Shades of Difference

Mythologies of Skin Color in Early Modern England

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For Richard and Kavya,
with love
Introduction

This book argues that we can only understand the early modern relationships among "race," embodiment, and skin color in their multiple contexts—historical, geographical, and literary. But unlike work that tries to find a specific historical or disciplinary point for the emergence of race as a color-coded classification, mine insists that the terms race and racialism cannot and should not be treated as pure or hermetic categories. Instead, I wish to maintain conversations among early modern culture texts, between historical and material contexts, and between various early modern ways of figuring difference (bodily, cultural, and social). I resist the imposition of a straightforward historical trajectory "toward" racialism or "toward" color-prejudice. In particular, I suggest that literary affiliations (the compulsion of narrative, the longing of lyric, the agendas of masque, and the escape of romance) entangle with variable concepts of skin color and emergent racial distinctions.

Moving through the early modern curriculum or paideia—from the learned professions of religion, medicine, and law to popular and practical sources of knowledge about the world such as rogue literature and travel narrative—I distinguish the early modern characteristics, interests, and intentions of cultural fields that engage skin color and human differences, and examine their significance for conventional literary genres, ranging from sixteenth-century epiphany to seventeenth-century lyric and Restoration prose romance. Each of these early modern discourses inherits and produces its own assumptions and language about skin color—and these early modern representations of racial difference.

I maintain, at once create and interrogate the assumptions about race, skin color, and gender that we live with today. While these mythologies fail to translate in any simple way to our own structures of feeling, this book aims to make the strangeness of early modern racialized discourse familiar, without losing its distinctiveness.

Take, for example, early modern travel narrative (perhaps the sharpest pressure point for competing beliefs about human divisions and variation), which gives us richly conflicting uses of the word race. The ambiguous marginal note, "The Negroes race their skinnes," beside
William Towerson’s account of ritual scarification in what is now Ghana ostensibly uses “race” in its sense of to mark or to scar, to race, as his body text makes clear: “the most part of them have their skin of their bodies raced with driers workes, in manner of a leather Jerkin.” At the same time, the use of the word “Negroes”—as the term that the author takes as “black” skin to constitute the defining characteristic of an imagined nation or group—ensures that the “Negroes’” skins are “raced” in two senses. They bear the marks of their own cultural affiliation and the gaze of a distancing colonial eye.

Or—to take another instance—let us turn to stage play, to an example from Shakespeare’s Measure for Measure (MM), whose use of the word “race” again seems at first to have little or nothing to do with the discourse of skin color. Glowing over Isabella, Angelo declares, “Now I give my sensual race the rein” (MM, 2.4.160). OED glosses this race and obsolete usage as one’s “natural or inherited disposition”; figuratively, Angelo’s illicit fantasy of sexual possession evokes the frenzied race-horses of desire held in check by the inadequate bridle of virtue. Angelo additionally, however, associates his “sensual race” with dirt, pollution, and blackening. No one will believe Isabella, Angelo threaten, because of Angelo’s “unsoldied name”: she will see oneself as “smell of calumny” unless she “lay[s] by all... prolixious blushes” (2.4.163), the modest signs of continence thought in the period to belong only to the white-skinned (a belief to which I will return throughout this book). From her very first entrance Isabella has been associated with “fair” (1.4.24) skin whose “check-roxes” proclaim her virginity (1.4.10). And again, the richness of meaning within Angelo’s words points to a characteristic of its genre. In dramas—Shakespearean drama in particular—conflicts occur not only between but also within characters. The revelation of Angelo’s “race” reveals, as the Duke has predicted, “what our seemers be” (1.3.54); in this most metadramatic of plays, Angelo himself is an actor. Angelo’s “sensual race” is something essential or innate, but at the same time individualized, specific to him.

Race and Genre

The structure of my project reflects my desire to engage texts and bodies, fictions and fact, in dialogue. It concerns itself with what Renaissance scholar Rosalie Colie called “The Resources of Kind”—the early modern copula that classifies, multiplies, subdivides, and recreates the genres and modes of literature, and that claims “mixed genre [as] a mode of thought [as] well as poetry.” Moreover, I concur with N. A. Fowler’s assertion that, although the sheer range of the paietico in inclusive genre systems such as Julius Caesar Scaliger’s suggests the absence of boundaries between the literary and the nonliterary, many early modern genre-critics (including Scaliger and Sidney) distinguish between fictional and nonfictional modes, between “poesy” and didacticism, between delight and instruction. Jonathan Crewe identifies this investment in ordered or kinds as “the continuing holds they exercise, the expectations or even identifications they exert,” phrases that testify to the power of kind at once to “limit” and to attract writers and readers. “Kind” contains within itself the idea of reproduction, both sexual and figurative. “To work one’s kind” is to generate offspring. Daydreaming Gonzalo imagines a commonwealth where “Nature should bring forth, / Of it[s] own kind, all loison” (Tim, 2.1.163–64). Similarly, kinds of literature give birth to other kinds; epigram and lyric marry to begrudgingly the sonnet—what Colie calls a “counter-genre”—while courtly dancing and public stage play join hands in the masque. Like races or tribes, kinds of literature expand into larger and more diffuse versions of themselves; Colie interprets the essay as the adage writ large, and I address in later chapters the flowering of romance from travelers’ tales. “Kind,” of course, evokes in the Renaissance not only generic forms but also human distinctions—skin color, gender, and social status. Elizabeth I’s famous edict expelling “blackamoores” dismisses them as a strange “kinde of people.” Women are the “female kind.” Malvolio is “a kind of a puritan” (TN, 2.3.140). And just as generic kinds in the period generate, reproduce, and redefine themselves, so, I will argue, does the language of race and skin color.

My model for understanding the development of racialism from ethnic prejudices into skin color, and its later affiliations and implications, comes from Raymond Williams’s account of social change in Marxism and Literature, and his classification of “residual,” “dominant,” and “emergent” “structures of feeling.” He uses the phrase structures of feeling in preference to the term ideology because he wishes to point out the places where seemingly explicit, overtly political institutions and seemingly hidden, private beliefs overlap. At any time, Williams argues, all three elements—residual, dominant, and emergent—coexist in a mode of reproduction and therefore no dominant social order and therefore no dominant culture ever in reality includes or exhausts all human practice, human energy and human intention.” This statement is not “wishful theory,” to borrow Jonathan Dollimore’s useful phrase; it is an affirmative version of history—but one that’s nonetheless true. In Williams’s model the dominant structure of feeling is always tempered by residual structures from the previous generation, and emergent ones from the one ahead. A residual structure of feeling can remain in play for years, even centuries, after its moment has passed, and become dominant again when it is revived as politically expedient.
This book employs Williams's model to examine the forms and practices of both kinds of kind—human variation and literary genre. The alignment of various nonsystematic xenophobias—mythologies of color, nationality, religion, class, and gender—into a coherent mythology of race is an emergent structure of feeling in the sixteenth to eighteenth century of feeling that grows stronger throughout the seventeenth century and that becomes dominant during the eighteenth. Genres accompany residual meanings from the past; mixed genres sometimes indicate emergent ideologies. To return to my earlier example of the masque as a mixed genre: courtly dancing celebrates social grace, the elegance of courtship, and the forms and services of aristocracy; it merges with stage play and civic pageant, domotic in tone and text, to produce the masque, a form peculiarly suited to, say, King James's revival of the theory of Divine Right and his modernization of old practices to suit contemporary political ends.

Structures of Critical Feeling

The historiography of race and slavery itself follows Williams's model. The terms and discourse of race studies shift and change according to the discipline or discourse employed (science, postcolonialism, ecology) and according to emergent and residual structures of feeling within our own culture (the Civil Rights movement, Afrocentrism, feminism). Theorists of race and historians of slavery have historically been divided on the following questions: (1) Did slavery cause modern racism, or did racism inevitably lead to slavery? (2) Is racial difference essential, fundamental, ineluctable, or is it socially constructed, contingent, and the result of historical accident? (3) Are colonized cultures and marginalized groups totally engulfed by the dominant culture or do they retain idiosyncratic or hybrid "subcultures" that remain distinctively their own? Winthrop Jordan explained what he called the "abasement of the Negro" and the institution of slavery as the cause and effect (slavery entrappe blacks) because they already despised black people and devalued them. But Paul Fyres argues that it was only because of slavery's economic power that a coherent system of racism came into being. Kwame Anthony Appiah and Henry Louis Gates argue that race is a social fiction, and demolish the old anthropological model that divided humankind into the three subspecies, Negroid, Mongolid, and Caucasian. Taking the social constructivist argument a step further, Theodore Allen blames the institution of slavery for beginning the process that his books call "the invention of the white race": in other words, racism became a convenient justification for an increasingly profitable, but controversial, trade. Allen, Gates, and Appiah regard "race" as a solely cultural fiction. But some prominent black scholars, such as W. E. B. Du Bois, Frantz Fanon, and, most recently, Molefi Kete Asante, have proclaimed a theory of "negritude," or essential Black identity (in upper case) to be reclaimed and reaffirmed, insisting that race is a necessary and useful category defined by white slavers and supremacists to justify the subjugation of darker-skinned peoples. Fanon had justified his belief in negritude by arguing that the white establishment overwhelmed the consciousness of black men, and that racial accommodation was impossible; his supporters often advocated separatism, voluntary segregation, as the only option for black people wishing to live with minds and bodies free from colonial oppression. Other black thinkers, however, argue that it is not necessary to essentialize Blackness in order to develop what bell hooks calls an "oppositional gaze" or consciousness—an identity politics based on shared historical circumstances. Lani Guinier and Gerald Torres's proposal of "political race" would incorporate liked-minded believers of every background into a coalition united by their desire for political change. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's critique of the liberal subject includes her suggestion that groups adopt a "strategic essentialism" in order to exert agency. Homi Bhabha has suggested that "hybrid" identities in colonial settings can provide a way for oppressed peoples to interrogate and coopt the dominant culture.

The concept of "hybridity" has proven enormously influential not only among African American, Afro-British, and postcolonial scholars, but also among literary critics in more traditional fields. Some scholars of early modern England have in recent years critiqued "hybridity" as a mode to encourage us to see that race is a social construction, not a biological necessity. This idea of irony and discourages us from allying with the institutional structures of racism that still exist today. Alan Sinfield, for example, queries the extent to which hybridity in itself provided a meaningful challenge to colonialism or patriarchy, and Ania Loomba argues that the specific context of so-called hybrid activities will determine whether or not these activities are subversive. As will be clear from my mixture of past and present, I have taken these debates to resolve a historical issue, as residual scholarly analyses gave way in the last decades of the twentieth century to a more nuanced understanding of the institution of slavery and the discourse of racism as a mutually interrogate and reinforce one another. I rehearse these three phases in African, African American, and postcolonial studies here in part because the scholarship of early modern race has developed along similar lines. Peter Erickson's article "The Moment of Race in Renaissance Studies" distinguishes between two distinct "phases" or waves of Renaissance race studies. The first, in the
1960s, resulted from "individual interest or effort"; the second, in the 1990s, treated race as "a major organizing category for the period as a whole." We can place both "phases" into larger political and social structures of feeling. The 1960s brought the Civil Rights movement in the U.S.A. and a corresponding interest in the African and Afro-Caribbean presence in Britain. In the 1980s, the immediate racism of Thatcher's Britain engendered new work on Black British cultural studies and on subcultures in the UK. The 1990s saw the rise of so-called "identity politics" in the United States, coupled with an increase in the number of African and Ethnic Studies programs in the academy. Current work on early modern race studies focuses upon the material process of racialization, ranging from the origins of "English" identities to studies of travel, trade, labor relations, and revaluations of the role of climate theory in early modern understandings of skin color.

