was in the transition from the 1780s to the 1790s, provoked by the war with the Russians and Austrians.

The view that the Turks were a haughty and prideful people continued to be propagated in articles surrounding the conflict. In discussing the possibility of conducting peace between the belligerent powers, one article showed a belief that if the Russians and Austrians were governed

[47] *New-York Daily Gazette* (New York, NY): January 2, 1790.

"by the views of sound political wisdom, they would seize the favourable opportunity…of making a peace honourable to themselves, but not too humiliating and mortifying to the pride of the Ottoman Court."[48] Portrayed as a group with no chance of actually winning their war, the author says that it is the duty of the European courts to consider a peace that may be less than they hoped for to save the pride of their enemies.[49]

Western readers saw this as a perpetuation of their own greatness, a projection of the might Europe had in contrast to the failing state of the Ottoman East. Their status became seen as one which was capable of not merely standing on par with the Turks, but to far excel them, gaining the privilege of utterly controlling the outcome of the negotiations. The author makes the reader pity the Ottomans, as if they are misguided children whose pride needs to be checked, but not destroyed, for fear of complete chaos.

The belligerent European powers are put on the moral high ground. The author entreaties them to listen to their "sound political wisdom," and come to a reasonable solution to the war. The author also denies the Ottomans any agency. The outcomes of peace shall be settled by European hands alone and the monarchs must simply make a peace "honourable to themselves." Russia and Austria are allowed to negotiate with honor, while the Ottomans are forced to accept the treaty with only a feign sense of dignity that the author suggests does not exist but by the grace of the Christian courts.

The 1790s were years of reinvention for Americans. After the strife of the Revolutionary War and the solidification of the federal government by the drafting and signing of the

[48] *Pennsylvania Packet* (Philadelphia, PA): January 5, 1790.
[49] Another possible motive for holding back on peace demands could be maintaining a balance between European powers, as well as keeping the Middle East stable enough to conduct lucrative trade. It was better to have distant territories controlled by a puppet empire than to spend excess resources on maintaining control over regions with vastly different cultures and religions.

Constitution, the citizens of the United States faced a different challenge: the consolidation of their culture and morals. As newspapers were the most easily accessible media for the majority of people, it is no surprise that it was the primary medium used in the formation of a truly American set of ideals. During the last decade of the 18th century, many articles began appearing in newspapers with moral lessons for the populace, often signed under pen names to preserve the anonymity of the author. Many more articles appeared concerning foreign affairs which were written with American commentaries, rather than by foreign European printers, giving us a good sense of what Americans themselves thought of their position in the world.

Late 18th century American moralism had a series of very important topics that were covered; however, no academic work concerning identity and power relations would be complete without the inclusion of gender relations. Likewise, an American moralist of the period would be remiss if they did not give their take on such matters. History was and remains a subject that proposes ways in which to view the world. In an article from 1790, an author relays what they call "A concise History of the Algerines."[50] The article is indeed concise, as there is only one period that it covers, and within that period it focuses on one account.

The article begins with the wars between the Spanish and the Algerines in the early 1500s. The Reconquista had ousted the Muslim Moors at Granada, the last Islamic enclave in the Iberian Peninsula, in 1492; however, the Spanish armies had not stopped, setting their ambitions on Northern Africa. After gaining a foothold in 1505, the Spanish kept the city of Algiers as a tributary until the death of Ferdinand V of Aragón in 1516. Having already asked an acclaimed and militarily skilled Arabian Prince, Selim Eutemi, to lead Algiers after their defeat in 1505,

[50] *Spooner's Vermont Journal* (Windsor, VT): March 10, 1790.

they then petitioned the infamous Arach Barbarossa for help. Arach is described as being "a Mohametan Corsair, famous for his bravery and successes," as well as being a Turk.

The assistance of Barbarossa freed the city from the Spaniards, but tragedy ensued as he killed the King, "and at once displayed before the people of Algiers his power and magnificence, his pride, ferocity, and his determination to oppress all who resisted his will." In this way, he followed the typical qualities associated with the Turkish man, enhanced by his being a corsair. He would soon come to acquire a reputation for lust, another common trait associated with the image of the Turk. His passions would be enflamed by the wife of the King he had killed, named Zaphira, "a most accomplished princess."

