

## *Colonel Jacks Americas and Spiritual Allegory*

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### **Abstract**

What seems to be interesting about Daniel Defoe's novel *Colonel Jack* (1722) is the apparent eagerness of its protagonist colonel Jack to achieve the status of a gentleman! Born as an orphan, turning later into a petty thief and somewhat a reluctant pickpocket, Jack however believes that he is destined to become a gentleman. Defoe creates in *Colonel Jack* a parallel narratives, a spiritual journey from sin to repentance and a journey to realize the dream of becoming a gentleman. Jack goes through these two parallel journeys and ultimately synthesizes an extraordinary reality: spiritual repentance leads to becoming a gentleman! The place where this remarkable transformation in the destiny of Jack happens is Virginia, both an actual physical location and a spiritual site of atonement. Ultimately, Jack realizes that his earlier dreams of becoming a gentleman were desires for spiritual and moral penitence. Defoe seemed to have intended Jacks' life of crime, repentance and eventual prosperity as a moral tale. He examines how Jack's poverty prevented him from achieving his promised gentry's status. However throughout the narrative of the life of Colonel Jack we realize that his spiritual journey toward prosperity and permanent settlement continues to be problematic in the sense that Defoe creates an erratic route toward repentance which goes through crime!

**Keywords:** allegory, gentleman, parallel, repentance, Virginia.

### **Colonel Jacks Americas and Spiritual Allegory**

What seems to be interesting about Daniel Defoe's *Colonel Jack* (1722) is the apparent eagerness of its protagonist colonel Jack to achieve the status of a gentleman! Born as an orphan, turning later into a petty thief and somewhat a reluctant pickpocket, Jack however believes that he is destined to become a gentleman. His nurse tells him through "oral Tradition" that he is the offspring "a Gentle-woman and "a Man of Quality. " He grows up bothered by the fact that he was "a Child to keep that should not be seen or heard of," however, he insists on realizing the advantages of his original state of a gentleman (Defoe, 1722, p. 2). Acquiring the status of gentility may come sometimes through ambiguous means. For example, according to Eve Tavor Bannet (2011) in her book *Transatlantic Stories and the History of Reading, 1720–1810: Migrant Fictions* colonel Jack shares one of Defoe's characters' problems: "obsessed with becoming genteel." What is problematic here according to Bannet is that achieving a higher social status in Defoes' narratives usually comes through "crime, prostitution and polygamy in order to obtain wealth and property, and to rise in the world"(p. 78). Moreover, according to *The New International Webster Comprehensive Dictionary of the English Language* (1998) a Gentleman is "a well-bred man with good manners...a man above a yeoman in social rank" (p. 527). As a case in point, John Selden (1584-1654), a seventeenth century English scholar reports in his *Table Talk* (a posthumous work written and published in 1689 by Richard Milward) how hard it is to "define" a gentleman. According to Selden whoever "is reputed to be one" in Westminster- Hall, is one!" He adds that the "Gentleman by Creation" is better than the Gentleman by blood because the later may be a "debauched man" the other "a person of worth" (p. 52).

Not knowing exactly what a "gentleman" is, Jack starts for example to associate this ambiguous term with being a good pickpocket, who does not harm his victims! A gentleman-pickpocket does not lead his victims to any great suffering; therefore, Jack shuns serious crimes and frequently feels rather sympathetic towards some of his victims. He continually reflects on the legitimacy of a gentleman stealing from other people, and always reminds himself that as a gentleman he should have a conscience and should not engage in serious crimes. His nurse insisted while raising him to remind him of his gentry's parentage. Paraphrasing his nurse's speech, Jack explains:

My Mother was a Gentle-woman, that my Father was a Man of Quality, and she (my Nurse) had a good piece of Money given her to take me off his Hands, and deliver him and my Mother from the Importunities that usually attend the Misfortune, of having a Child to keep that should not be seen or heard of." (p. 2).

After listening to his nurse's recommendation, Jack is convinced that he is a gentleman because according to the nurse, his father "gave [her] something more than was agreed for at my Mother's request, upon her solemn Promise that she would use me well, and let me be put to School, and charg'd her that if I liv'd to come to any bigness, capable to understand the meaning of it, she should always take care to bid me *remember, that I was a Gentleman.* (p. 2).