Just as we can historicize the first phase of early modern race studies in light of these changing political and academic contexts, so we can consider current work in light of late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century discoveries about the origins and nature of the human, in different disciplines and genres—genetics, biological anthropology, archaeology, and history. The Human Genome Project established that what we call race—a term that for us is inextricably linked to skin color—is a biological category, not a biological one: "Although frequencies for different states of a gene [alleles] differ among races, we have found no 'race genes'—that is, states fixed in certain races and absent from all others." Sub-Saharan Africans demonstrate the greatest variation within alleles. Some biologically minded anthropologists have taken this African diversity as evidence that all human beings today share a common ancestor who left Africa only 200,000 years ago—a nanosecond in what Shakespeare's Prospero calls the "dark backward and abysm of evolutionary time" (Tim., 1.2.50). Genetic variations among human beings, even within isolated populations such as Icelanders, are not enough to constitute subspecies, let alone separate species or races. Furthermore, genetic differences between two individuals in a single population may display greater variation than between two individuals from different populations, and such distinctions do not seem to correlate with pigmentation. "World historian" and biologist Jared Diamond likewise refutes racialism and its associated hierarchies through his present-day climatological explanation for the varying rates of scientific "development" and discovery on different continents. Dismissing myths of racial superiority, he explains Eurasia's proclivity to advantage as the stretch of East-West zones that shared the same climate, which enabled large domestic animals (and their germs), scientific and military inventions, crops, languages, and culture to cross vast expanses of land with relative ease and to flourish there.

The Renaissance scholars now writing about race do not usually forge connections between these developments in the social sciences and their own studies in literary and intellectual history. But it is easy to see their work as part of this wide-ranging interrogation of the old category race and its descendants, together with another aspect of twenty-first century living—the global market. Reinterpretations of early modern climate theory resonate with Diamond's ecological approach to world history and human migration. Excavations of "British" genealogies and the animal-human divide pick up our contemporary obsessions with genetic inheritance. Explorations of labor, travel, and freedom in the Renaissance mirror current concerns about European Renaissance cultures in a global context.

My own work attends closely to material contexts and discursive networks, refracting the black/white (or, in Kim Hall's more historically resonant formulation in Things of Darkness, dark/fair) binary through a prism that displays its colors. I explore bodily differences in parallel, moving both "top down" and "bottom up" through the historical and literary record. I examine, as it were, individual genetic variation in discourse—Renaissance "counter-texts," popular accounts of corporeal differences that evoke mythologies of color as well as myths of race, and the ways in which these works interrogate each other. I am not denying the importance of racial distinctions in everyday life, in the present day or in the early modern period: the contrary, the concept of race has been used both as a weapon against marginalized groups and as a tool for their survival and growth, just as genre or discipline has been proved to work too (think of the relative weight we give to a philosopher's thoughts on race versus those of a geneticist). Intiiaz Habib's helpful formulation in Shakespeare and Race suggests that race is both an epistemology and an ontology—that is, both a way of knowing or of organizing knowledge, and a state of being—an imaginary category with real consequences, an intellectual fiction and an experiential fact. Genre, similarly, exists in a quantum state, both there and nowhere, a convenient but imaginary way of dividing up a world of words, a system responsive to human needs and desires (the demands of science, the compulsion for romance). We cannot generate overarching statements of early modern beliefs about skin color and human differences without taking account of the disciplinary and literary affiliations that shape them.

A Case Study: The Curse of Cham

Depending upon what discourse we examine, blackness may or may not appear as a distinct taxonomic division, a situation I investigate at
greater length in Chapter Three. For now, I offer as an example of my approach a comparison of perhaps the two most widely discussed treatments of blackness in Renaissance race studies: George Best’s notorious commentary on the book of Genesis (1578), printed in Hakluyt’s Principal Navigations (PN, 1598–1600), and Sir Thomas Browne’s essay “On the Blackness of Negroes,” from Pseudodoxia Epidemica (PE, 1646). Both writers refute helotropism—the belief that dark skin was caused by the sun’s rays; both writers seem unaware of the pernicious argument, used in later centuries to justify African enslavement, that Noah cursed his son Cham and his descendants with perpetual servitude. Yet I shall show that their differing motives and experiences, and the consequences of their generic decisions, indicate a confluence between a residual mythology of color and an emergent myth of race.

Having encountered South Americans, East Indians, and Moluccan Islanders, all of whom, despite living “under the Equinoctiall . . . are not blacke, but tawney and white, with long haire uncurred as wee haue,” Best questions the theory that the sun’s heat causes blackness and tightly curled hair (PN, 7:261). He speculates instead that such characteristics proceed from a “natural infection” or hereditary taint. As further proof of this, he adduces the example of an “Ethiopian as blacke as a cole” who married “a faire English woman” and yet “begat a sonne . . . as blacke as the father” (7:262). Nowadays we know of course that two people of different skin tones or other physical differences can produce a child that resembles one, either, or neither of them. Classical theories of conception, long familiar to the Renaissance, attributed the conferral of form or appearance to the father, and of matter or substance to the mother (incorporating a common pun on the Latin word for mother, mater). But both classical and early modern observers realized that skin color could not be reducible to either form or matter, since black parents of either sex did not reliably produce dark-skinned offspring. Pliny recounts the birth of “the famous boxer Nicaeus, whose mother was the offspring of adultery with an Ethiopian but had a complexion no different from that of other women, whereas Nicaeus himself reproduced his Ethiopian grandfather.” And in a fictional example from Shakespeare’s Titus Andronicus (1592), Aaron, a black Moor, sires a dark-skinned baby through a union with the white-skinned Tamora. At the same time, Aaron suggests exchanging the child with the infant of Muly, his countryman. Muly’s infant, like Aaron’s, is the offspring of a black father and a white mother, but unlike Aaron’s child, is fair-skinned (Tit. 4.2.152–54).

To explain such phenomena, Best mixes genre, moving from travel narrative into biblical exegesis. He repeats the story that Noah’s three sons, Shem, Cham, and Japheth, colonized Asia, Africa, and Europe respectively after the flood. Since, he argues, everyone presently on the whole earth . . . must needs come of the off-spring” of one of these sons, “all three being white, and their wives also, by course of nature should have . . . brought forth white children” (PN, 7:264). Instead, however, Cham and his wife disobeyed Cham’s father by having sexual intercourse with a “fornicator” (for which wicked and detestable fact) Cham wrote a son called Chus, “who not onely it selfe, but all his posteritie after him should bee so blacke and losithome . . . and of this blacke and cursed Chus came all these blakc Moores which are in Africa” (7:264). Having identified black skin with Noah’s curse, Best concludes that blackness must be an “infection of blood” (7:264), transmitted through “lineall descent” from father to child (7:263). Best’s account links black skin to polluted and polluting “sexual transgression,” implicitly locating the Ethiopian father in England and his “faire” wife with the sexual disobedience of Cham and his spouse in the Ark. Its mixed modes mimic its fears about sexual commixture, the horrifying fantasy of racial pollution.

The narrative’s motives, like its genre, are also mixed. Its ostensible goal, like Browne’s, is to correct a common error, but this curiosity and thirst for knowledge is far from disinterested, characterized instead by the desire for mastery of the seas and climate typical of travel narrative. The descriptive and inductive (“I myself have seen,” “hair uncurred as we have”) mutates into the didactic and deductive (“must needs come”). This generic or modal shift accompanies a movement from neutral to derogatory, as the “coal-black” Ethiopian in England becomes a descendant of the “blacke and cursed” Moores in Africa.

Recalling Colie’s analysis of the Renaissance essay as an outgrowth of emblematic form, we can see that genre allows the essay on blackness to stage a scientific rewriting or response to the well-worn Renaissance chestnut, “to wash an Ethiop white,” signifying impossibility. Having distinguished between the dark skins of sunburned Europeans, “Artificial Negroes, or Gypsies,” and those of the Africans or “True Negroes,” Browne maintains, like Best, that there appears to be little or no correlation between exposure to the sun and the darkness of Africans’ skin, arguing that the African’s blackness must be “speculative,” passed from father to child. In contrast to Best, however, Browne denies the exegetical tradition that explained black skin as a divine or patriarchal curse. He very sensibly observes that there is no reason to consider black skin a “curse”: “if we seriously consult the definitions of beauty, and exactly perpend what wise men determine thereof, we shall not apprehend a curse, or any deformity therein” (PE, 3:245).

Like earlier medical writers, Browne conflates sperm or seed with the embryo itself, believing that sperm contained a “hoornculus” or miniature human being that was already complete. At the same time, he cannot believe that the sperm (the “seed”) of black men is darker than that
of white ones (another popular belief). On the contrary, sperm is "in its
naturals white," but blackness is an "accident" in the scholastic sense:
a cover or "efflorescence" created by the natural processes of birth that
"shadow" the essential whiteness of the embryo. This process, he con-
tinues, means that "not only their legitimate and timely births, but their
abortion...are also dusky, before they have felt the scorched and terror of
the Sun" (3:3242). Browne's early empiricism (his observation of fetuses
and of semen) encourages him to draw a subtle but meaningful distinc-
tion. Blackness is not essential, although it is inherited; it is an "acci-
dent," a "dusky" cover for the Africans' natural whiteness. Blackness
gilds the "outside" of essentially white men.

Some also believe that although the essay as a form privileges authority or ethos,
Browne admits defeat; his conclusion is no conclusion at all. "Efflor-
escence" describes both a flowering or completion (an association that
leads him to discuss "aborted" or untimely births) and the chemical
crystallization of fine, powdery particles on the surface of a substance
when water is removed from it, "the separation of parts," as Browne
puts it. Blackness is an external crust, but also a decoration, like a flower—
worthy of wonder rather than open to analysis. Blackness remains opaque
to him, underwriting the mastery inherent in the essay form (even as it
continues to fetishize blackness as mysterious and unknown, as Kim Hall
has observed).

Both Best and Browne question a generally held belief about black-
ness. Neither espouses polygenesis—the belief that people with different
skin colors had completely separate origins. To do so would contradict
the word of the Bible, and in fact, Browne explicitly states that "Negroes"
descend from "the seed of Adam," just like Englishmen, Chinsamen,
Guinea Moors, and all the inhabitants of the world (4E, 3:3240). Most
important, neither connects black skin, or the divine curse, with slavery;
such a connection does not become standard until the end of the seven-
teenth century. Even the connection of Cham with Africa is conten-
tious in the Renaissance. William Browne's Practice for Travellers (1578)
derives the Africans from Shen, not from Cham, arguing that Shen
died out in the parties of Africa. Cham, "the parties of Asia," and
Japhet, "Europe, and... the great lande Atlantia [Atlantis], now
called America." Browne's compendium of useful travel information
(instructions in navigation, mathematics, shipbuilding, and meteorol-
ogy) briskly dismisses as "vayne and contentious arguments" the belief
that "there were any more Adams than one, or any more Noyes [Noahs] in
the[n] one..."[22]

Best's hybrid or mixed form of travel narrative and Browne's "abort[ive]" essay can suggest how loose mythologies of color became a
systematic mythology of race. The demise of the heliotropic or sunburn

theory of blackness is caused not only by observation (Browne's early
scientific method) but also by early modern travel and new methods of
generating wealth and work. There existed in the Renaissance a hitherto
overlooked, residual relationship between labor and skin color, one that
was transformed into the more familiar connections epitomized by the
curiosity of travel by travel, labor, and the new science. Those who
were untanned worked, voyaged, or spent extended periods outdoors, such
as the "sunne-burnt pilgrim," the "sun-tane slave" who manned ancient
galleys, or the "tawne" gardener with "sunne-burnt hands."[23] With the
establishment of plantations in Barbados, this residual connection
between skin color and outdoor, manual work (through the figure of
sunburn or suntane) became a more emergent myth linking dark skin and
other physical features to an inherited destiny to slave labor on the one
hand, to species difference on the other. Consider the sailor Dionise
Settle's words when he encounters dark-skinned Inuit in his search for
the Northwest Passage in 1577. He comments in surprise that despite the
climate's cold darkness, the Inuits' "colour is not much unlike the Sunne
burnt countrey man, who laboureth daily in the Sunne for his living"
(5.17:7221). Settle's words domesticate the strange and evoke English
hierarchies of rank and region. Travel narrative, biblical exegesis, and
scientific treatise foreground this shift differently. Without surveying the
differing motives, experiences, and forms of Best, Browne, and others,
these gradual transformations would remain invisible.

