

The Secret History of *The Adventures of Eovaai*:
Concealing Social and Political Critiques Within an Oriental Mystique

Oriental places, objects, and stories enchanted eighteenth-century Western European audiences to the point of obsession. The allure of foreign lands and the mysticism of the unknown tantalized consumers as oriental tales and imported commodities allowed them to engage with different cultures and ideals. This paper utilizes cultural materialist theory in order to analyze Eliza Haywood's oriental tale *The Adventures of Eovaai, Princess of Ijaveo* (1736) within the context of the political and social moment the author occupies. Haywood projects Western models of political philosophies, such as John Locke's principles of government, onto an oriental landscape in the novel, exploring contemporary subjects like corruption and questions of sovereignty by appropriating oriental elements of mysticism as an avenue to explore these in an exoticized space. Haywood also examines the role of women, specifically their agency and implications of exercising that agency, in both occidental and oriental spaces. This paper seeks to further consider the marriage between the Western ideologies Haywood examines and the use of oriental mysticism, magical objects, and spaces to obscure these philosophies within a foreign imaginary.

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