According to Jack, this "was all the Education he [his father] would desire of her for me, for he did not doubt, he said, but that sometime or other the very hint would inspire me with Thoughts suitable to my Birth, and that I would certainly act like a Gentleman, if I believed myself to be so. "(p. 4). This feeling of ingrained sense of privilege, even though not supported

with evidence in real life, seems to inspire Jack toward creating his own imagined sense of the appropriate behavior of a would-be gentleman. Throughout his life journey from childhood, adolescence to maturity, Jack attempts to find an appropriate *allegory* which best represents the fulfilment of his desires to become a real gentleman.

What seems to dominate Defoe's narrative in *Colonel Jack* is the representation of the Americas as a spiritual allegory. The English colony of Virginia in particular comes to embody toward the second half of the novel a physical terrain where Jack seems to find what has preoccupied his mind since childhood: to be a gentleman and realize whatever advantage thereof.

I argue in this article that Daniel Defoe in his novel *Colonel Jack* (1722) creates parallel narratives, a spiritual journey from sin to repentance and a journey to realize the dream of becoming a gentleman. Jack goes through these two parallel journeys and ultimately synthesizes an extraordinary reality: spiritual repentance leads to becoming a gentleman! The place where this remarkable transformation in the destiny of Jack happens is Virginia, both an actual physical location and a spiritual site of atonement. Jack realizes that his earlier dreams of becoming a gentleman were desires for spiritual and moral atonement.

Kirstin Olsen for example in her book *Daily Life in 18 th Century England* (1999) explains that during the eighteenth century it "was becoming increasingly important to seem *genteel* [emphasis added]" She explains further: "people studied books and the behavior of others to learn to be ladies and gentlemen." A "polite person" according to Olsen "was supposed to be sensitive to the plight of the unfortunate, a good conversationalist, susceptible to strong feelings, inoffensive, discrete, courteous, frugal, religious, apolitical, calm, modest, interesting, and above all *natural* [emphasis added]." (p. 256). Defoe seemed to have been fascinated with the status of a gentleman in many of his novels. In addition to *Colonel Jack*, he also discusses gentlemanly behavior in *Captain Singleton* (1720), *Robinson Crusoe* (1719). However, Defoe's conception of a gentleman does not necessarily relates to being a political, courteous, or natural, to quote Olsen, but he relates this status to financial security.

One of the problematic aspects of Jack's desire to fulfill his destiny of becoming a gentleman is his apparent lack of accurate understanding of the "typical" character of the gentleman. Jack bases most of his impressions about a gentleman on what others have told him. Jack follows mistakenly certain behaviors he assumes a gentleman does! His lack of accurate information about any typical gentleman's behavior motivates him to come up with his own imagined genteel tendencies. For example, while still a child, he was always reluctant to hurt his pick pocketing victims, something he argues a gentleman would not do. Later, he goes the extra mile to rectify his past mistakes; for instance, returning the money he stole from an old poor woman. George Starr argues that the narrative in *Colonel Jack* "has become paramount, and largely eludes thematic control," because Jack's story "preserve distinct vestiges of the spiritual autobiography, but virtually abandons both its characteristic spirit and shape" (p. 183).

Jack begins *The History and Remarkable Life Of the truly Honorable Col. Jacque, commonly call'd Col. Jack* [sic] by first revealing one of his childish desires of salvation. After seeing his "Life has been such a Checquer Work of Nature," Jack realizes that his fate is better than other transported convicts, and wishes that his personal history is "diverting, or instructing" (p. 2) "What is interesting in Jack's autobiography is that since childhood he wishes to achieve

financial security, which he accomplishes later by owning two Virginian plantations. What seems to have been one driving force behind his achievements is Jack's constant and conscious desire to be good, as a gentleman would. Jack looked at pick pocketing "as a kind of Trade, that [he was] to be bred up to, and so [he] enter'd upon it, till [he] became harden'd in it beyond the Power of retreating." Yet he realizes earlier in his career as a thief that he "was made a Thief involuntarily, and went on a Length that few Boys do, without coming to the common Period of that kind of Life, I mean to the Transport Ship, or the Gallows"(p. 10). What seems to drive the young Jack toward pick pocketing is his paradoxical belief that he might finally achieve a gentleman status! As a child-pickpocket, he abstained from committing violence against his victims due to that nagging feeling that a gentleman does not do such things!