Parts and Chapters
This book's three parts, "Ethiopian Histories," "Whiteness Visible," and
"Travel Narratives," thus attempt to engage in dialogue with each other
and with various early modern structures of feeling: mythologies of color
and myths of race, "new" discoveries and "ancient" literature. Part I, "Ethi-
opian Histories," considers the Renaissance transmission of two ancient
texts, one classical, one biblical, and their changing representations of
blackness in fiction and lyric, before ending with a comparison of the Irish
and the Ethiopians in their early modern corporal imagination. Chapter 4,
"Pictures of Andromeda Naked," tracks the ways in which the sexual and
racial ambiguities in Heliodorus's ancient Greek romance, Athioppea
or "Ethiopian Story," and in early modern mythographies of Ethiopia
harden into essential notions of racial difference in seventeenth-century
adaptations of Heliodorus's fabula. I argue in Chapter 2, "Thirteen Ways
of Looking at a Black Bride," that exegetical and literary interpretations
of the "black" bride in the biblical Song of Songs shift from reading her
negritude as a sign of her Ethiopian origin to dismissing her blackness
as purely literary rather than literal. This shift corresponds, I suggest, to
a growing African presence in Britain and to the transformation of the "ancient rhyme" of the sonnet tradition to the new, scientific—called by Samuel Johnson "metaphysical"—poetry. Chapter 3, "Masquing Race," concludes this part of the book by examining two groups who, although not usually called "black" in the period, nonetheless seem to constitute "races" in our modern sense, in the Renaissance—the Irish and the (Native) Americans. Looking at the Jacobean court masque and its colonial and regal agendas proselytizing for the "plantation" of Ireland, the economic conquest of sub-Saharan Africa, and the religious conversion of Virginians, I contend that the status and meanings of blackness as an epithet alter according to their political, geographical, and literary contexts.

The next part of the book, "Whiteness Visible," suggests that reading skin explicitly called "white" or "fair" is in the Renaissance a hermeneutic enterprise akin to literary criticism. "Heroic Blushing," Chapter 4, engages moral treatises that both stigmatize and praise the blush with early modern epilalia. These erotic narrative poems use the figure of a fluctuating blush to evoke sexual freedom, moral indecency, and the enthusiasm of lyric, and the notion of fixed blackness or pallor to trope sexual constraint, race, and the compulsion of narrative. Chapter 5, "Blackface and Blushface," maintains that what I call "blushface" makeup and the strictures against it in antiscientific and antifeminist tracts highlight the emphasis in stage plays on cosmetics as racial or gender prosthetics on the one hand and indices of metadramatic illusion on the other. Chapter 6, "Whiteness as Sexual Difference," further analyzes pallor as a metaphor that breaks down distinctions of sex and the construction of sexual desire altogether. In Elizabethan homoerotic verse, excessively pallid, "green," or "white" skin unites young men and women in their suffering from what medical texts call "green sickness," satirizing heteroerotic pairings and teasingly allowing the possibility of same-sex desire.

My final part, "Travail Narratives," mobilizes two of the meanings of "travail" in the period, as hard labor on the one hand and as travel or vagrancy on the other. Chapter 7, established against the Gypsies (the so-called "Artificial Negroses" of the chapter's title) in Jacobean England in the context of popular "cony-catching" pamphlets and drama. Where legislators and the writers of rogue literature castigate Gypsies as illicit or unlicensed laborers (arguing that they are in effect unemployed and unemployable, unauthorized actors or performers), I find that masque and stage play foreground the relations between the suspiciously plentiful work of the wandering Gypsy and the invisible labor of the artist. Chapter 8, "Sustained Slaves," contrasts the association of dark skin with gold in the city pageant before investigating the ways ethnographic accounts turn the black bodies of Africans themselves into currency. The first English slavers to return from the Senegambia produce tribal ethnographies that rapidly produce what I argue is already a version of racism—a hierarchical ordering of human beings that depends on skin color and labor, nonetheless seemingly slavery. The final chapter of this part, Chapter 9, allows me to return to where I began, with an encounter between romance and historiography that, to adapt de Certeau, is also an encounter with the Other. "Experiments of Colors" glances ahead to the Restoration and the scientific revolution, when, I suggest, the connections between personal autonomy and embodiment become increasingly restrictive in light of the growing prominence of the latest taxonomies and polygenic theories of black inferiority imported from the American colonies. Reading prose romance alongside theories of color and light from the scientific revolution, I speculate that the world of romance offers a literary escape from the emerging cultural hierarchies of gender and pigmentation—the social fiction of race. "Shades of Difference" concludes with a brief "Afterword" about a contemporary interpretation of race—digital artist Nancy Burson’s "Human Race Machine."

Keywords
In a book concerned with "shades of difference" in so many senses, it is particularly important that my terms be exact. Out of context, Hamlet's first words, "A little more than kin, and less than kind" (Ham. 1.2.64-65), could serve as a working definition for "race" in the early modern period. The construction of sexual desire altogether. In Elizabethan homoerotic verse, excessively pallid, "green," or "white" skin unites young men and women in their suffering from what medical texts call "green sickness," satirizing heteroerotic pairings and teasingly allowing the possibility of same-sex desire.

My final part, "Travail Narratives," mobilizes two of the meanings of "travail" in the period, as hard labor on the one hand and as travel or vagrancy on the other. Chapter 7, established against the Gypsies (the so-called "Artificial Negroses" of the chapter's title) in Jacobean England in the context of popular "cony-catching" pamphlets and drama. Where legislators and the writers of rogue literature castigate Gypsies as illicit or unlicensed laborers (arguing that they are in effect unemployed and unemployable, unauthorized actors or performers), I find that masque and stage play foreground the relations between the suspiciously plentiful work of the wandering Gypsy and the invisible labor of the artist. Chapter 8, "Sustained Slaves," contrasts the association of dark skin with gold in the city pageant before investigating the ways ethnographic accounts turn the black bodies of Africans themselves into currency. The first English slavers to return from the Senegambia produce tribal ethnographies that rapidly produce what I argue is already a version of racism—a hierarchical ordering of human beings that depends on skin color and labor, nonetheless seemingly slavery. The final chapter of this part, Chapter 9, allows me to return to where I began, with an encounter between romance and historiography that, to adapt de Certeau, is also an encounter with the Other. "Experiments of Colors" glances ahead to the Restoration and the scientific revolution, when, I suggest, the connections between personal autonomy and embodiment become increasingly restrictive in light of the growing prominence of the latest taxonomies and polygenic theories of black inferiority imported from the American colonies. Reading prose romance alongside theories of color and light from the scientific revolution, I speculate that the world of romance offers a literary escape from the emerging cultural hierarchies of gender and pigmentation—the social fiction of race. "Shades of Difference" concludes with a brief "Afterword" about a contemporary interpretation of race—digital artist Nancy Burson’s "Human Race Machine."

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a later, consistent, “mythology of race.” Fryer’s terms, however, presuppose a belief in distinct races and thus have limited application in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries in England, where perceived physical differences and accusations of savagery, bestiality, and moral turpitude are leveled against different populations and individuals with varying reference to skin color. But during the course of the seventeenth century race became the justification for the slave trade and for Britain’s expanding empire. We need to locate the manufacture of race historically, in the context of Britain’s incipient involvement in the slave trade and of an increasing division of labor between male and female, rural and urban, free and forced.

I therefore use “racism” to refer to the mistaken notion that such visible differences demonstrated speciation, like the differences between cats and dogs, that such supposed species could be ranked hierarchically, and that they should not intermarry. My term “mythologies of color” describes the complex of early modern beliefs surrounding the significance of skin of all perceived shades—white, black, red, green, brown, yellow, and transparent. I call immigrants to early modern Britain “strangers,” as they would have been called at the time, as well as by the modern name “foreigners” (in early modern England this word is used primarily by the inhabitants of one county or shire to refer to people from another English county). Similarly, I adopt for the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries the phrase “ethnic prejudice” to refer to the tribal xenophobia, often related to religious or national prejudice rather than to skin color, that was directed against groups perceived as foreign in early modern England. Stuart Hall’s well-known definition of “ethnicity” acknowledges the historical contingencies not only of events but also of the language we use and have used to define particular categories.

The term “ethnicity” acknowledges the place of history, language, and culture in the construction of subjectivity and identity, as well as the fact that all discourse is placed, positioned, situated, and all knowledge is contextual. Representation is possible only because enunciation is always produced within codes which have a history, a position within the discursive formations of a particular space and time.

But I wish also to retain the Renaissance associations of the word “ethn- i c k”: “a heathen . . . or Pagan, one that knoweth not God. ” Adding to Stuart Hall’s discussion an awareness of the word’s early modern sense of religious exclusion allows us to track the development of taxonomies of racial difference and skin color through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

These terms—like the concepts they evoke—cannot and should not be “pure” or situated safely in the past. Later chapters employ the term “caste” to refer to hierarchies based upon vocations to which one is only “called” by the accident of birth. I also appropriate the nineteenth-century coinage, “miscegenation,” or its Renaissance equivalent, “com- mixture,” to characterize the fear that sexual pollution or unhealthy mixing would occur if humans belonging to different races were to pro- duce children together. Such beliefs drove the anthropological division of humanity into distinct races or subspecies, Caucasian, Mongol, Negro, Malay, and American, an increasingly complicated scheme of racial classification that would dominate scientific and humanistic thinking about human societies from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries. Racial thinking begins to color not only the growing colonialism of the early modern period and its engagement with literature but also the representation of Britons and of their slaves. Through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries ethnic prejudice and mythologies of color decline in favor of racism and the fear of miscegenation.

I have called this book a dialogue, but perhaps better even than “dia- logue” would be the term “polyphony”: “the plurality of consciousness was not reduced to a single ideological common denominator.” Let me reiterate that I do not wish to construct an overarching narrative, a just-so story, about why and how race and racism came to extend to figure so largely in our lives. Early modern ethnic prejudice, xenophibia, and color prejudice, pernicious though they were, comprised a different structure of feeling from modern pseudoscientific racism. We can by all means point out the existence of, and the preconditions for, racism and color prejudice, but we should also acknowledge the competing structures of feeling that battle it, reinforce it, and (in the Renaissance) quash it. Otherwise, we end up creat- ing a version of history that is static and closed, rather than dynamic and open, a history that cannot take account of change and multiplicity. At the same time, one of the goals of a racially informed Renaissance liter- ary criticism should be to open up the study of race and encourage us to realize that protoracialized rhetoric is omnipresent in early modern texts, even in those without any “black” characters. For racial differ- ences—its existence and its significance—is not a constant. Notions of essential bodily variation, purity, and hierarchy emerge at different points in history, and they intersect in the twenty-first century with issues of gender, class, sexuality, power, aesthetics, and American academic pol- itics. A racially informed Renaissance criticism should therefore simulta- neously be a feminist criticism, a materialist criticism, a queer criticism, a new historicist criticism, a formal criticism, and an interventionist one. We cannot escape from our own mythologies of color, but we can continue to reimagine them, with the help of the shifting stories of the past.
Chapter 2

Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Black Bride

I continue to explore the transmission of ancient texts—and their negotiations among skin color, inherited characteristics, and religious belief—in early modern English culture by turning now to a Hebrew poem, the biblical Song of Songs, Canticles, or Song of Solomon. Like the Athithophela, the Song displays a heroine whose skin color is ambiguously related to her rank, her beauty, and her national origin. In the King James Version (KJV, 1611), she describes herself thus:

I am black, but comely. O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon. Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me; my mother’s children were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept.  

These verses raised a perplexing series of questions for early modern translators and poets, questions that continue to puzzle commentators today. Is the speaker excusing or celebrating her blackness? Should we translate her self-description as black, dark, or brown? Is her supposed blackness a reference to skin color, and if so, does her skin color reflect a particular national or geographical origin? Is she as "black as the tents of Kedar" because she comes from Kedar, in Arabia, or is the comparison purely a metaphor, with no geographical association or foreign origin implied?  