Zaphira would become the foil of Barbarossa; a model of feminine virtue. After hearing of Barbarossa's intentions, Zaphira sent him a letter, which the author considers

> *a fine exhibition of the temper of the woman – of female delicacy, address and firmness – such as should excite a respect for the fair sex in all who make any observations upon human characters.*

In the letter, the "virtuous" Zaphira tells Barbarossa that she will not concede to him, and accuses him of killing her husband. Her verbal attack on Barbarossa's actions reflects the ideal of the upstanding woman who remains dedicated to her husband. Women in the New Republic were the symbols of the country's moral future; the educators of the new generation which would be composed of men and women who had been born in an independent America. Fighting against the wishes of the corrupt Muslim Barbarossa, Zaphira becomes a metaphor for the American woman's aversion to the moral evils of the world.

Barbarossa sets out to cover up his involvement in the murder by sending off his confidant, a man named Ramadan, to find men to take the blame. After having falsely promised

the men he had chosen that they would be unharmed, they are strangled, but not before they shout out that Ramadan had been involved in the murder. Determined not to fail in his deception, Barbarossa then kills Ramadan to secure Zaphira's trust, proving that he is the opposite of a virtuous man, willing to sacrifice his morals to satisfy his lust. If Zaphira's actions represent what an American woman should do, Barbarossa's reflect what a proper American man should not. Giving into lust, turning his back on moral rectitude, betraying the trust of his confidantes; his actions and motivations are in line with what the public would connect to the deceitful, weak, sinful, lustful Turk which had been solidified in the public imagination.

After the executions, Barbarossa petitions Zaphira to change her mind, as the "true" murderers had been found and executed. Despite his assurances, she is still convinced that Barbarossa was the man to blame for her husband Selim's death, claiming that her "[his] ghost is ever in [her] sight…ordered by the prophet [sic]" to come and notify her of Barbarossa's guilt.[51] Zaphira's actions are made symbolic of Divine virtue. Despite the fact that it is the Prophet Mohammed who comes to warn her, it would have been more important to the reader that her actions were so righteous that she received a message from Allah. She then explains to Barbarossa that she would prefer death over submission to him, but he gives her 24 hours to reconsider his offer. Zaphira remains steadfast to her intentions, and when Barbarossa comes to her hoping to gain her love, she instead comes at him with a dagger. Having missed her mark, she takes poison to avoid submitting to him. To the readers, the martyr's death is the assurance of freedom. In her last moments, Zaphira chooses to be virtuous by freeing herself from Barbarossa's grasp forever.

[51] "Prophet" is not capitalized in this article; showing its obvious Christian authorship, as it is usually capitalized to show respect towards Mohammed.

This "history," however, contained very little truth. Though the sultan of Algiers had been killed by one of Barbarossa's brothers, his ascension to the throne was sanctioned by the reigning Sultan, Selim I, in Constantinople; this is likely the origin of the Selim in the anecdote.[52] Moreover, by most accounts, Barbarossa was a very diplomatic and capable ruler, speaking many languages and maintaining loyalty to the Ottomans his entire life. The focus of the article was not on the truthfulness of the account, but the moral teachings it conveyed. This makes the acts of Zaphira all the more important.

As popular and capable a ruler as he was, Americans had reason to impose on Barbarossa the mantle of a villain, or at least an enemy. In the early 1500s, North Africa (also called the Maghreb, or Maghreb Africa) was threatened by the invasions of the newly invigorated states; Spain in particular. The Spanish had defeated the last Muslim stronghold in Hispania, Granada, in 1492 and had expulsed the Moors from the Iberian Peninsula. The states that would become known as the Barbary Powers (Algiers, Tunisia, Tripoli and Morocco) reacted to the possible incursion of the Christians by supporting privateers. Privateers improved their defenses, limited the amount of funds needed for a navy, and even provided an extra source of income from prizes. These "Turkish pirates" as they were sometimes called, roamed the Mediterranean and Eastern Atlantic, disrupting European trade and breaking up naval forces.[53]