Jack's personal narrative of transformation starts to take its parallel routes in adulthood, combining both social and spiritual ascending as soon as he arrives in Virginia. This American colony represents for Jack a melting pot of his previous 'chequered' personal experiences. Virginia becomes a spiritual allegory, a journey from sin to repentance, from unstable living to personal and financial security. Jack's transformation into a repentant former pickpocket takes place while he watches his "Master," a plantation owner, where Jack is transported into as an indentured servant; dictates the new life to a group of newly arrived indentured servants. Listening to the Master addressing his newly arrived servants, Jack informs us that he tells them "they ought to look upon the Life they were just a going to enter upon, as just beginning the World again. If they "thought fit to be diligent, and sober, they would after the time they were order'd to Serve was expir'd, be encourag'd by the Constitution of the Country, to Settle and Plant for themselves." The plantation's owner informs the new servants that even he himself would be so kind to them, that if he liv'd to see any of them serve their Time faithfully out, it was his custom to assist his Servants, in order to their Settling in that Country, according as their Behaviour might Merit from him [sic]"(p. 62). His Master impresses Jack that he would not quit his Service for the best Plantation in Maryland. He "had been so good to me, and I believ'd I was so useful to him, that I cou'd not think of it; and at last, I added, I hop'd he cou'd not believe but I had as much Gratitude as a *Negro* [sic]"(p. 77). Jack admires how his master manages his plantation: "the Plantations in *Maryland* were the better for this Undertaking, and they are to this Day less Cruel and Barbarous to their *Negroes*, than they are in *Barbados*, and *Jamaica*." However, he qualifies his previous statement by explaining that slaves in Virginia are not "so desperate, neither do they so often run away, or so often Plot mischief against their Master, as they do in those"(p. 78). What seems to develop here is a favorable association between the plantations in Virginia and the new opportunities it provide. After he was released from his indentured contract, Jack acknowledges "I was Set up in the World." He was "removed by the degrees that you have heard from a Pick-pocket, to a Kidnapp'd miserable Slave in *Virginia*; (for *Maryland*, is *Virginia*, speaking of them at a distance,) than from a Slave to a Head Officer, and Overseer of Slaves, and from thence to a Master Planter"(p. 79).

Jack's spiritual journey from sin and guilt to repentance and forgiveness takes place in Virginia. Virginia becomes in Jack's mind, the land of unlimited opportunities. However, Virginia does not offer a free ride to repentance! For instance, Jack identifies certain requirements for spiritual ascending in Virginia. One of the requirements for an indentured servant to become a planter is repent first from his former sins. Next, a transported criminal

needs to become "a diligent Servant." Jack explains for example that hard work would ultimately win a transported individual a good character (p. 79).

Achieving a good character in Virginia, according to Jack, might represent a new beginning for the "most despicable Felon that ever went over [sic]." According to Jack, if an individual proves himself with hard work and commitment even if he is the "poorest," he shall find financial and spiritual salvation in the Americas (p. 79). Virginia seems to provide a new opportunity for Jack's salvation, or for that matter "every *Newgate* Wretch, every Desperate forlorn Creature; the most Despicable ruin'd Man in the World, has here a fair Opportunity put into his Hands to begin the World again." According to Jack a desperate individual can "find himself "upon a Foot of certain Gain," raised from the "Condemn'd Hole in Newgate"(p. 80).