Early modern responses to these questions in exegeses and poetic translations of the Song’s functionally vague, as she is to the early modern anti-Petrarchan lyric—in particular, to the startling reversals of the Shakespearean sonnet. Exegesics commented upon the Song as though it were a narrative of conversion from "black" or sinful to "fair" or pure, with discrete events, characters, and conclusions. In the Geneva Bible (Geneva, 1560), the bride’s conversion from black to white represents the triumph of faith over works. Protestant churchmen oppose the bride’s black beauty to the painted beauties, dependent upon concealment and cosmetics, that they identify with the Catholic church. The Bishops’ Bible (Bishops’, 1568) calls her “blacker...but faire” to express the paradox of Anglicanism, neither decorated like the Catholic church, nor plain, like the Protestant sects in Geneva. And in Elizabethan and early Jacobean tracts, her blackness is usually a sign of her “Aethiopian” origin and therefore considered an emblem of Anglican tolerance.

Like twentieth-century poets and translators of the Song, however, early modern secular poets did not necessarily read the Song as a narrative poem, but as a lyric or even a series of lyrics, with obscure episodes, shape-shifting characters, and irresolution. When we read the Song in this way, rather than as a story, the progress from black to fair is by no means straightforward; it celebrates an ongoing moment of conflict rather than a chronological transformation. Responsive both to nuances about the role of poetry and the symbolic in religious life on the one hand, and to the new influx of African slaves to Britain on the other, the discourse of biblical exegesis on the subject of “racial” difference thus forms the residual matter in the production of English lyric poetry. The sonnets of Edward Herbert and Shakespeare, I will conclude, figure the supposed conversion of the black bride as a continuing battle between narrative and lyric itself.

The Narrative

Over centuries of commentary, scholars have read this mysterious book as a collection of unrelated love lyrics; an erotic poem about the sexual awakening of a Hebrew girl and her lover, a drama starring King Solomon, his black bride (often called “the Shulammite” or Queen of Sheba), and a rival lover; a praise poem, or an allegory of the love of the soul for God. It has been read mystically, allegorically, erotically, philosophically, anthropologically, poetically, and politically. Early modern commentators on the Song followed Aquinas’s model of four-fold biblical interpretation, finding a historical or literal level that chronicled actual historical events, and three allegorical or mystical levels. On the topological level, the historical personages of the Old Testament prefigured those of the New; on the analagical level, the events described shadowed those of the Christian church and the day of judgment; on the moral or topological level, the story allegorized the relationship of the individual Christian soul with Christ. The three allegorical levels were often confused, but on the literal level, Tudor and Stuart commentators read the Song as a narrative or a marriage song, and, lacking documentary evidence to prove the contrary, assumed that the Song was certainly about, and probably by, King Solomon himself.

The Song in Geneva, Bishops’, and KJV has the same narrative structure, a divine love story in which King Solomon wooes the bride. First, the bride claims she is “black” or unworthy, ill-used by her brothers who
make her tend another's vine, but asserts her desirability ("but comely," KJV, 1:5–6). The bridegroom praises her and calls her "fair" (KJV, 1:15) and promises to come to her that night, but when he arrives at the door she tarry's in opening it and when she finally flings open the door he "hath found thee, thou art fair, yea very fair;" the bride wanders the streets, "wounded" by the watchmen who guard the door, beseeching the "daughters of Jerusalem" to find her love, whom she describes as "white and ruddy, the chiepest among ten thousand" (KJV, 5:6–10). Reunited, the lovers wander in the "wilderness" and return to the city, the bride adorning her friends not to awaken her lover until he is ready (KJV, 8:5, 8:4).

Explanations for the bride's self-description as black in the early modern period varied on all four levels, literal, typological, analogical, and tropological. Linda Van Norden finds sixteen commentaries between 1549 and 1675 that identify the bride with the Church, blackened by nearly a dozen different afflictions. With the benefit of a wider body of later scholarship and more sophisticated research tools, I have found more than twenty commentaries between 1549 and 1662 alone. These treatises offer an even more dizzying array of explanations for the bride's blackness: affliction, Anglicanism, antiquity, apostasy, Araban origin, blindness, bruising, chastisements, church troubles, conversion, corruption, damnation, dawn, defection of Solomon, deformity, divinity, dispersal of the ten tribes, division of the kingdom, Egyptian origin, election, Ethiopian origin, Ethiopian supremacy over Israel, fall of Rehoboam, foolishness, frailty, Gentiles, history, horror, humility, idolatry, illusion, infuriation, impurity, menstruation, mourning, original sin, outward appearance, persecution, punishment, redivisism, recusancy, sorrow, stoning to death, subjugation to a tyrannous king, suffering, sunburn, terror, tribulation, tricks of the Catholic church and Islam, vileness, virginity, weakness of the flesh, wealth (spiritual and material), and works.

Most of the commentaries combine several types of explanation at once, like Antonio Brucioli's (1598). Brucioli interprets the bride as a figure for the Christian soul, with her blackness a sign of sin (on the moral level). On a literal level, her blackness slips between being a bodily characteristic (she is vile and humble in her black body, he suggests) and merely a mote in the eye of the beholder (she is black only to fools, but fair to wise men). Most important to Brucioli, however, is her status on the analogical level, as a reminder of the end of the world and the perils of eternal punishment. He associates blackness with a temporary, earthly, bodily state of being, faithless with "eternall and everlasting goods" and heavenly permanence. The most redemptive aspect of blackness for him is its association with humility and with mortality; blackness reminds Christians that earthly life is temporary, while heavenly life is immortal.

In arguing that blackness is a sign of a temporary state of being, Brucioli contradicts other theories of color, such as heraldry, which identify black or "sable" as "the ancientsest amongst colours" and as a sign of permanence, constancy, and antiquity. Gervase Markham's Poem of Rome (1596) refers to the "theories of color only to break down the association of black with permanence by calling the bride's "Sable tincture" "decaying old." Markham praises not the bride's age but "youths features," the renewal of faith that the bridegroom's arrival brings. "Tincture" suggests paint or gilding, and a few lines later, Markham compresses references to paint, along with several alternative Renaissance explanations for blackness (allegorical as well as physical), in a single stanza:

Dusky me not because of blacke attaint,  
For why the scorching sunne hath kist my brow,  
And with his eieballs, on my cheeks doth paint,  
What sinne-afflicting nature doth show  
Through the corruption of her broken vow.  

The bride is black because of dirt ("blacke attaint"), sunburn ("scorching sunne"), cosmetics ("painted"), "sinne," decaying ("corruption"), and recusancy ("broken vow"). Markham implies that, if the bride were free from sin and fallen human "nature," the sun could not have painted her with sunburn; the image of the sun kissing and painting her with her eyeballs is perhaps deliberately grotesque.

"Ethiopian Beauty"

British Renaissance divines most consistently claimed the poem represented Christ's marriage with the church, in particular, with the Church of England. They developed this reading from that of the church fathers, notably Origen, whose commentaries and homilies on the Song were translated by S. Jerome. Subsequently edited by Desiderius Erasmus and republished along with Jerome's Bible (the Vulgate) in the sixteenth century, Origen's commentaries on the Song went through several editions. He took the bride to figure the Church of the Gentiles and the bridegroom to figure Christ. The so-called "Origenist heresy" denied any literal or historical level of meaning to the Song, treating it as though it were only about the Gentiles and Christ, but Origen himself does not deny the historical level. In particular, he insists that it is the very blackness of the bride in Canticles that renders her beautiful and, as I observed in my previous chapter, he finds examples of biblical "Ethiopians" as Moses' Ethiopian wife (Num. 12:1), the Queen of Sheba
or "the queen of the South" (Matt. 12:42; Ebed melech, the saintly Ethiopian eunuch (Jer. 38 and 39), and the Ethiopian governor baptized by Philip (Acts 8:26), to prove his point. We may recall that Origen repeats Jerome's Christian gloss on Jeremiah's rhetorical question, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?" (Jer. 13:23), and argues that Christ enables both these metamorphoses, converting the proverb itself from an allegory of incorrigibility into one of regeneration.

Origen argues that the black bride in the Song of Songs is beautiful in both her physical, dark-skinned body and, once Christ has bleached away her sins, in her soul. He imagines her uttering a spirited defense of her beauty:

I am indeed black, O daughters of Jerusalem, in that I cannot claim descent from famous men, neither have I received the enlightenment of Moses's Law. But I have my own beauty, all the same. For in me too there is that primal thing, the Image of God wherein I was created, and, coming now to the Word of God, I have received my beauty... I am black indeed by reason of my lowly origin; but I am beautiful through penitence and faith.

Origen ventriloquistizes the bride's blackness as beautiful because it represents the "primal... Image of God," spirit rather than flesh, transformed by the word of God; he evokes theological and classical commentaries that consider blackness an emblem of Chaos, as the "darkness" that precedes the "light" at the Creation.

Origen is at first careful to distinguish between the pejorative metaphor in the charge of "blackness" that the daughters of Jerusalem bring against the bride, and her physical body, which he insists possesses both "natural beauty" and "that which is acquired by practice." He seems to take the bride's conversion, from dark to light-skinned, to apply to a purely spiritual state, explaining that she is "black" with sin, as we all are, and burnt by the "sun of justice," "black" in the eyes of the daughters of Jerusalem because she is a Gentile and cannot claim the blood of the Fathers. In this he contradicts the Jewish tradition that reads the bride as Israel and her blackness as the metaphorical rendering of her sufferings as a slave in Egypt.

A modern commentator points out that "by dint of some fancy exegetical footwork, Origen... undermine[s] his own positive approach to the theology of negritude." At one point Origen denies that the bride's skin color is a "natural blackness" from the sun's brightness, such as the Ethiopians transmit to their offspring, and calls her negritude instead the result of the burning of the "sun of justice." The sun of justice can both blacken and blanch sinners' skins, but neither of these effects is natural, neither color innate. It darkens believers when they sin but bleaches them when they repent. Origen also associates 'blackness' with

Christian humility and constancy, because, he believes, its hue remains constant while lighter skins blush or grow pale, an argument that, as we shall see in later chapters, Shakespeare's Aaron in Titus Andronicus and Barnfield's Daphnis in The Affectioate Shepherd both repeat. The bride's Ethiopian origins remain important, however; after purification and repentance, "your soul will indeed be black because of your old sins, but your penitence will give it something of what I may call an Ethiopian beauty."

An "Ethiopian beauty" is a mark of special redemption. For Origen, the bride's Ethiopian blackness is beautiful because it marks her necessary difference from the daughters of Jerusalem. In marrying an Ethiopian, Solomon opens the kingdom of the Jews to foreigners, an act of exogamy that prefigures Christ's extending grace to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews. The Ethiopian bride becomes not just a convert but the means by which others are brought to Christ. Origen explicitly identifies color prejudice with what he calls an outdated Jewish tradition rather than the Christian, reading Aaron's dislike of Moses's Ethiopian wife as the typological precursor of the Jews' refusal to convert:

Let the Aaron of the Jewish priesthood murmur, and let the Mary of their synagogue murmur too... Ethiopia shall get her hands in first with God. It is well said that she shall get in first; for... Ethiopia [has] been healed while Israel is still sick.

As we shall see, Renaissance commentators concur with Origen's view that the Song praises Ethiopia over Israel, and share his hostility to Jews, but they primarily interpret "Ethiopia" as a reference to the British church, "healed" while the Church of Rome "is still sick." The reformed Protestant church becomes the bride who is called "black" by the Catholic church but who in fact is the "whitest" of all because of her purification by God. The association of the black bride and the true church establishes a link between the Englishman and the Ethiopian bride: "Ethiopia shall get her hands in first with God."

Melanophobia

There are three major problems in translating Song 1:5-6: (1) Is the bride black and comely, or black but comely? (2) Is she black, blackish, brown, brownish, tawny, swart, dusky, dark, or some combination thereof? (3) Is her dark skin evidence of a particular geographic or national origin, or is her blackness the temporary result of a suntan? Let us take these questions in order.