A further consequence of the increased focus on privateering was the growth of the slave trade in North Africa. The history of slavery is one that goes back to the beginning of recorded history, but slavery had different meanings in each era and region. Slavery in Ancient Greece was very different from Roman slavery, and vastly different than the chattel slavery which rose

[52] Chidsey, Donald B. *The Wars in Barbary: Arab Piracy and the Birth of the United States Navy*. New York, NY: Crown Publishers, Inc. 1971. Pages 15-17. Print.
[53] Colley, Linda. *Captives*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books. 2002. Pages 44-46. Print.

in the Americas. North African slavery in the early modern era consisted of the sale of a slave to an owner who would then either use them as a domestic servant or as a laborer on state projects. A slave in North Africa was a slave for life, as manumission was infrequent and looked down upon. However, when American ships were captured by Barbary corsairs in the late 1700s, they were called slaves, but were treated more like political prisoners.[54]

Because of the type of slavery prevalent in the United States, the issue of American captives in Algiers was one which caused anxiety and awe in the American public at large. In 1784, a brig named the *Betsey* was boarded by pirates and its crew detained and held by the Dey of Algiers. American diplomats were in a frenzied state after receiving the intelligence of their imprisonment. With the looming threats of the Barbary States to American trade and the issue of Morocco's insistence on diplomatic negotiations, many feared war, or at least a massive sum in tribute. Spain had paved the way for mediation, having its own interests both in American trade and Moroccan relations. The treaty with Morocco would eventually be signed with better terms than anyone had expected. Morocco and Portugal would keep the Atlantic trade free from pirates and there would soon be a multinational alliance against Algiers.[55]

While alliances were being forged, the prisoners remained in captivity. A letter from one of the men, a Sea Captain, arrived in February 1787 and was printed in several American newspapers throughout that year.[56] The letter contained valuable information about the nature of the Algerian maritime forces, which the captain says can be easily overcome. It also explains that the Algerians are well aware of the separation of the United States from Great Britain, and hints

[54] Chidsey, Donald B. *The Wars in Barbary: Arab Piracy and the Birth of the United States Navy*. New York, NY: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1971. Pages 7-9. Print.
[55] Allison, Robert J. *The Crescent Obscured: The United States and the Muslim World 1776-1815*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1995. Pages xiii-185. Print.
[56] *Pennsylvania Packet* (Philadelphia, PA): February 3, 1787.

on their being the source of the Algerian tenacity in their capture. In fact, the captain mentions the ill disposition of British envoys towards them, while simultaneously bestowing a positive image to the French people they encounter there.

The prisoner gives a summary of the meeting between the American ambassador and the Dey, saying that the ambassador was ignorant in the ways of the Algerians, especially in terms of the haggling system of transaction. The ambassador immediately requests the release of the American prisoners with the full sum he was allotted, to which the Dey replied that he would only accept a much larger sum. Later in the article, the captain explains that the Turks are a very greedy people:

> *Any nation that has people to redeem, peace to make, or indeed if they have any thing [sic] else to do with the people, they must have money! Money is their god, and Mahomet is their prophet. If you give a Turk money with the one hand, you may take out his eyes with the other.*

The writer made a strong accusation against the Turks and even insulted them by saying that they follow their avaricious thoughts as much as they would their religion. Given that the captives are Christian, they no doubt attach their own religious views and morals to their judgments. The image of slave traders that would trade anything for profit and a people following a false god of gold would no doubt have come to the minds of the Americans, as connections to stories from the Bible. Also, their language regarding their imprisoned state is important. They see themselves as "people to redeem" through negotiation and not slaves that needed to be freed. In effect, this distances themselves from the fact that the United States also practiced slavery, an important, unspoken mission of most of their contemporary printers.

The fact that they are "people" and not property or merchandise further demonstrates the point that their situation is different than that of slaves; their position as slaves was temporary,

something that could be changed through negotiation. The captain does mention that there are "4000 [C]hristian slaves of all nations in Christendom" within the city, but even this suggests a differentiation from the slaves on plantations in the American South. Their status as "Christian slaves" and not merely slaves suggests that they should be seen more as martyrs, enduring something unnatural. It is also unclear if there are other non-Christian slaves within the city, a situation which seems highly unlikely, and further demonstrates that such slaves are less important.