### Spiritual Allegory:

An allegory according to the OED refers to A story, poem, or picture which can be interpreted to reveal a hidden meaning, typically a political one. Defoe seemed to have been very interested in moral allegories throughout his career. He seems to develop his allegories, usually, on foreign lands, Crusoe as a case in point. However, in Jack's autobiography, we witness a new kind of spiritual allegory. In *Robinson Crusoe*, the protagonist's daily experiences take the form of series of practical challenges. His agonizing journey to survive on the Island carries Crusoe on a spiritual journey where he discovers God's providence, chastising himself along the way about his former sinfulness and disobedience to his parents. Instead of becoming a representative of all humanity, as happens in a typical spiritual allegory, Crusoe seems to go through a very personalized spiritual awakening. Likewise, Jack does not see himself as a sinning Adam banished from paradise, but as a reluctant repentant, who sometimes forgets his repentance for the sake of commercial and financial gains!

One of the indications that Virginia represents for Jack a physical, and a spiritual haven, is Jack's excitement about it. He informs us that he "can give no Description of; it was an inexpressible Joy to [him,] that [he] was now like to be, not only a Man, but an Honest Man; and it yielded [him] a greater Pleasure, that [he] was Ransom'd from being a Vagabond, a Thief, and a Criminal, as [he] had been from a Child." Jack is enthusiastic about Virginia because he "was deliver'd from Slavery, and the wretched State of a *Virginia* Sold Servant." This new opportunity to begin a new life makes Jack almost elated to the extent that he "had Notion enough in [his] Mind, of the Hardships of the Servant, or Slave, because [he] had felt it, and Work'd thro' it.' Moreover, his improved condition in Virginia reminds him of "a State of Labour and Servitude, Hardship and Suffering." Jack thinks of "Reflections upon Hell, and the Damn'd Spirits; it struck me with Horror, it was Odious and Frightful to look back on, and it gave me a kind of a Fit, a Convulsion or nervous Disorder, that was very uneasy to me [sic]" (p. 81). Yet, he does not inform us about the crimes he committed earlier which seem to cause him so much agony. When he was a pickpocket, Jack did not murder any of his victims. In fact, he was a reluctant petty thief, more eager to compensate for his crimes by helping his former victims. However, Jack seems to find it appropriate to exaggerate his spiritual and mental agony by associating his physical handicap as an indentured servant with slavery. He creates in his mind a would-be spiritual journey of sin, repentance and salvation. Nevertheless, Jack does not acknowledge, for example, the need for blacks to acquire any spiritual tranquility or freedom. As usual, Defoe



deals with blacks as subhuman and it is only whites who can absolve their sins if they mend their ways.

### **White Slavery in Virginia:**

After adopting/adapting to the life of a *slave* in Virginia, Jack describes the life of a slave in Virginia as "to be prefer'd to that of the most prosperous Thief in the World." He argues that a slave in Virginia, even though while living "miserable, but honest; suffer wrong, but do no wrong; [his] Body is punish'd, but [his] Conscience is not loaded." (p. 84). What is ironic here in Jack's moral and spiritual reflections about slavery in the American colony is that it seem to emphasize the life of a white indentured servant, not black slaves. Defoe seems oblivious here of the fact that Virginia turns out to be, in Jack's narrative, a white-only- spiritual allegory! Black slaves in Jack's narrative do not share with him his spiritual ascending. They cannot look at Virginia as a place where they can achieve spiritual redemption, and seem only to deserve correction and physical punishment if they transgress. When we consider the fact that all white indentured servants are actually criminals and convicts, yet they seem to Jack to deserve another chance to rectify their ways. Jack does not acknowledge black slavery as a moral sin, and he only describes himself as a slave within the framework of white slavery.

### **Black Slaves in Virginia: Lack of Spiritual Redemption**

George Boulukos (2008) argues in his book *The Grateful Slave: The Emergence of Race in Eighteenth-Century British and American Culture* that Jack, as soon as he was appointed as an overseer "sets about articulating 'racial' differences between 'black' and 'white' people, while leaving a side the much-debated question of Jack's aspiration to gentility" (p. 75). Even while he was an indentured white servant, Jack never experiences any physical punishment like a Virginia's black slave, nor does he mention one single incident where a white convict receives any form of brutal treatment at the hands of other white overseers. It is important here to question Jack's account of slavery in Virginia because even though his circumstances were dire, being kidnapped, sold and forcibly indentured, yet his situation in the plantation was much lighter than an actual black slave. He does not seem to consider the life of an African slave as equal in human value with the life of a white servant. For example, later when Jack started to work in his new job as an overseer, he informs us that a "Horse-whip was given me to correct and lash the Slaves and Servants, when they proved Negligent." He believes that "whipping the *Negro* Slaves, was not so much owing to the Tyranny, and Passion, and Cruelty of the *English*[...]but it is due to "the Brutality, and obstinate Temper of the *Negroes*." Black slaves according to Jack "cannot be mannag'd by Kindness, and Courtesy[sic]" (p. 66). Cruelty toward slaves exposes one of Jack's ultimate contradictions: achieving spiritual repentance, while condoning the sin of slavery. Jack does not seem to consider black slavery as a sin, yet he discovers in Virginia a place where one can atone for their moral sins!