Origen gives Song 1:5 as "Nigra sum & speciosa filia Hierusalem, ut tabernacula cedar: ut pelles Solomonis," "I am black and lovely, daughters
of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar: as the hangings of Solomon. The Vulgate, however, gives "nigra sum sed formosâ, "I am black but comely." We might call these two options emphatic blackness versus exclamatory blackness. As Frank Snowden observes, the Septuagint and the early Patristic writings give and. Most modern translations likewise give "black and beautiful" for the Hebrew. Blackness is here a condition of beauty, not a contrast with it. The four major Renaissance English translations, however—Geneva, Bishops’, KJV, and the Catholic Rheims-Donai—all treat the bride’s blackness as a contradiction, a surprise, in the context of her beauty and desirability. The translators of the Douai Bible believed that the Latin Vulgate was closer to God’s word than the Septuagint and so followed it strictly. The Protestant translators, however, boasted of their return to “the original Greek and Ebrue” (Geneva, subtitle). Why then replace “and” with “but”? Marvin Pope dismisses the Protestant preference for but over and as what he calls “melanophobia,” or fear of blackness. But according to Ariel and Chana Bloch, the variations between but and and spring from a genuine ambiguity in the Hebrew, where the conjunctive we may be used either in its common meaning ‘and’ or in an adversative sense. They conclude that the bride may be either excusing her blackness or emphasizing it as a sign of her beauty. While the Blochs concede that both interpretations of the bride’s blackness are possible, Marcia Falk argues that the Hebrew conjunction we-sach [me] means ‘and’ far more commonly than ‘but’; the standard translations are based on the unfortunate assumption that blackness and beauty are contradictory. In their translation itself, Bloch and Bloch agree with Falk, rendering the phrase as “dark . . . and beautiful,” regarding the bride’s statement of blackness as emphatic rather than exculpatory.

But the next verse raises a second series of questions, this time about not only the tone of the bride’s statement but about the degree of her blackness. In “Look not on me because I am black” (KJV, 1:6), the Hebrew word for “black” (bəḥōrâh) is slightly different (ṣâhoraḥ)—a hapax legomenon, or unique usage in the Hebrew Bible (the Song of Songs has the highest rate of hapax legomena in this corpus). Some readers take the change to indicate a diminution of the bride’s blackness. Jerome translates the second “black” as fusa, “dark” or “brown,” in contrast to nega, “black,” in the previous verse; Henry Ainsworth (1623) gives “brown” and NRSV gives “dark” where it gave “black” before. Others, however, read the second “black” as at least as strong as the first, if not stronger. The Septuagint gives “black” as in the previous verse; Geneva “black,” Bishops “so black.” KJV “black.” The Blochs retain their first translation, “dark,” and Falk gives “black as the light before dawn.”

While Pope notes that Hebrew lexicographers usually distinguish between two similar-sounding words (ṣâh I and ṣâh II) that mean “dark” and “dawn” respectively, Falk argues that there is a deliberate pun in the text that explains the paradox of darkness that comes from the sun, the source of light. John Roberton had argued the same thing in 1652:

The Hebrew word here translated blacka, signifies blackness, or darkness; and therefore the Hebrew word Miskhâr is taken from the same roote, which signifieth the morning, or the day-dawning, because of the blackness or darkness thereof.78

Falk uses this paradox of dark or black light to translate the bride’s words triumphantly: “Yes, I am black! and radiant—.” Blackness for Falk is a poetic device expressing mystery and magnificence, and she reads the references to Kedar and to Solomon’s curtains as “parallel,” both expressing concealed, dark beauty.

NRSV, in contrast, takes the references to the bride’s blackness and to Kedar as allusions to the bride’s dark skin, which it interprets as a sign of a particular ethnic origin: “The new bride is dark because she is from Kedar in northern Arabia, where a tribe lived that was linked with Abraham’s son, Ishmael” (NRSV, 1:5n.). Origen likewise takes the bride’s blackness to be a reference to her dark skin, although he argues that she is Ethiopian rather than Arabian. NRSV, Origen and Falk all describe the bride’s blackness as emphatic, but for Falk it is a primarily poetic device to convey mystery, not an accurate description of her skin. The bride’s blackness may be beautiful, but she is not necessarily foreign. Kedar and Solomon are not references to actual places or historical figures, but metaphors that evoke a sense of opulence. Like Falk, the Blochs emphasize the bride’s blackness, and the allusions to Kedar and Solomon as poetic devices that evoke romantic associations, rather than as statements of ethnic origin or historical fact. They call the bride’s darkness “sunburned skin . . . associated with a lower social status, a fair complexion being the mark of those who could afford to work outdoors,” and explain the “tents of Kedar” as a reference to the tents of “nomadic Bedouin . . . typically woven from the wool of black goats.” They read “Solomon’s tapiseries” as a reference to his kingly splendor, so that “black” qualifies the reference to Kedar (they find a pun on Kedar and qârê, the root of the verb “to be black”) and “beautiful” the tapiseries. Such metaphors are orientalizing, in Edward Said’s sense, because they use allusions to an exotic foreign part of the world purely to evoke a contrast and to assert the bride’s fundamental similarity to the daughters of Jerusalem, which is concealed by her superficial blackness.
"blacke... therewithall comiler"

These debates about the tone of the bride’s self-assessment, the degree of her blackness, and its significance, were current in translations of the Song throughout the Renaissance. Henoch Clapham’s translation of the Song (1603) describes the bride as “blacke (o ye daughters of Jerusalem) and to be desired.” This is a literal translation of Martin Luther’s “Nigra sum, sed desiderabilis, filiae Hierosolymae” in his brief comments on the Song in 1539. As Kim Hall observes, Ainsworth’s translation ‘includes both the phrases ‘I am black, and comely’ and ‘I am black, but am pleasing comely.’’ Ainsworth explains the “opposition” thus: “as blackness is in the colour and skin, so sometimes is in the parts, features and proportion of the body.” The distinction he makes between skin color and shapeliness possibly comes from the Vulgate, which gives formosa, well formed or comely, rather than pulchra, beautiful, in the bride’s praise.

Dudley Fenner’s translation of the Song of Songs (1587) words the bride’s beauty and her defense more strongly than Ainsworth’s, declaring:

Be it that I am blacke, 
howe be it so as I 
O daughters of Jerusalem 
am therewithall comiler. 
Graunt that like to the Tentes 
Of Kedar I remaine, 
Yet like I am to those that dwell 
in Solomon’s curtayne.  

Fenner carefully glosses “howe be it so as” to show us the meaning of the original Hebrew, which he gives as “and, or notwithstanding.” We might wonder whether his lengthy circumlocution arises from the uncomfortable exigencies of Poulter’s Measure; indeed, thirteen lines after “howe be it so as,” Fenner has to introduce the awkward “Or for because that I” instead of the straightforward “or because I” that the sense requires. Common Meter, Poulter’s Measure, or even old-fashioned “fourteeners” need not, however, be quite so heavy-handed. Drayton used fourteeners mellifluously four years later to translate the same verse:

Ye daughters of Jerusalem, although that browse I bee, 
Than aris rich or cedars fruits I seemeller am to see: 
Disdain me not, although I be not passing fair. 
For why, the glissing sunny raises discollours have my lye. 

Her “lire” may be her “leer” or “appearance,” or perhaps her “dwelling-place.”

Yet Fenner is not simply a bad poet. While Drayton sacrifices accuracy to euphony, turning the guttural “black” into “browne,” the harsh “Kedars tentes” into the lively evocative “cedars fruits,” and removing the reference to Solomon, Fenner valiantly attempts to turn the Song into verse and remain true to his Hebrew. “Howe be it so as” attempts to keep both meanings, and as well as notwithstanding, in circulation, along with the opposing attitudes towards black beauty that each term implies. Black and comely gives each term equal weight, does not assume that blackness precludes beauty, and even hints that blackness is part of the bride’s charm. Black and notwithstanding comely excuses the bride’s negligence by weighing her beauty against her skin tone. Even notwithstanding, however, maintains a certain vagueness, during the sixteenth century it is used not just to mean “in spite of” but also like a Latin ablative absolute, to indicate a syntactical relationship between two terms: “Being black, I am comely,” might be an apt equivalent. Fenner employs a similar ambiguity with “Therewithall” (glossed “ident,” that is, the same as above). OED gives “therewithal” as meaning first c’n add’ sion to. In fact the comparative “comiler” suggests a degree of cau sation: the bride’s blackness, which Fenner equates both with Ethiopian origin and with sin, makes her all the more beautiful in the eyes of her beloved.

Fenner’s notes upon his translation, however, qualify his description of her as all the “comiler” for her blackness by describing the “principal places of beautie” as “both cheeks and necke... adorned with ornaments of the Spirit, as grateau, as rews of precious stones, or gorgeous collers of great price.” His translation demonstrates an encounter between the residual religious myth of black religious conversion and the emergent early modern connection between blackness and material wealth. His bride’s blackness is beautiful because it sets off her jewels all the better (just as Shakespeare’s Juliet shines “like a rich jewel in an Ethiope’s ear” [Rom., I.3.46] next to the other Capulet ladies). Heraldry is again illuminating: the combination of “Argent, and... Sable,” silver and black, in heraldry is called “Most fairest,” because “Argent will be seen in the darkest place that is, and contrariwise, Sable will bee scene in the most clearest light that may be.”

And when Fenner characterizes the bride’s adornments, rather than her body, as attractive, he presupposes the ways in which African house servants in England would over the course of the next century be kept and treated as beautiful household furniture. The slave trade had begun in the 1610s, when Portuguese merchants, claiming they wanted to “save” the Africans they met by converting them to Christianity, kid napped 235 people from Guinea (one of whom became a Franciscan
Sixty. 1. England at first held a good reputation among the Guineans, who distinguished between the Portuguese and Spanish, who came to kidnap them, and the English merchants, who came to look for gold. However, five men traveled from Ghana to England. John Lok’s well-known contemporary account refers to them as “blacke slaves” (the marginal gloss, “fuye blacke Moores”) (PN, 6:176), but Towerson suggests that they were translators employed to enlist African support for the British against the Portuguese, who had established a trading monopoly on the Ivory Coast (6:200). Towerson’s account admits that the men had been carried away “perforce” (6:205), but reassures an indignant compatriot that the men will return as soon as their English is adequate:

he demanded why we had not brought againe their men, which the last yere we took away .... we made him assure, that they were in England well used, and were there kept till they could speake the language, and then they should be brought againe to be a helpe to Englismen in this Country. (6:200)

Upon their return to Ghana “with much joy” on the part of “the people ... specially one of their brothers wives, and one of their aunts” (6:218), they did indeed act as intermediaries between their countrymen and the English, convincing them that it was safe to trade metal with the English ships. Peter Fraser finds further evidence of their free status in Lok’s narrative as a whole, which emphasizes gold and ivory as the valuable commodities to be found in Africa, not the bodies of Africans themselves, and the Africans’ “wary” skill in trading.80

The 1560s saw John Hawkins’s three slaving voyages; despite their overall failure, there is evidence of a black presence in Tudor England from the second half of the sixteenth century onward, one large enough to cause Elizabeth some consternation. Africans brought to Britain during the 1590s served as living pawns exchanged between the English and the Spanish in their long hot-and-cold war. On July 11, 1596, the queen wrote a now infamous “open letter to the Lord Mayor of London” complaining that “there are of late divers black moores brought into this realme, of which kinde of people there are allready here to mane.” Such people, she continues, take work away from native-born Englishmen, who then “for want of service and means to sett them on work fall to idlenesse and to great extremite.” She urges the bearer, Edward Baines, to deport the ten “blackmoores” recently brought to London by Sir Thomas Baskerville. On the eighteenth, the Queen issued “an open warrant” to the Lord Mayor and other “publicke officers” requiring them to help Lubeck merchant Caspar van Senden “to take up [89] blackamoors here in this realme and to transport them into Spaine and Portugall.” Fryer calls this an “ustute” political move rather than an attack of blind xenophobia; the queen had already arranged to exchange Africans for 89 imprisoned Englishmen set free by Van Senden “at his owne cost and charges.”81

