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# History of Zoa [supplemental materials]

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# History of Zoa, by an unknown author.

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## MLA Citation

*The History of Zoa, the beautiful Indian, daughter of Henrietta de Bellgrave: And of Rodomond, whom Zoa releases from confinement, and with him makes her escape from her father, who was the occasion of Rodomond's imprisonment and dreadful sufferings. To which is added the memoirs of Lucy Harris, a foundling, who, at sixteen years of age, was discovered to be daughter to the countess of B— a true story.* Sabine & Son, Shoelane, Fleet Street: London, c. 1800.

## MLA Citation from the Gothic Archive

*The History of Zoa, the beautiful Indian, daughter of Henrietta de Bellgrave: And of Rodomond, whom Zoa releases from confinement, and with him makes her escape from her father, who was the occasion of Rodomond's imprisonment and dreadful sufferings. To which is added the memoirs of Lucy Harris, a foundling, who, at sixteen years of age, was discovered to be daughter to the countess of B— a true story.* Published c. 1800. E-Publications Marquette. The Gothic Archive, Marquette University, Wisconsin.  
[http://epublications.marquette.edu/english\\_gothic/30/](http://epublications.marquette.edu/english_gothic/30/). Accessed 9/16/13. Web.

## Full Title

*The History of Zoa, the beautiful Indian, daughter of Henrietta de Bellgrave: And of Rodomond, whom Zoa releases from confinement, and with him makes her escape from her father, who was the occasion of Rodomond's imprisonment and dreadful sufferings. To which is added the memoirs of Lucy Harris, a foundling, who, at sixteen years of age, was discovered to be daughter to the countess of B— a true story.*

## Summary

This story is told by an unnamed narrator to a woman he calls “Madam.” The narrator begins by explaining that Rodomond is the child of his longtime friend, whose untimely death left his three children, including Rodomond, penniless. Consequently, the narrator took the boys under his care, and Rodomond grew into a successful interpreter for the East India Company in Bombay. While there, Rodomond eventually became an enemy of the natives because he demanded fair business practices. One day, Rodomond was kidnapped by five mercenaries for “the banyan,” a powerful local. Luckily, the Banyan’s daughter, Zoa, heard of her father’s plot, and she freed Rodomond in exchange for his promise to leave India and take her with him, and to never exact revenge on her father. Rodomond complies, and he and Zoa left India on the next boat. They fell in love on the voyage to England, where Rodomond taught Zoa English and Christianity. Upon arriving in England, Rodomond went to the narrator, seeking his approval in marrying Zoa. Once Zoa’s conversion to Christianity was secured, the narrator approved of the union, and Rodomond and Zoa were married. As the narrator concludes, he assures the listener that Rodomond and Zoa are living under his roof, and that everyone is very happy with the union.

## Constellation of Knowledge/Historical Context

Both this chapbook and its companion piece, *Henrietta de Bellgrave*, come from a novel entitled *The Lady's Drawing Room*, which was first printed in London in 1743 (according to a record in *The Daily Advertiser*) and then reprinted in London, Dublin, and London again in 1744, 1746, and 1748, respectively. The full eighteenth century editions are rare today, but there was one final printing centuries later in 1974 by Garland Publishing, and the book is currently available via on-demand printing through Gale ECCO. The novel contains a pastiche of stories told by a group of titled ladies and gentlemen in an aristocrat’s drawing

room, and the Preface claims that the stories are meant to provide an accurate depiction of the world for the reader. These stories are relayed in assorted formats and told from various points of view—there are stories told from experience, hearsay, and read aloud from chapbooks and letters. The story of Zoa and Rodomond is told in the first chapter, and it leads to the Henrietta de Bellgrave story in the third chapter, which can also be found in this archive.

After its inclusion in *The Lady's Drawing Room* in the 1740s, the story of Zoa was printed as a chapbook by Sabine & Son on Shoe Lane, Fleet Street in 1800 (according to the records at the British Public Library). In this edition, the story was followed by the tale of Lucy Harris, but in subsequent versions (printed by Dean & Munday of Threeneedlestreet, London) Zoa's story was paired with a Russian tale called Lisette and Login. As there doesn't appear to be any thematic connection between Zoa's tale and the stories included in each version of the chapbook, it may be safe to conclude that these supplements were chosen for their length, as chapbook printing relied upon certain length requirements. The popularity of Zoa's story is evident, though, as Roxann Wheeler reports that both Henrietta and Zoa were "printed separately in chapbooks and as single pamphlets until the 1830s" (Wheeler 320).