### **Temptation of Sin:**

Jack recognizes the importance of Virginia as a place where all temptation seizes. For instance, he explains that "*Virginia*, and a State of Transportation, may be the happiest Place and Condition they were ever in [unhappy Wretches]" (p. 89). Life in Virginia for a transported villain is a kind of life, if backed by "sincere Repentance, and a diligent Application to the Business they are put to; they are effectually deliver'd from a Life of a flagrant Wickedness"(p. 89). Moreover, he informs us that "I was deliver'd from the horrid Temptation of Sinning, to

Support my Luxury [sic]"(p. 86). Virginia seems to provide a place where it "is sufficient to Sweeten the bitterest Sorrow, and make any Man be thankful for *Virginia*, or a worse Place, if that can be [sic]"(p. 86). Yet, Jack feels awkward about acknowledging his sin. For example, he is eager to distant himself from other convicts by informing his master "that I did not come over to *Virginia* in the Capacity of a Criminal, or that I was not Transported; which considering how many of the Inhabitants there were so" (p. 87). Jack seems to go through a rather pungent spiritual dilemma, even though he appreciates his new life in Virginia, but he seems troubled about accepting all its implications. In other words, Jack accepts his repentance as a new opportunity to begin a new life; but he seems quite troubled with the fact that all transported servants had a serious criminal past, while he has none.

Jack, sometimes, does not seem to be aware of his own sins! He explains that "I had no knowledge of better things to be thankful for, which he had [his servant/teacher]; but in return for that, I was deliver'd, and set up in the World" (p. 88). This apparent inability to recognize fully the nature of his previous condition seems to contradict with his previous appeals for repentance. Jack sometimes fluctuates between full self-acknowledgment of his former sinful life, and his disappointment of not having the chance to enjoy what some others in his condition had enjoyed. For instance, Jack's only crimes revolve around childhood pickpocketing experiences; and he has so far related his current prosperity in Virginia to his redemption. Referring to one particular indentured servant who was working for him that he "was in, I mean a sold Servant; but that he remain'd so still, so that if his Sin had been greater than mine, so his Distress'd was still greater" (p. 88).

### Virginia and Self-Esteem:

Jack also recognizes the great opportunities Virginia offers him to recreate a new identity. According to Jack, he achieved a prosperous financial "Condition now," that it does not matter anymore to others what he "had been, and as it was grown pretty much out of Memory" (p. 87). Becoming a plantation owner in the Americas requires Jack to attempt erasing any previous memories about his former life. For example the fact "I was ever a Servant, otherwise than Voluntary, and that it was no Business of mine to expose myself; so I kept that Part close" (p. 87). Secrecy is compulsory for Jack in order to gain a new identity in Virginia. The wealth he amasses in Virginia will also later buy him a new life, a new identity and a clean slate for a fresh start. He can transcribe in Virginia whatever biographical records he wishes to dictate for himself and to show to the world. Spending more time in Virginia improves Jack's self-esteem: in one soliloquy, after becoming a rich plantation owner, he address God directly saying " *I thank thee* for all that I have been sav'd from, or all that I have been brought to in this World [original emphasis]." Feeling grateful to God makes Jack not to forget that his "Life has been as full of Variety, and I have been as miraculously deliver'd from Dangers and Mischiefs, and as many of them." He recognizes God's "invisible Hand in Mercy to me, what have I been doing, and where have I liv'd? that I only should be the most Thoughtless, and Unthankful of all God's Creatures!" (p. 87). He adds that "I had certainly as much to be thankful for [was] made a Master, and easy, and was in good Circumstances, being rais'd from the very same low distress'd Condition" (p. 88).