In some opposition, Elizabeth urges three kinds of nationalism on her Londoners in order to convince them to give up their servants. First, she describes the duty of a subject to the monarch (“her Majesty’s good pleasure”), and second, the duty of a host to a guest and “stranger,” twice in the same document (the “charitable affection” of Van Senden to the imprisoned Englishmen, despite “being a stranger” and “the good deserving of the stranger towards her Majesty’s subjectes”). Third and most important, she urges (again, more than once) the duty of one Christian to another. “Christian people ... perseve for want of service”, reluctant masters “shall doe charitably and like Christians rather to be served by their owne contrarym,” she insists. At the turn of the century, the queen treated out the Christian motive once more when she renewed Van Senden’s license for “taking such Negroes and blackamoors to be transported” out of the realm. In 1601, Elizabeth engages religious or religious prejudice, blaming them not only for taking jobs and food from native Britons, but also “for that the most of them are infidels having no understanding of Christ or his Gospel.” Such arguments may not have been effective, since the letter concludes with a threat to recalcitrant masters: “if they shall ensoons willfully and obstinately refuse, we pray you to certify their names to us, to the end her majesty may take such further course therein as it shall seem best in her princely wisdom.”82

Africans in London suffered a dubious legal status (as I shall discuss in Chapter 8), neither slave nor free, paid for their labor yet liable to deportation on political grounds. They might have served in the fields of entertainment, trade, interpreting, or sex-work. Parish records in London note servants, musicians, and a “black sailor,” and some scholars even identify the so-called “Dark Lady” of Shakespeare’s Sonnets with the “Lucy Negro” named in the Gray’s Inn Christmas Revels of 1594 as the “Abbes de Clekenwell,” or London Madam.83 But later in the early modern period the body of the black slave herself, rather than her decorations, becomes part of a meretricious display of conspicuous consumption. By the turn of the century, an African in Britain presented, as Kim Hall has argued, “an object in the midst of other objects” : chained in gold, with silver “collars riveted round their necks,” portrayed as expensive jewels and adorned with the same, but captive nonetheless—a sinister light upon Fenner’s description of black beauty in terms of “collers” or “precious stones.”84 Compare, too, Keew’s 1662 description of the bride’s black comeliness negatively, with “no blemish or deformed spot,” as if she is being advertised, and adorn her in what seem to be literal trappings: “rich jewels set in rows,” and chains of gold.85
"metamorphocall toyes"

Fenner’s account implicitly distinguishes between the use of paint or cosmetics on “cheeks and necke” that we will encounter in the next section of this book, “Whiteness Visible,” and the use of ornament or decoration; the one conceals its wealth through deception, the other displays it through ostentation. His praise of ornamentation might seem to contradict the Protestant movement away from statues and decorations. But the position of the Song as a book of poetry (the “poem of poems,” as Markham calls it) made it central to debates about the function of ornamentation, allegory, and poetry itself for Protestant, Anglican, and Catholic divines, as well as for poets and writers. These debates interpreted the bride’s black beauty as a defense of a particular kind of ornamentation: Genevan blackness against Roman paint, Lewalski, John Pendergast, and others have examined these debates within Protestantism, and concluded that just because there was a strand of Protestant rhetoric that disapproved ornamentation, that did not mean that Protestant writers and preachers ceased to use it altogether. All that the distrust of ornament meant was that images could be used in the service of religion, as long as they were recognized as signs rather than as referents, rendered meaningful for their relation to symbolism (especially biblical symbolism) rather than as symbols themselves. Thus Fenner’s insistence that the bride wears “ornaments of the Spirit” tries to reconcile the sensual and sensory beauty of the Song with his Protestant dislike of decoration. Hill points out that Fenner, exiled from Britain for his youthful beliefs, carefully avoided the ornaments of scarlet, fine linen, silk gold, organs, cope, surplices . . . to the Babylonian trumpet,” that is, the Roman Catholic church.46

In choosing the Song for his text, Fenner was asserting its rightful place in the canon; he spends several pages justifying its inclusion to those who consider it to be only a love poem. In praising the bride’s ornaments, he was asserting the right of the Protestant church to use images, ornamentation, and allegory. Other Protestants treat the Song as a test case for the value of poetry itself. Jud Smith (1585) contrasts the poetry of the Song to the popular, secular “metamorphocall toyes” of Chaucer and Ovid.47 Smith claims that a reader who wishes to find real poetry and a story of spiritual rather than physical metamorphosis, should turn to the biblical Song of Songs rather than to the Ovidian myth of Actaeon. In Sions Sorts (1629), Francis Quarles justifies both the content of poetry and its form, praising the bride’s mouth for uttering “Sacred Poesie,” which he glosses as “Divine harmonie”:

Thy lips (my dearest Spouse) are the full Treasures
Of Sacred Poesie, whose heavenly measures

Poetry is the combination of words and music in “heavenly measures” (12tr), the perfect way of instructing through delight. Christopher Jelinger (1641) argues that, given that the Pope presents a “glistering, and glorious . . . rose” to the Catholics every year, it is a Protestant minister’s duty to do the same, by offering a sermon on the Song of Songs.48 The Song, he continues, comes between Proverbs and Ecclesiastes because Proverbs indicates the moral life, Ecclesiastes the natural, and Song, the contemplative; the way of reaching the contemplative life is through “mystere,” or poetry.49 Joshua Sprigg’s commentary on the Song (1648) calls rhyme a symbol of divine harmony and the peaceful coexistence of different churches, ages, and human souls; “God makes one time or age to Rhime to another; one Christians heart, condition, temptations to Rhime to another.”50 Metaphor, likewise, is a divine gift, “not only meat but sauce” to the Scriptures.51

“bitter notis”

Given the centrality of the Song and its rich symbolism for debates at the heart of the schism between Catholic and Reformed churches, the marginal glosses interpreting the text in Geneva and Bishops’ were areas of religious warfare. When an “English lady” gave James VI of Scotland a copy of Geneva, he complained that the notes were “very partial, untrue, seditious, and savouring too much of dangerous conceits.”52 The Geneva commentators interpret the bride’s delay in opening the door to the bridgroom, his subsequent absence, and her sorrow, as the Catholic church’s ultimate disappointment in finding that works alone will not lead to salvation. “The spouse . . . shall not finde [Christ] if she thinke to anoint him with her good works,” explain the annotations on “I rose up to open to my wellbeloved, and mine hands did droppe downe myrthe, and my fingers pure myrrie uppon the handels of the barre” (Geneva, 5:5). Similarly, “the watchmen” who “smote and wounded” the seeking bride are “false teachers, which wounde ye conscience with their traditions” (5:7). Compare the NRSV on the same verse: it turns the bride’s sloth in opening the door into bathos, a purely mechanical failure when “the bride’s fingers slip upon the bolt because her hands "drip . . . with myrth" and "the king . . . becomes impatient as she tries to slide the bolt and admit him” (NRSV, 5:5n.).

The Geneva glosses to the Song regard the relationship between the
bride and bridegroom not as the marriage of Israel and Yahweh, as the Jewish interpreters had suggested, but as the marriage of the true (Protestant) church with Christ. The marginal notes interpret “blacke” but comelie” as “The Church confesseth her spots and sinne, but hathe confidence in ye faver of Christ.” This seems like a mild example of the opinionated Calvinistic glosses that James found so objectionable, but its bias is clear nonetheless. “Confidence in ye faver of Christ” is a call to arms: tropologically, the Song was interpreted as the union of the Christian soul with Christ, but the Geneva Song insists that such a union can be effected only through faith and individual election (Christ’s “favour”), not through works. This Protestant emphasis on faith over works is anticipated by the figure of the black and comely bride in William Baldwin’s verse translation of the Song (1549):

Why I am blacke an other cause there is
My mothers sonses (for Eve is mother of all)
Fell out with me, the cause whereof is this:
I damne my workses, on Christes mercies I call.88

Baldwin dedicated his translation to Edward VI, whose Protestant sympathies were well known. This bride is a vocal advocate of Protestantism and is blackened both by the calumnies of her brothers and by her works, which prevent her from having faith in Christ and being saved. When she receives Christ in faith, she becomes “fayre” and “beautified” by him.89

Geneva’s translation of the Song separates “blacke” and “comelie” by the address to the daughters of Jerusalem, emphasizing the bride’s blackness before qualifying it:

I am blacke, 0 daughters of Jerusalem, but comelie, as the frutes of Kedar, & as the curtinmes of Solomon.

Regarde ye me not because I am blacke: for the same hath looked upon me.
The sonses of my mother were angrie against me; they made me the keper of the vines but I kept not mine own vine. (Geneva, 1:4-5)

It gives “frutes of Kedar” rather than “tents of Kedar,” emphasizing the supposed lineage of Kedar from Ishmael, “of whom came the Arabians [that] dwell in tents” (Geneva, 1:4). Elizabeth detested the Geneva Bible as much as James did, and requested that her Authorized Version, Bishops’, should follow Coverdale’s Great Bible (1539). Henry VIII’s Authorized Version, as far as possible and avoid “bitter notis yppon any text . . . Lightness[,] or obscenite.”90 In practice, Bishops’ “for the most part . . . happily reprinted the Great Bible text with, now and then, a revision introduced from the Geneva Bible.”91 In comparison to Geneva, Bishops’ often seems wordy and profluse, and the Song is no exception:

I am blacke (0 ye daughters of Hierusalem) but yet fayre and well favered, like as the tentes of the Cedarmen, and as the hangings of Solomon.

Mayvale not at mee that I am so blacke, for why? the Sonne hath shined upon me: my mothers children have evil will at me; they made me the keper of the vineyards, but mine owne vineyard have I not kept. (Bishops’, 1:4-5)

Gerald Hammond, with some justification, calls Bishops’ “either a lazy and ill-informed collation . . . or . . . the work of third-rate scholars and second-rate writers.”92 But Bishops’ prolixity in this instance is no accident but the deliberate representation of a specific political position. Bishops’ more strongly the paradox of the bride’s beauty by doubling “but” and “yet” and by pairing “blacke” with “fayre.” Black and fair are opposites, but it is through the union of these two opposites that the Elizabethan church can flourish. As many of the commentators maintain, the Anglican church’s strength and righteousness derive from its balance. “The Elizabethan settlement” supposedly struck a “via media” or middle way between the extreme Protestant belief in redemption through faith and election alone and the Roman Catholic belief in redemption through works and ritual alone. “Bishops’ notes to the Song gloss “the floweres are come up” (Bishops’, 2:12) as good works, and “the voice of the turtell doth” as the voice of the Holy Spirit, in a combination of faith and works. When the bridegroom abandons the bride in 5:6, he does not because the Church has sinned but because “she would strike up in them a greater desire of him.” There is a more direct statement of ecumenism in 6:8: “there are threscoes Queenes, fourscore Wives, and damosels without number” apparently means “There bee many in the Church of God, and divers orders and degrees within,” and in the following verse, “one is my dove” is glossed “Divers particular Churches dispersed, make but one Catholique Church” (Bishops’, 6:9). After the religious turmoil of previous decades, the Elizabethan Anglican church was interested in fostering compromise: if radical Protestants demanded faith, and Roman Catholics demanded ritual, Elizabethan Anglicans demanded “faith in ritual.”

Bishops’ notes on the Song, while more circumspect than Geneva’s, make this paradoxical position clear by emphasizing the role of the Eucharist—a ritual—in Christian redemption—through faith. Bishops’ glosses “blacke” simply as “through the spots of sinne and persecution,” and “fayre” as “thorowe faith in the blood of Christ”; “fayre, thorowe faith in the blood of Christ,” balances the Geneva dependence on Christ’s “favour,” redemption through election, with the power of doctrinal acts.
Faith in the Eucharist, “the blood of Christ,” the ritual, is as important as faith in divine election. Pendergast suggests that the Eucharist functions as a sacrament for Protestants not because the host becomes Jesus’s body (as the Catholics believed) but because of “the interaction and participation of the faithful with the symbols” of that faith: “by receiving the symbol in faith the redemptive act is done.” Nevertheless, Catholic and Protestant acknowledge “the symbolic reality of mediation, without which no sign system can flourish.” In other words, even the Protestant interaction between believer and symbol during the Eucharist cannot occur without the presence of another level of meaning. The notes to the Anglican Bishops’ Bible attempt to resolve this paradox by emphasizing the believer’s need for faith, not just in Christ alone but, as importantly, in the Church’s symbolism. Individual Christian faith is necessary for redemption, as the extreme Protestants believed, but acts of worship and liturgy were suitable vehicles for the expression of this faith, as the Catholics believed.