Despite this popularity, the story of Zoa has received very little critical attention to date, with only one article in print, Roxann Wheeler's "The Complexion of Desire: Racial Ideology and Mid-Eighteenth-Century British Novel," that analyzes it in any depth. The novel it came from, *The Lady's Drawing Room*, has also gone largely unnoticed by the scholarly community, with just one line dedicated to it in Jerry C. Beasley's *Novels of the 1740s*. Despite this seeming disinterest by scholars, the Zoa story has much to offer any study of "the importance of Christianity to European identity" (Wheeler 321). It also has much to offer in regards to race relations, as Rodomond's and Zoa's happy union is an example of the bliss that is attainable if Christianity is the basis for an interracial marriage. However, as Wheeler points out, the text gives its reader a storyline engaged in the act of "purging the significance of [Zoa's] color" through several narrative moves. For instance, Zoa goes from being disguised as a slave to being transported by changing into genteel, English clothing (321). Ultimately, Zoa's suitability is determined by her espousal of Christianity, which solidifies the hierarchal values of a text that lauds religion above all else, even viewing it as a force that can unite races in marital harmony. Overall, in its complex representation of religion, race, and marriage, the story of Zoa is an essential text for anyone considering how these topics are represented in popular 18<sup>th</sup> century literature.

## Key Words

### Banyan

Description forthcoming.

### Bombay/India

Description forthcoming.

## British Nationalism/English Nationalism

Description forthcoming.

## Christian

Christianity is both very much present and absent in Gothic literature. In *Dracula*, religion features prominently in the fight against the vampire – Van Helsing, Harker and Mina frequently invoke the name of God for supernatural and divine aid against the power of Dracula. Yet, there is also a disturbing sense that God is strangely absent, or at best, distant, within the novel. God's power seems limited – captured and contained within material shapes and symbols such as the Host, Indulgences, and the Crucifix. The men who hunt down Dracula are dependent on the trappings of religion without true substance.

Christianity thus becomes reduced to transferable property.

God is also sidelined in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. On one hand, while Biblical allusions to God as Creator abound in the novel, it is always in juxtaposition to the transgression of Victor Frankenstein as the mad scientist. Again, God is invoked only when an immediate threat is identified, as Victor laments and appeals to God to grant him the strength to defeat and destroy his monster. Christianity as the dominant religion in nineteenth century England was thoroughly interrogated and questioned, its beliefs in an Almighty God challenged as science and technology assumed prominence. Gothic authors, themselves questioning the relevance of religion, foregrounded these issues by presenting Christianity in a dubious light – present, but altogether powerless, shallow and somewhat deficient.

Source: Fong, Minghui. "Gothic Keywords."

<http://courses.nus.edu.sg/course/ellgohbh/gothickeywords.html>. Last Updated 2006. Last Accessed 9/16/2013. Web.

## Colonialism

Description forthcoming.

## East India Company

Description forthcoming.

## Eighteenth Century

Description forthcoming.

## Empire/Imperial

Description forthcoming.

## Interpreter

Description forthcoming.

## Interracial Marriage

Description forthcoming.

## Lady's Drawing Room

Description forthcoming.

## Merchant

Description forthcoming.

History of Zoa

## Pagan

Description forthcoming.

## Race

Description forthcoming.

## Rodomond

Description forthcoming.

## Zoa

Description forthcoming.

## Bibliography of Related Information

Beasley, Jerry C. *Novels of the 1740s*. U of Georgia P: Athens, GA. 1982.

"Classified Listings." *Daily Advertiser* [London, England] 2 Nov. 1743, Issue 3991. *17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> Century Burney Collection Newspapers*. Web. 20 November 2013.

*The Lady's Drawing Room. Being a Faithfull Picture of the Great World. In which the various Humours of both Sexes are display'd. Drawn from the Life and Interspers'd with entertaining and affecting Novels*. M. Cooper & A. Dodd, near Essex-street, in the Strand: London, c. 1744.

*The True and Affecting History of Henrietta de Bellgrave; A Woman Born Only for Calamities. Being an Unhappy Daughter, Wretched Wife, and Unfortunate Mother; Containing a Series of the Most Uncommon Adventures that Ever Befel One Person by Sea and Land*. Birmingham, England: S. Martin, c. 1805.

Wheeler, Roxann. "The Complexion of Desire: Racial Ideology and Mid-Eighteenth-Century British Novels." *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 32.3 (1999): 309-332.