Jack is not always sure about the kind of opportunities Virginia can provide. He reflects melancholically on his life in the British colony by claiming that "I look'd upon myself as one

Buried alive, in a remote Part of the World, where I could see nothing at all, and hear but a little of what was seen, and that little, not till at least half a Year after it was done" (p. 89). However, being financially comfortable in Virginia does not seem to reduce Jack's desire to go back to England. Sometimes he spends "a Year or more," then returns to England.

Even though, Jack sometimes confesses that "It was true, that this [his stay in Virginia,] was much nearer to it [Gentlemanly], than that of a Pick-pocket, and still nearer than that of a sold Slave" (p. 89). However, "But in short, this would not do, and I cou'd receive no Satisfaction in it" (p. 89). Jack is unable to achieve a moral satisfaction because he does not see fully the link between his *spiritual* condition and his *material* condition. In other words, even though that his financial conditions have improved in Virginia because he "had now a second Plantation, a very considerable one, and it went forward very well;" and he "had on it almost 100 Servants already, of sundry Sorts, and an Overseer," yet he is not satisfied. Furthermore, he " had a third [plantation] in Embrio, and newly begun, I had nothing to hinder me from going where I pleas'd" (p. 89).

#### **A Life to be remembered:**

Jack's spiritual and moral experiences in Virginia constitute a model for other former convicts, or this is what he claims: "*Virginia*, and a State of Transportation, may be the happiest Place and Condition they were ever in, for this Life" (p. 89). However, in order to achieve a happy existence in Virginia, the individual must show "a sincere Repentance, and a diligent Application to the Business they are put to" (p. 89). According to Jack, repentant former convicts need to remember, "They are effectually deliver'd from a Life of a flagrant Wickedness, and put in a perfectly new Condition, in which they have no Temptation to the Crimes they formerly committed, and have a prospect of Advantage for the future" (p. 89). All temptation is supposed to end in Virginia because former culprits would receive more advantages by becoming transported/ indentured slaves in the colony. They can reap the fruits of whatever they work for; and according to Jack, "the meanest, and most despicable Creature after his time of Servitude is expir'd, if he will but apply himself with Diligence and Industry to the Business of the Country, is sure (Life and Health suppos'd) both of living Well and growing Rich" (p. 89).

In addition to providing Jack with numerous opportunities to forget his sad past; rectify his past mistakes and achieve good existence; Virginia also represents a resourceful place for other accomplishments: it creates a life to be remembered. For example, Jack informs us that during one of his frequent trips to England, he carried with him from his plantation in Virginia "about six Hundred Hogsheds of Tobacco" as he "left the Capes of *Virginia*, on the first of *August*" (p. 90). Virginia's resourcefulness enables Jack to feel "at the height of my good Fortune; indeed I was in very good Circumstances" (p. 95). This good financial stability and security materializes because "being of a frugal Temper from the beginning, I Sav'd things together, as they came, and yet liv'd very well too" (p. 95). Instead of constantly being haunted by his past experiences as a pickpocket, Jack is now able to achieve the "Reputation of a very considerable Merchant." He is reputed to be "one that came over vastly Rich from *Virginia*, and as I frequently brought Supplies for my several Families and Plantations there, as they wrote to me for them, so I pass'd, *I say*, for a great Merchant" (p. 95).