“The British Church”

The battle between works and faith figures as female competition and decorum in George Herbert’s “The British Church,” which most explicitly associates the Catholic church with “painted” fairness and the Protestant with “undrest” simplicity:

She on the hills, which wantonly
Allureth all in hope to be
By her preferred,
Hath kissed so long her painted shrines,
That ev’n her face by kissing shames.
For her reward,
She in the valley is so shy
Of dressing, that her hair doth lie
About her ears.
While she avoids her neighbour’s pride,
She wholly goes on th’other side,
And nothing wears.

Herbert’s strictures against the Roman church, “wantonly” alluring, seem at first to be more forceful than the charges laid against the Genevan, until we learn that the latter “wholly goes on th’other side.” His language echoes the parable of the Good Samaritan, who rescued a wounded man abandoned by a priest and a Levite who had “passed by on the other side” without helping him (KJV, Lk. 10:30–37). Extreme Protestantism denies succor to the spiritually needy because the doctrine of predestination excludes all those who have not been elected to grace, just as the priest and the Levite ignored the man’s sufferings because they did not believe he was the “neighbour.”

Herbert’s “British church” is “Neither too mean, nor yet too gay,” neither too plain nor too gaily. Several lines later, he switches from using “mean” as an adjective to employing it as a noun in order to praise the church for a different kind of “mean.” Aristotle’s golden mean or balance, that renders her unique: “the mean thy praise and glory is.” Like a girl on the marriage market, the church should be neither “wantonly” alluring nor “shy” and reserved, but pleasingly inviting. Donne, characteristically, employs the same concept more outrageously, comparing the Roman church to a proud and “painted” harlot, the Genevan to an unattractive, “rob’d and tore” mourning widow, and the true church to a happy, available housewife, who “is most trew, and pleasing to thee, then / When she is embrac’d and open to most men.” This hierarchy, which places a satisfied (and shared) spouse above either an unmarried woman or a mourning widow, directly contradicts the Roman Catholic value of celibacy over marriage.

Herbert and Donne praise female concern for appearance because, according to Anglican theology, dismissing appearance altogether indicates not a fine disregard for the flesh but a disrespect for the church and for public worship. The Elizabethan Settlement required only outward conformity; one’s own beliefs did not matter as long as one attended church along with one’s neighbors. Elizabeth’s compromise was both practical and compassionate: not faith, but the appearance of faith was necessary. Religious leaders justified the settlement on theological grounds. Donne stresses this need for sacramental reverence very logically in his sermons:

He that undervalues outward things, in the religious service of God, though he begin at ceremonial and ritual things, will come quickly to call Sacraments but outward things, and Sermons, and publick prayers, but outward things, in contempt . . . Beloved, outward things apparel God, and since God was content to take a body, let us not leave him naked.

Geneva’s distaste for dressing becomes in Donne’s sermon a reproach on behalf of Christ himself, who desired to wear the very “body” that the extreme Protestants scorn. Donne neatly turns the terms of the settlement from a practical compromise into a precondition for conversion, while the appearance of faith is all that’s required, merely the act of appearing faithful and attending church will work a conversion in the churchgoer’s heart.
Anglican Reading

Clapham uses his translation of the Song to expound a model of literary criticism that we could call Anglican reading, a middle way between the heresies of the Catholic church and those of the extreme Protestants. His dedicatory epistle to King James balances “gladness-sadness and sad-gladness” at the deep “blacke . . . bass” bell tolling for Elizabeth’s death and the high-pitched “silverie-one” pealing for James’s coronation; like the bride in Bishops’ translation, England is both black and fair (A2r).

In Clapham’s preface the reigns of Elizabeth and James symbolize a return to order, and Clapham offers his translation as a nationalistic project that is inseparably tied up with religion. He connects modes of reading the Scriptures, and in particular, the various interpretations of the bride’s blackness, with different kinds of religious heresy. On the one hand, the Origenists, the Evangelical FAMILISTS, and the Roman Catholics read everything as a “fanatike forme of Allegorizing” (A6v), treating the Song as though it were only an allegory about the relationship of Christ and the church of the Gentiles (the so-called Origenist fallacy), or only about the individual Christian soul (the Familists), or only about the Virgin Mary (the Roman reading). On the other hand, he argues, by treating the Song as though it applied only to present-day conflicts within the Christian church, radical Protestants ignore the allegorical level and focus only on the literal-historical level. Clapham’s definitions of “allegory” and “historie” are different from a modern reader’s; he does not consider topical or political readings to be allegorical, but literal. (The idea of reading the Song in a truly “literal” manner, as a sexually explicit love poem, does not occur to him. Here, again, he may be influenced by Luther, who denies the allegorical readings of the Church Fathers in favor of a literal reading that identifies the spouse with the State and her blackness with its discontented citizens.)

Clapham attempts to offer instead a reading that takes account of “Historie and Mysterie, Shadow and Substance, Signe and Thing Signified” (A6v). The Song is about the love of Christ and his church, and about the individual Christian soul and Christ, but this allegory cannot be understood except through the progress of history, the representation of Christ by Solomon and of the church by Pharaoh’s daughter. Like the doctrines and practices of the British church, the practice of Anglican reading requires a combination of faith (“mystereic”) and works (“historie”), the spiritual (“shadow”) and the practical (“substance”), the symbolic (“signe”) and the metonymic (“thing signified”). “[T]hing signified” is metonymic, rather than referential, because, as we have seen, debates within Protestantism justified the use of ornament, allegory, and poetry on the condition that congregations would always recognize ornaments and decorations as referents, not as objects for worship in their own right. Anglican reading requires metonymy alongside metaphor because a truly “literal” interpretation of symbolism is impossible (compare Clapham’s definition of topical reading as “historie” rather than allegory).

Anxious to bolster a united English church, Clapham tries to avoid controversy, criticizing other sects for believing they alone are the true church, without confessing their own sins. Clapham makes an implicit comparison between Catholic services and stage plays, arguing that Catholics deny the bride’s beauty and fail to confess themselves “black” because they place too much value on outward appearance and on “playlike paintings” (D2r). At the other extreme, the radical clergymen refuse to describe themselves as “black” by believing only in “supposed Saintings,” calling all those “black” who are not predestined for election (D2r). In Clapham’s model, the Catholic church is superficially beautiful because she is “painted” (as Andrewes, Donne, Herbert, Fenner, and many others insist); in contrast, the extreme Protestants go undressed, undecorated, and plain. But the Anglican church is both black and comely—neither light-skinned through cosmetic use, like the Catholic church, nor ugły because of carelessness, like the radical Protestants, but beautiful nonetheless. Her beauty comes not from paint or cosmetics but from decorations and ornaments (as in Fenner’s translation).

“beyond the partition wall”

Clapham’s bride is black in a sense both literal and allegorical, like his interpretation of the Song as a whole. He argues that she is dark not only because of sin, as in most allegorical readings, but because she is descended from Kedar, Solomon’s “Egyptian” bride (C7v). Fenner, Clapham, John Dove, and Sir Henry Finch follow Origen in explaining the bride’s blackness through her foreign origin, whether she be Egyptian, Ethiopian, or Arabian. Maintaining that the bride is black or foreign on the literal level works in two opposing ways. On the one hand, the tracts illustrate the slippage between blackness as a physical attribute and blackness as a moral failing, bolstering the association of blackness with sin, as Kim Hall notes. Clapham himself identifies blackness as “horror of nature” on the same page that he praises the bride for her foreign origin (C8r).

On the other hand, treating the bride as an Ethiopian or Moor, whose blackness lies in a physically dark skin, allows black-skinned people and strangers to be the equals of white Britons in their access to religious salvation. Contrast the insistence of Theodore Beza, one of the Geneva Bible’s most prominent translators, that the bride cannot be Egyptian or
as those who were the first to be converted. Clapham notes that the conversion of Ethiopia from Judaism to Christianity was not a sudden or abrupt change, but rather a gradual process that took place over several centuries. He suggests that the Ethiopian Church was influenced by the Coptic Church of Egypt, which had a long history of theological development and was already well-established by the time Ethiopia began its own church.

Clapham's work also highlights the role of the Ethiopian Church in maintaining the integrity of its faith and tradition. Despite the challenges posed by outside influences, the Church remained steadfast in its commitment to its ancient heritage. Clapham notes that the Church's ability to hold fast to its beliefs was a testament to the strength of its faith and the dedication of its leaders.

In conclusion, Clapham's work on the Ethiopian Church provides valuable insights into the history and development of this unique religious community. Through his detailed research and analysis, he demonstrates the resilience and adaptability of the Church, as well as its continued influence on the modern world. As Clapham suggests, the story of the Ethiopian Church is one of faith, perseverance, and the enduring power of religious tradition.
which is imputed unto her. As Jacob put on Esau his clothes to get his fathers blessing, so wee must put on the righteous garments of Jesus Christ, that we may appease righteous before God. (Ez 25:5)

Putting on the garments of righteousness becomes righteousness itself, another example of the Anglican compromise; the congregation must have faith in the sacraments themselves and the trappings of office, so that both election and ritual participation count towards salvation.

Sir Henry Finch’s musings (1615) slip between the binaries of sin/regeneration and black/white most clearly. He reads the Song as in part testifying to “the drawing of others that as yet were strangers and aliens from the common wealth of Israel to the fellowship and participaon of Christ,” emphasizing the importance of the bride as a redemptive stranger.24 But she is “cole black, as black as any black-more, or if any thing bee more black then it, through sinne, both original and actual, so that sin is an intensification of blackness.”25 He notes that all those who think themselves “white” contain “no part white but it is blackish also,” but in the same breath equates whiteness with “silver” and blackness with “dross.”26

The “Tawney” bride in George Sandys’s Paraphrase of the Song of Songs (1641) is neither Ethiopian nor Egyptian, although she is a stranger.27 Sandys identifies this bride with conquest and exploration.28 A “successful . . . colonizer,” Sandys owned shares in the Bermuda Company, served ten years as treasurer for the colony in Virginia, and returned to England in 1631.29 His Solomon addresses a bride with a body that shines like the gold of Solomon’s crown / And organs, and whose “Neck the Oceans Treasure Weares.”30 He imagines a bride who is not so much African as American, and turns the Song’s blazon of voyage into discovery. To her natural advantages, the king or colonizer will add the benefits of civilization or learning: “I will a golden Zone impart, / Enamelled with curious Art.”31

While Dore and Clapham took the historical level to mean the events of the Old Testament, Nathanael Homes, Arthur Jackson, and Joshua Sprigg interpret the Song as a “Prophetical history, and Historical Prophecy” of the future of the church.32 During the tumultuous years of the Civil War, radical Protestants ignore the literal explanation for the bride’s blackness as dark skin. They also understand Aquinas’s literal level of interpretation somewhat differently from earlier scholars. The narrative they read predicts the whole of Christian history; in order; it travels from the days of the Old Testament through the cruelty of the Roman emperors to the early Christians, the burning of Wycliffe, the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, and the ultimate triumph of Protestantism over other world religions—almost as if the Canticles were a version of the Book of Revelation. These exegetes interpret the bride’s blackness as mourning, idolatry, recusancy, or the dispersal of the tribes. The bride mourns for the fall of Solomon and his son Rehoboam, a scarcely veiled allusion to Protestant disappointment in King James towards the end of his reign and disenchantment with Charles I. Now Solomon’s foreign wives are supposed to have led him not to salvation, but to idolatry, just as Queen Henrietta Maria had allegedly led King Charles I astray into Catholicism. In a drastic reversal of earlier interpretations, the bride is a recusant, in another comment on Charles’s supposed crypto-Catholicism, and the dispersal of the tribes prefigures the fierce factionalism of the Civil War.