The image of the Turk was not entirely negative. The letter closes with the captain's assurance that the Turks are "a very religious, and by no means such a wicked set of men as they have been generally held up to be." This is in stark contrast to the Moors, which the captain says are an untrustworthy and "dastardly people." This is interesting because not only has the captain made a differentiation between Turks and another ethnicity, but he has also given a first-hand account explaining that the Turks themselves are not as evil as they are made out to be. By establishing the difference between Turks and Moors, the captain challenges the notion that all Muslims are Turks. Not only this, but he establishes a hierarchy of races, much like that of the United States. The Turks are the suzerain overlords of the Algerians, and the Moors are the untrustworthy men incapable of even soldiering the regency's army. The power relations between Black and White inhabitants in the United States are very similar to the dichotomy of the Turks and Moors in Algiers; perhaps owing to the Anatolian origins of the Turks in contrast to the African origins of the Moors.

This letter is also important because it is a first-hand account. The image of the Turks was defined by European articles, allegories, anecdotes and stereotypes, but now there is a more direct connection between Americans and the Turks. While he still rants about their greed, he is

willing to accept that the general view of the Turks is not completely accurate, a statement bolder than it might seem at first glance today. This could have been an attempt to cope with the fact that they were captured and held in African cells.

Algiers wasn't the only Barbary power the Americans would have to reckon with. In 1793, Jefferson was ready to start diplomacy with Morocco and prepare for war with the Barbary Powers, but fate would prove that a difficult task. His first two choices for a Moroccan ambassador, John Paul Jones and Thomas Barclay, had both recently died closely in tandem. Additionally, Britain had started paying Native Americans to attack American settlers in the Ohio territory, Spain began to feel threatened at the notion of American encroachment in Florida and started stirring up trouble in the Louisiana and Ohio territories. Finally, France had abolished its monarchy, an act which Jefferson lauded as a herald of freedom.

Other Americans didn't prove as eager to share Jefferson's optimism. Some Americans in the 1790s worried that the atheistic ideals of the French Revolution, if they had been brought to the United States would have led to anarchy. To these conservatives, the French would no longer be the gracious defenders of American Independence, but the synonym for mob rule. As in the debates over the Constitution, the power relations between citizen and government were questioned. Newspapers reflected this fear in articles bombarding their readers with opinions on the inseparable bond between religion and good governance as a backlash against the perceived leniency of Enlightenment ideals. While Christian moralism was the genesis of their debates over good governance, it would not be the only doctrine mentioned. Many articles made their disgust of atheism extremely evident.[57]

[57] *Federal Intelligencer* (Baltimore, MD): August 3, 1795.

One writer felt that recent news from France had been dismal, showing very rapid changes in their forms of government which did not constitute a proper democracy. Absolute monarchy had transformed into an absolute anarchy, and even after some semblance of control had been established, only a form of limited anarchy prevailed. The conservative thinker found this mortifying and saw these events as reason to look back towards the roots of effective governance. The author made his points by citing historical references, going all the way back to the times of the Gauls, the ancient predecessors of the French. In his list of "wise legislators," he included the Greeks, Romans, Moses, and Mohammed.

Jews and Muslims were both considered inferior to Christians, while the Greeks and Romans were pagans; however they all shared the same idea of states guided by religious mores.[58] Greece and Rome were considered to be the civilizations most important for the rise of the West, but the other two references seem contradictory to the established views concerning non-Christian peoples. Other newspapers from the same year representing different parties all present Mohammed as a man to be held in contempt for creating a false religion.