### A Gentleman Pays his Debts:

Jack fears discovery by one of his former wives' creditors. While visiting England, he lives "retir'd, because I knew she [the former wife] had Contracted Debts, which I should be oblig'd to Pay, and I was resolv'd to be gone out of her reach, with what Speed I cou'd." Jack insists on paying the debt of his wife because all gentleman are supposed to do so. However, he has to wait for his Virginia's cargo" because I look'd for at least 300 Hhds of *Tobacco* from thence, which I knew would heal all my Breaches; for indeed, the Extravagance of three Years with this Lady, had sunk me most effectually; even far beyond her own Fortune, which was Considerable, tho' not quite 1500*l.* as she had call'd it" (p. 102). Believing himself to be a real gentleman, Jack accepts the responsibility of paying his former wife's loans; bills, etc., Fearing discovery; he keeps a low profile while in England; until he is able to return to Virginia; the only save place he trusts. By referring to Virginia as his true "home," Jack projects the colony as a place where he can feel secured ."In Virginia, he is "out of the way of Villains, and Assassinations." Jack takes precautions "for every time I stirr'd out here [London] I thought I went in danger of my Life, and therefore, as before I went out at Night, thinking to be conceal'd; so now I never went out, but in open Day that I might be safe, and never without one or two Servants to be my Life Guard" (p. 105). Jack is alluding here to a previous incident when he was severely beaten by one of his wife's lovers. Ultimately, he concludes that he cannot feel safe in England at all. What is contradictory here is that Jack feels obliged to pay his former wife's creditors; an indication of some of the challenges he faces while trying to become a gentleman.

### Virginia: A Sense of Belonging

Jack's plantation in Virginia is part of his American home where he feels a sense of belonging to "my People in *Virginia*" (p. 118). Virginia provides Jack with a financial security he did not enjoy in his past life, being retired in a "sollitary manner I now liv'd in; and I experienced the Truth of the Text, *that it is not good for Man to be alone*; for I was extremely Melancholy and Heavy." Jack does not even "knew not what to do with myself" outside his home in Virginia. He finally resolves to "go to *Virginia* again, and there live retired as I could" (p. 118). He does not like to remain in Virginia permanently. His curiosity pushes him not to be satisfied with a secluded life where he "could not live in the World, and not enquire what was doing in it." He does not accept to remain permanently in Virginia, where he only hears "News twice a Year" and receives out-of-date stock's news (p. 118). Nevertheless, Jack feels the burden of his success in Virginia. For instance, while meditating about what to do in England even though he "had no Body to keep but myself," and his plantation in Virginia "return'd me from 400 to 600 *l.* a Year, one Year above 700*l.*" he "concluded, [I] was to be bury'd a-live; so I put off all Thoughts of it [returning to Virginia for the time being],and resolv'd to settle somewhere in *England*" (p. 118).

### Virginia: a Seat of Power

After succeeding financially in Virginia, Jack, like Robinson Crusoe, starts to perceive his plantation as his own kingdom. He informs his readers that while " [talking] to myself; if I Marry an honest Woman, my Children will be taken care of; if she be a Slut and abuses me, as I see every Body does; I'll Kidnap her and send her to *Virginia* to my Plantations." There "she shall work hard enough, and fare hard enough to keep her Chast, I'll warrant her" (p. 124). The plantation in Virginia represents for Jack a seat of his newly acquired power. He believes that he can send his former wives to the plantation to rectify their infidelities; punish them at his will.

Moreover, after failing to find refuge in his native country (England,) Jack resolves to return permanently to Virginia. He informs us that after deep thinking about his current situation, while hiding in England, Jack starts to believe that "Heaven summon'd [him] to retire to Virginia" a placed where he "had- been bless'd at, or had met with any thing that deserv'd the Name of Success." He "resolv'd to leave my native Country once more, and taking my Son with me, and leaving *Moggy's* Daughter with her Grandfather"(p. 126). *Moggy* was one decent wife Jack married in England. She passed away after few years. Jack decides to leave *Moggy's* Daughter with her Grandfather, and he makes arrangements for her financial maintenance by which if he died, she will receives a "portion to be paid by [his] Son out of the Estate [he] had in Virginia (p. 126).

### Repentant Wife in Virginia:

After spending twenty four years traveling, Jack returns to his plantation. The return to the plantation brings with it other happy news! One of Jack's former adulterous wives arrives in the plantation as an indentured servant. While examining the arriving transported servants, Jack, by now a very prosperous plantation owner notices that one of the female transported faints. Being sometimes quite credulous, Jack imagines that "the poor Creature was afraid of [him], for Masters in Virginia are terrible things; bad [his manager] tell her she need to be under no Concern at my calling for her." In fact, the woman was afraid of being discovered to be Jack's former adulterous wife (p. 128). Jack accepts his repentant adulterous wife, and she actually helps him later escape detection by the British government as a Jacobite conspirator.

### Fear of Discovery

Fearing being exposed by the captured and transported Jacobite rebels as a former rebel, Jack does not listen to the advice of his wife to remain in Virginia. He starts to imagine that his spiritual repentance and his financial prosperity will come to an end. He flees to the West Indies pretending that he was ill. Reflecting later on his difficult experience Jack feels more humble. Talking to his wife, while hiding in the West Indies, about his difficult situation, she informs him that "the State of Life that [he] was now in, was as perfectly calculated to make a Man compleatly happy, as any private Station in the World could be [sic]" (p. 132). However positive were his wife's assurances, Jack "was not thoroughly easy in [his] Mind, and secretly wish'd [he] was in my own Dominions in Virginia, to which, in a little time, other Circumstances concurring, [he] made Preparations to remove with my whole Family" (p. 134).

Jack fears of "to be against every Day, be taken up, and sent to *England* in Irons, and have all [his] Plantations seiz'd on as a forfeited Estate to the Crown" (p. 134). However, listening to his wife's "Design" who intends not "kidnap [him], and transport [him] from Virginia as other People are transported to it." The faithful wife informs him that he "shall find [her] the same faithful humble Creature"(p. 136). Indeed, the reformed wife proofs a good loyal partner to Jack because she succeeds in manipulating the public sphere in the plantation informing others that Jack is sick and will soon travel to England.

### Virginia: a Rescue Needed

In addition to being a spiritual allegory of sin and repentance, the colony also provides Jack with a much-needed rescue. For instance, when Spanish privateers capture Jack, and take him as hostage for ransom in Havana, Virginia provides rescue. For example, seeing no other way but to pay his ransom, Jack resolves to inform his captors that he has a plantation in Virginia to which

the Spaniards "seem'd very easie [sic]" (p. 141). Jack is also able to use his plantation as a much-needed material asset to make more money. He actually "make[s] a kind of an Acquaintance with the *Spaniards* which came in the Canoes, and we became so intimate, that at last, with the Consent of the *three Spaniards of the Havana*," he returns to Virginia (p. 145).

After returning to Virginia, Jack "came Home [with] above 4000 Pieces of Eight richer than I went out"(p. 146). In addition to representing a place where Jack gains a gentlemanly respectability, repents from his past sins, Virginia also provides him with a fortune as if the "Golden Rivers of *Mexico* flow into my Plantation of *Virginia*." Jack "Dream'd of nothing but Millions and Hundreds of Thousands [sic]"(p. 148)

Thanks to Virginia, Jack ends his adventurous career as a new individual, not a pickpocket or a transported servant, but a rich and a satisfied gentleman. Hal Gladfelder (2003) argues that the last page of the novel reiterates conventional criminal confessions. The same appeal "was made by criminals at the gallows to those within earshot on execution day...evoking a shared bloodline of transgression, the relationship is equally grounded in the problematics of an emerging individualism" (Gladfelder, 2003).

Defoe seemed to have intended Jacks' life of crime, repentance and eventual prosperity as a moral tale. He examines how Jack's poverty prevented him from achieving his promised gentry's status. Throughout the narrative of the life of Colonel Jack, we realize that his spiritual journey toward prosperity and permanent settlement began as a child. However, what is remarkable about his spiritual journey is that it *parallels* his realization of his gentry's destiny. His nurse told him since a child that his father was a gentleman, yet, Jack remained most of his life unaware of the nature of his class "moral" principles. He adopts at the beginning of his journey a naïve and a rather chaotic interpretation of a gentleman's behavior. For instance, Jack believed that a gentleman-pickpocket should never harm his victims. Moreover, while attempting, although inadvertently, to achieve his gentlemanly destiny, Jack continues to reflect constantly about his spiritual agony. Defoe confuses his readers in his delineation of the spiritual condition of his character; Jack for instance does not seem to espouse any determined sectarian position: if he was among the Catholic or the Protestants, it is not apparent whether he adopts any particular religious dogma.

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