One article from an antifederalist paper would compare Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason* to the "betrayal" of Christian Scripture in the Koran.[59] In this passage, both Paine and Mohammed are considered to be imposters. An article from a federalist newspaper agreed, calling Paine an "imposter; more pernicious than Mahomet."[60] Both use Mohammed as a way to describe what can go wrong with a government by following the teachings of a false prophet; in this case

[58] An article published in the *Columbian Centinel* (Boston, MA): July 11, 1792, which was a printed translation of a speech made to the French National Club in Bordeaux by a "Citizen Godineau," put Mahomet and Moses into the same category of legislators that used false religion to rule their people.
[59] *City Gazette and Daily Advertiser* (Charleston, SC): July 24, 1795.
[60] *American Mercury* (Hartford, CT): November 23, 1795.

Thomas Paine. This is not extremely surprising as Paine was an ardent supporter of the French Revolution and was therefore ostracized from society due to his pro-Revolutionary writings.

What can then be made of the article which gives Mohammed the standing of a "wise legislator?" An analysis of the words surrounding the phrase and the article as a whole do not connote a sense of sarcasm, and the author is not making a jest. The key would have to be in the meaning of "legislator." This limits the contributions of Mohammed to the aspect of governance, leaving aside his claims to religion. This hypothesis can be rooted in other examples around the period which do not deny the rise of great "Mahometan" empires in the past, but that the religion itself had made people lazy, militant and reckless, unable to keep their governments intact.

The sentence must be put into the greater context of the article, as well. The key topic is the anarchy and quick succession of various forms of government in the French Revolution. The author is stating that such instability is due to the atheistic nature of the France. A good government, per the author, is one that is rooted in religion; so while the states founded by the Greeks, Romans, Moses, and Mohammed were inferior to the current government, they were at least able to maintain stability longer than the French.

The articles regarding Thomas Paine prove that it is not so much Mohammed that is being idolized, but religion.[61] Some Americans, John Adams included, were concerned that the secular ideals of the Enlightenment had made the population into deists, or possibly even atheists, not only in France, but in America as well.[62] While the articles reflect this fear of secularism on both sides, examples such as Thomas Jefferson and Thomas Paine show that there were dissidents.

[61] *City Gazette and Daily Advertiser*: July 24, 1795; *American Mercury*: November 23, 1795
[62] Allison, Robert J. *The Crescent Obscured: The United States and the Muslim World 1776-1815*. New York, New York, USA: Oxford University Press, 1995. Pages xiii-185. Print. Pg. 40.

With such clamor over the concept of proper limitations over liberty, there was another American institution spelling trouble on the horizon. Slavery was a not a state by state concern, but one of national and even international proportions. The power struggles between the abolitionists and slaves and their owners were in constant discussion in the newly formed United States. Citizenship was denied to slaves and black freedmen, as can be clearly seen by the Three-Fifths Compromise which preceded the signing of the Constitution. This compromise allowed slave states the ability to count their slaves as population, but stopped just before giving them citizenship by denigrating them to three-fifths of a person. Writing this into the Constitution was required in order to receive the votes of the slave states and was proof of their power in directing national affairs.

While the members of the Constitutional Convention had accepted slavery at its worst a necessary evil, abolitionists were not without their own backing from powerful voices. Those who experienced or had heard about white slavery in Africa sometimes wrote pieces against American slavery, connecting the two as a single evil.[63] Some listened, but many refused to accept that American slavery was the same as African enslavement of White Europeans. Among those joining the anti-slavery rhetoric was Benjamin Franklin, who remained an outspoken opponent of slavery and who, until his death on April 14th, 1790, wrote many pieces to influence others to dismantle American Slavery. Just months before, Dr. Franklin attended the meeting of the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia, which met and discussed, in large part, the institution of slavery and its abolition.[64] Franklin did not stop there, as would be shown by

[63] *The Selling of Joseph*, published in 1700 by Samuel Sewall, was the first American work composed to combat slavery. See *White Slaves, African Masters: An Anthology of American Barbary Captivity Narratives*. Ed. Paul Baepler. Chicago, Illinois USA: University of Chicago Press, 1995. Pages xi-51. Print.
[64] As shown in letters to the editors of…*The Federal Gazette and Philadelphia Evening Post* (Philadelphia, PA): February 17th, 1790 (Federalist). *The Freeman's Journal; or, The North-American Intelligencer* (Philadelphia, PA): February 24th, 1790 (Antifederalist).

another article written to the editor of the *Federal Gazette* published in the form typical to moralist apologies, and under the pseudonym of "Historicus."[65]

In this letter, Franklin parodies a speech by a congressman, Mr. Jackson, and his pro-slavery rhetoric, invoking a fictionalized history regarding a similar speech he says was given by a member of the Divan (royal court) of Algiers. Franklin starts his statement by including the Islamic phrase "Allah Bismillah, &c. God is great, and Mahomet is his Prophet." The following text is not hard to consider an incredibly witty and intelligent reply, as each of the references to Islam, Muslims and Algerians could be interchanged with Christianity, Christians and Americans. There are references to common pro-slavery arguments such as the problematic nature of reimbursement of the slave owners' "property" (the slaves themselves) and the question of where they would go if they were manumitted.

One of the comparisons Franklin makes throughout the text is by the use of religious doctrine. He mentions how the Algerian proponents of slavery use verses of the "Alcoran" (Koran) to justify their actions; a comparison that must have angered those American slave owners who used Bible verses to do the same. Another argument states how beneficial it is for the Christian slaves to remain under Muslim rule than to submit to the "despotic" Christian powers of Europe, who are constantly bickering; mimicking the argument that the "uncivilized" tribes in Africa were constantly at war. Algiers, so the article says, is much safer for them than the countries from which they came as it remains under the "Sun of Islamism."

He goes on to add more common pro-slavery arguments. The Algerian states that slaves are given ample food and shelter, which they would not have gotten in their home countries, due to their backwardness and oppression. They were taught the "true Doctrine" of Islam, as

[65] *The Federal Gazette and Philadelphia Evening Post* (Philadelphia, PA): March 23, 1790.

compared to the inferior and incorrect Christian doctrines, and they were saved from the various vicious wars in their own countries. Furthermore, he mocks the pro-slavery argument that Black slaves could not subsist on their own and were incapable of creating their own government and communities in the wilderness. The article states that they would be constantly assailed and harassed by "Arabs," (perhaps Native Americans or other European settlers) who might even enslave them again. Given the deep convictions that many Americans and Europeans had of the despotic and tyrannical Muslim, this commentary would have come as quite a shock.

The slave owners would have no doubt expressed anger at the entire article. How could they be disgraced so far as to being like the tyrannical Muslims? The article pushed on the American mind not only for its comparisons to American slavery, but also the anxieties of enslaved white Christians. The capture of Christians by Algerian pirates was a reality that many were aware of due to the crises faced in the 1780s and Benjamin Franklin's genius pulls on these fears to give people a moral exposition of the slavery in which they were complicit.

The slavery Benjamin Franklin called to memory in his admonition was transformed and romanticized in the "captive narrative," a common form of popular literature. The stories of White Christian captives in the North African slave trade were the most captivating, as they were seen as the most opposite to the social hierarchy present in America. The Ottoman Empire had long since had a slave trade consisting of Christians from Circassia (in the Caucasus region) as well as any they had caught in wars or rebellions, but none of these compared to the stories of White Western European and American slaves. The most common example of popular "captive

narrative" literature in the period is Susanna Haswell Rowson's play *Slaves in Algiers*, performed in 1794.[66]

The play not only served as a story of intrigue as a captive narrative, but also tackled the identity of American women. Denied the vote, women of Rowson's time were above slaves in rank and society, but still considered less than citizens. Compared to the earlier libertine identity of the French Madame du Frenoy, their realm was now limited to the home, and their duty to the United States was to raise proper men to honor its values; retroactively termed "Republican Motherhood." American women were not able to impact important political decisions except through their sons and husbands.

Rowson's play tells the story of an American woman, her son and her long-lost husband as they are all held captive in Algiers. Their owner is an Algerian Jew named Ben Hassan, who has accepted the ways of the Turks, adopting their clothing and customs in order to get better business deals and higher social standing. A plot ensues, led by two groups of slaves in an insurrection. The American women, Rebecca and Olivia make constant remarks about liberty and freedom. These terms are not merely the freedom and liberty from servitude and slavery, but a mark of higher moral rank and purity, much like the earlier example of the Princess Zaphira. Rebecca refuses to marry Ben Hassan and become his second wife, and Olivia promises to renounce her faith and become the wife of the Dey to save her father and suitor, but is saved at the last minute.

The plot, while basic, does tell us quite a bit about American womanhood. Rebecca and Olivia are symbols of chastity and faithfulness, yet they speak primarily of freedom and liberty.

[66]Rowson, Susanna Haswell. Margulis, Jennifer, and Karen M. Poremski, eds. *Slaves in Algiers; or A Struggle for Freedom*. 1794. Acton, MA: Copley Publishing Group, 2000. Print.

It is Rebecca's son and Olivia's lover who are leading the slave insurrection, so it is implied that they have been influenced by these women to behave in this way. Even if the women themselves are not directly responsible for the action in the play, their role as American mothers are what led to the major success in the end.

Muslims and their faith are seen as the opposite of these values. Ben Hassan had adopted the ways of the Turks after having been in England and lived in luxury, with a multitude of slaves. He keeps the money Rebecca's friends had sent in order to secure her freedom. His daughter Fetnah, who "drew [her] first breath in England," rises against him by helping initiate the plans for the insurrection. [67] She even plans to convert to Christianity and befriends Olivia, and remains steadfast even when she finds out that they both love the same man. All of this is in spite of her father, showing how his treacherous ways did not affect his daughter, as Rebecca had influenced her son, proving the weakness of parents in their culture and the strength of a woman who was born in England and longed "for liberty."

Fetnah's mother is not even mentioned in the play, and the only moment Ben Hassan refers to her is when Rebecca asks if he is already married. Hassan replies that Muslims are allowed to have more than one wife, at which point he does not mention her name. This along with the intolerable manners of the Dey show that the "Moriscan" people do not value women and restrict their freedom, unlike the Americans who give them liberty.

Additionally, it is interesting that the slaves are acquainted with the concepts of liberty and freedom. They hatch a plot to free themselves and while the plot itself was not successful, they were able to escape in the end. This is in direct contrast to the idea of the Black slaves in the

[67] Rowson, Susanna Haswell. Margulis, Jennifer, and Karen M. Poremski, eds. *Slaves in Algiers; or A Struggle for Freedom*. 1794. Acton, MA: Copley Publishing Group. 2000, p. 16. Print.

United States, who were thought to either be too ignorant to think of a way to escape, or to be too savage in their own escape attempts. The author must have been quite disturbed by the concurrent Haitian Revolution,[68] and had to find a way to explain the differences between the liberty of white American men and women in contrast to the character of Haitian liberty.

The White American and British slaves in Algiers keep their own moral rectitude because they were "born in freedom," while slaves of other races and countries are incapable of having good morals. This presents the idea that the power struggle between slaves and masters was laid on complicated moral grounds and based in racism. While black men and women may gain freedom, they would still come from a base understanding affected by slavery, and a slave mentality.

While American writers feared the ideals of the French and Haitian Revolutions, there were more substantial concerns regarding the Barbary powers. The strife caused by Barbary corsairs was ruining American shipping and mercantile ventures in the Mediterranean. While the United States had the support of Morocco and therefore had secured their trade routes in the Eastern Atlantic, the powers of Algiers, Tunis and Tripoli were still at war with the fledgling nation.[69] Negotiations were slow, due primarily to the high ransom suggested for the release of captured ships and American prisoners and the arguments over how to fund this sum.[70]

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[68] The Haitian Revolution: 1791-1804

[69] Morocco had conducted peace negotiations with the United States in 1785, and a peace treaty was signed in 1786.

[70] Arguments between the Federalists and the Antifederalists in Congress passed back and forth throughout the period. Antifederalists warned that such a sum would be too much and raise taxes far too high for citizens to be willing to pay for it. Additionally, they fought the Federalists on the suggestions of a standing national navy, believing it to be a threat to the freedom of the citizens, an overly-costly and wasteful venture, as well as counterproductive to Western Expansion, which they believed was threatened by trade with European states. A transcription of the address from the President to Congress can be seen in *Albany Chronicle* (Albany, NY): January 2, 1797; a transcription of the debates in Congress over the President's address can be seen in *Claypoole's American Daily Advertiser* (Philadelphia, PA): January 4, 1797.

An additional matter discussed was the appropriation of funds for the continuing construction of naval ships. While the idea of a national navy had been discussed earlier, even being forwarded by President Washington and his War Secretary Henry Knox, the first signs of a treaty with Algiers in 1795 meant that the construction of the main ships of the line were halted, although they were finished later once funds were reallocated.[71]

By 1797, additional treaties were coming into fruition between the United States, Tunis and Tripoli. When news had come of the impending peace, newspapers across the states shared the relief with their readers.[72] The first article bearing the good tidings of "secured peace' was printed on March 25, and imparted that "the Jack, a vessel belonging to New-York with…[sums] for complying with the treaty stipulations with [the Barbary] powers, had just left [the port of Leghorn]; and that our flag met with neither insult nor injury in the Mediterranean."[73] The United States had taken its first steps to secure trade from Barbary pirates; an important milestone in foreign affairs, which had also effectively garnered more diplomatic esteem for Americans abroad.

The most lasting importance of the Treaty of Tripoli, however, was not necessarily its guaranteeing of safety for American ships, but its reflection on the nature of American government and the American people. Article 11 of the treaty states that:

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[71] Chidsey, Donald B. *The Wars in Barbary: Arab Piracy and the Birth of the United States Navy*. New York, NY: Crown Publishers, Inc. 1971, p. 26-31. Print. Debates about the creation of a navy among Federalists and Anti-Federalists was less focused on the threat to personal freedom as much as a debate as to how the government was to acquire the funds. Jefferson himself advocated in the extreme for a navy as a way to avoid giving into the demands of the Barbary States. For information on this topic, see Lambert, Frank. *The Barbary Wars: American Independence in the Atlantic World*. New York, NY: Hill and Wang. 2005, p. 62-65. Print.

[72] One running article began in *Gazette of the United States* (Philadelphia, PA): March 25, 1797, wherein a Captain Graybell is mentioned as the one offering the information but without written matter; this article is then confirmed by another beginning in *Philadelphia Gazette* (Philadelphia, PA): March 30, 1797, when a Captain O'Brien brings the official news with documentation. This was likely the same Captain O'Brien that had been imprisoned in Algiers since 1785. The latter article was printed more often than the former.

[73] *Gazette of the United States* (Philadelphia, PA): March 25, 1797.

> *As the government of the United States of America is not in any sense founded on the Christian Religion, -as it has in itself no character of enmity against the laws, religion or tranquility of Musselmen,- and as the said States never have entered into any war or act of hostility against any Mehomitan [sic] nation, it is declared by the parties that no pretext arising from religious opinions shall ever produce an interruption of the harmony existing between the two countries.*[74]

While it can be debated that the United States was forced to sign the treaty under such terms, the fact that it was said in a public and political document set a precedent for the future relationships of religion and state. At least on paper, the new nation would be a secular entity, neither restricting nor promoting any one religion over another; the Enlightened ideal. This shift represented an important milestone in the creation of an American identity. The true citizen would believe in a government that promoted tolerance in the observance of personal religious beliefs. This meant that the United States would not be a theocracy, like the Papal States, nor a government which promoted a certain religion explicitly, such as in Spain, and yet it was not to be an atheist state, as was the feared French Revolutionary Republic.

While the Puritans nearly two centuries earlier would have considered such a notion to be blasphemous, it was more in line with the tenets of their religious ideology. A man's connection to God would be a personal matter, and not one controlled by a worldly entity. Religious freedom and tolerance had their roots in a people who tried to regulate religion themselves. We see this transition clearly in the literature that has been left to us. Through the thorough investigation of period newspapers, it is clear that, while not the only symbol used, the Christian-Muslim dichotomy proved a powerful tool, shaping the very origins of modern American society; the ways in which they thought of themselves and others, "*Both Forreign and Domestick.*"

[74] Miller, Hunter, ed. *Treaties and Other International Acts of the United States of America*. Volume 2. Documents 1-40: 1776-1818. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1931.