Under such several hundred years, the Jewish interpretation of the bride’s blackness as her sufferings in Egyptian slavery resurfaces in the work of John Cotton (1652) to evoke the persecution of Protestant sects in Britain.33 Like Beza and like Brightman (who predicts the overthrow of Rome and of “all Muhumetans,” Home blames Catholics and Muslims for blackening the bride, who on the literal-historical level again stands for the persecuted Protestant sects.34 He claims that Catholics and Muslims torture the bride for her religion, smearing her with calumny and beating her until she is just “black” but “blue.” One can assume, some writers retain the earlier literal explanation of blackness as caused by foreign origin or sunburn. As late as 1658 Jackson describes the bride as both tanned like “Country Dansels” and dark like an Egyptian, a telling equation of the exotic and the homespun that I investigate in Chapters Seven and Eight.35

The Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Black Bride

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The Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Black Bride

Masks of Blackness and Beauty

In two verses from 1620s, the bride’s foreignness and her negritude disappear. Robert Aylett and Quarles call her not “black” but “brown,” perhaps in contrast to the so-called “blackamoors” or real Africans who had begun arriving on Britain’s shores. Such translations imply that blackness and comeliness are not merely paradoxical but altogether incompatible. Aylett’s translation, from 1621 (the year of the first mention of the sale of dark-skinned slaves in Britain), lightens the bride’s blackness into brownness and insists that the bride only seems dark to observers, when in reality she is “faire”: 
Scorne me not (Sions Nymphes) though I seeme browne
For I am faire and comely, as a Rose,
I (till Sunnes scorching beamses on me did browne),
Was like those that in Salomons tents repose.109

"Those that in Salomons tents repose" are "faire," not black or even "browne"; the biblical reference to the "tents of Kedar" has disappeared altogether, so that the bride’s darkness and the hint of her foreign origin are an illusion. The divine bridegroom equates fairness and sinlessness, making explicit a move that most earlier translations left as a mere hint or suggestion: "Thou art all faire (my love) in thee’s no spot.

Quarles weeps the bride’s blackness as entirely an attribute of the onlooker, so that beauty exists only in the eye of the beholder:

But you, my curious and too nice Allys,
That view my fortunes, with two narrow eyes,
You say my face is blacke, and foule; 'tis true,
I’m beauteous, to my Love, though black to you.
My censure stands not upon your estate,
He seems me as I am; you, as I seeme;
You see the cloudsie, but he discerns the Ske.
Know, 'Tis my Maske that lookes so blacke, not I. (B1v)

The notes to Quarles’s translation gloss "blace" as "through apparent infirmities," as "I am" as "Glorious in him" and "maske" as "Weakness of the flesh," so that in this scheme blackness is a mask or cover for true virtue. Spirit or soul is fair, flesh is black, an opposite interpretation from Origen’s, where the bride’s blackness represents "the Primal . . . image" of God, heavenly spirit rather than tainted white flesh.110 Quarles’s bride is still defiant, but she resists the daunt not because they do not find black beautiful (as in Clapham’s or Fenner’s translations) but because they see her as black at all. His versification emphasizes the role of comparative, rather than absolute, blackness and fairness: the bride seems black only to the "blinde," with their "two narrow eyes," because "The blinde imagins all things black, by kind; / Thou art as beautifull, as they are blinde" (B2r). Blackness and beauty cannot share the same face.

This bride is so fair that "The maiden blushes thy cheeks, proclame / A shame of guilt, but not a guilt of shame" (C4v). Quarles’s chiasmus attempts to solve a problem I shall discuss in the next part of this book, "Whiteness Visible," that parallels the seeming conundrum of whether black can be beautiful—how can one tell whether a black is a sign of innocent shame or furtive guilt? Quarles sets up a distinction between the blushes of "guilt" and those of "shame": the blush of guilt is caused by the bride’s personal consciousness of sin, and the blush of shame springs from an external cause (the slurs cast by the daughters of Jerusalem). The bride’s blush on this occasion, according to Quarles’s own notes, represents "modest graces of the Spirit." Presumably his epitaph, "A shame of guilt, but not a guilt of shame," means that the bride is brought to true repentance (guilt) by the Holy Spirit, but that she is not gilded with shameful calumnies or cosmetics. The only gilding on her face is the "Maske," beneath which there is "No spot, no veniall blemish" but "Illustrous beames" that burn an onlooker (Dv).

The "Maske" covers the bride’s glory but also protects her from the daughters of Jerusalem:

Would beate faire be flatter’d with a grace
Shee never had? May shee behold thy face:
Envy would burst, had shee no other taske,
Then to behold this face without a Maske;
No spot, no veniall blemish could shee finde.
To feele the famin of her rancous minde:
Thou art the flower of beautyes Crowne, and they’re
Much worse then foule, that thinke thee lesse then faire. (Dv)

Quarles is responding to the current fashion for ladies to wear masks, but he also establishes a structure of "rancious" female competition, where foulness and fairness are comparative terms. As Kim Hall observes about Baldwin’s version of Song, in which the groom declares, "Loe thou . . . art fayer: / Myselfe have made thee so," only the bride-groom can confer absolute beauty or fairness on the bride.111

A trait that takes the bride—including her naturally dark skin—as the type of the perfect female offers a welcome respite from Quarles’s denial of her megrim. On the Continent, Ernestus Vaezius, the son of Otho Vaezius (whose engravings I discussed in my previous chapter), composed a medical treatise in Latin detailing the platonic female form, taking as his model the bride in the Song of Songs (1662). Having commented approvingly on the bride’s blackness (or, as he also writes, "redness") as a sign of her strength and vigor, he dismisses the current fashion for pallor because "the color white is strongly opposed to virtue . . . White refers to all those who are phlegmatic, cold, and careful, for that color is the element of water, and so Physicians say, corruption."112 Borrowing both his father’s erudition (the Ovidian tag praising the beauty of Andromeda, dark with the color of her native land) and his technique (the unusual use of shading to indicate dark skin [Figure 4]), he appends a poem in praise of black Andromeda and the bride:

Zealous Siris’ furious heat
And Phoebus’ coloring flame
Burned black the bride from her head to her feet
And devastated her fame.
She tells us now she lacks ivory, rose,
The gentle curves of so many.
Who'd hurt thee, fair maid? The King himself knows
Thy color’s more lovely than any.\textsuperscript{111}

Thus despite representing divine femininity, the bride’s loveliness requires the presence of a bridegroom for its existence. Vaenius crowns Perseus or “the King” judge of the pageant, the final arbiter of beauty.

From Narrative to Lyric: Thomas Campion

I mentioned earlier that secular poets turned the stable characters and events of the Geneva or KJV narrative into the shape-shifters and ambiguous episodes of lyric. Thomas Campion’s lyric, “Follow the faire sunne, unhappie shaddowe,” changes the sex of the black beloved in order to present the sun as both redeemer and capitor. Shadowing the fierce gaze of the “sun [that] hath looked upon” the bride, his long Latin poem, “Umbræ,” offers not just a reversal of the Song but a perversion, in which the sun’s power utterly destroys the black beloved. In the biblical analogue, the Shulamite has been blackened by the rays of the darkening sun and will be bleached white by Solomon; in Campion’s lyric, the neglected male lover has been “scorched” black by his fair female sun and can only be returned to “brightness” by her favor:

Follow thy faire sunne unhappie shaddowe
Though thou be blacke as night
And she made all of light.
Yet follow thy faire sunne unhappie shaddowe.

Follow her whose light thy light deprivaeth,
Though here thou liest disgrac’t,
And she in heauen is plac’t.
Yet follow her whose light the world reuineth.

Follow those pure beams whose beautie burneth,
That so have scorched thee,
As thou still blacke must bee,
Till her kind beams thy black to brightness turneth.

Follow her while yet her glory shineth:
There comes a huckles night,
That will dim all her light;
And this the black unhappie shade devineth.

Follow still since so thy fates ordained:
The Sunne must have his shade.

Till both at once doe fade,
The Sun still proud of the shadow still disdained.\textsuperscript{111}

On a physical level, a shadow must follow the sun all day, irresistibly, until the onset of “huckles night,” when both shadow and sun disappear into darkness. The poem concedes that the shadow might have some rest when the sun turns it “from black to brightness,” but such a transformation will never happen. As I have discussed at length, the figure of turning black into white is a common Renaissance emblem for impossibility, “washing an Ethiop white,” just as, in the physical world, a shadow can never outshine the sun or exist in the sun’s absence.

The lover resembles a shadow not only in his compelling attraction to the sun but also in his antithesis to it, his inky darkness next to her “light.” Her light, like the sun’s, revives the world, which is swallowed.
up in shadows at night. Campion uses "word-painting" throughout his music to illustrate his poetry. In this case, the movement of the shadow as it "follows" the sun and the rise of the sun in the sky ascend musically, culminating in "made all of light," which is the highest pitch in the song. It would also suggest that Campion pays attention to light in his notes, as do Dowland, Gibbons, and other composers of the era. "Shaddowe" and "thou be [black]e" in stanza one fall on "black notes" or crotchet; in stanza two the crotchet mark "deprive" and "disgrac't," and in three, "burneth" and "scorched."

The poem does not deny, however, the possibility that light can blacken or tarnish as well as make bright. For Campion's forsaken lover, the lady's beams are paradoxically "pure" when they blacken him, "kind when they brighten, kind in the sense that they are gentle but also in the sense that they are natural to her. The lady's "light" is also her "lightness" or moral ambiguity (a pun we shall encounter with the white-skinned Guendolen of Richard Barnfield's The Affectionate Shepherd in Chapter Six). Her lightness ("thy light depriveth" so that on earth the lover "lives disgrac't." Her scandalous behavior has ruined his name (an alternate meaning might be that she moves in a sphere so far above his that her light "depriveth" or dims his by obscuring it). The shadowy speaker unhappily predicts and prefigures the dark night of death that will come. In the final stanza the female sun has died, victim of a "huckles night / That will dim all her light . . . till both at once doe fade," a night that reverses the biblical Song's triumphant statement that "Love is strong as death" (KJV, Song 8:6). Shadowing, like blackness, is both contextual and metaphorical; thus, the poem concludes with a triumphant hymn: "I use the sun (emphasis not the shadowy narrator) reigning supreme and "praud" while the shadow and his love "do fade." "The Sunne must have his shade" (my italics); next to this new and brighter sun, the lady's luminosity disappears in obscurity (just as the moon, ruled by the goddess Phoebe, fades when the sun rises). The sun which is run by her brother Phoebus Apollo.

The sun (personified in the god Phoebus) appears as a similar, all-conquering power in Campion's long Latin poem "Umbrahas," or "Shadoes." Campion retains the form of a narrative poem, but writes an Ovidian "metamorphocalloy toyce," as Jud Smith might have said, rather than a biblical psalm. Campion published the first half of his Ovidian narrative in 1595, and the completed poem in 1619; from the reference to Elizabeth of Bohemia and her European realm, he must have finished the poem after Princess Elizabeth's marriage in early 1613. In this account of the origin of the shade, he identifies the sun with the con-sciousness of sin but with an amoral, relentless, rapacious masculine force. Phoebus adores the nymph Iole, who rejects him; unable to control his lust, Phoebus drugs and rapes her in the dark, impregnating her with a son, Melampus. The boy is born black, because he was begotten in the dark, all but for a white sun beneath his breast, "candida solis . . . / sub pectore, patris imago" (lines 155–56). "Imago" can mean shape, image, reflection, or spirit; and this black Melampus bears on his breast the shining shadow of the sun. We may recall Chalcidice's black birthmark on her ivory skin; as in Heliodore's text, the circular mark functions as the impress of paternity.

As he grows up, the lad resembles a black Cupid: "If Love were black, or if somehow the boy were white, you'd swear the god were in both of them" ("Si niger esset Amor, vel si modo candidus ille, / Jurares in utroque deum, / line 158–60). His beauty is paradoxical: "Shaddowe, god of sleep, dreams, and shape-shifting, who descends to the enchanted garden of Persephone to find a suitable shape in which to seduce the beautiful boy, whose dark face shines with a lightless light ("sine lumine humen," line 242). Eventually Morpheus decides to mix and match, donning a natty frame composed of Queen Elizabeth, Queen Anne, Elizabeth of Bohemia, and various other royal females. Melampus awakens desperate to find whoever—whatever—has made love to him. Unable to find his lover, he goes completely mad with desire, and through fruitless searching wastes away—to a shadow.

Melampus cannot meet his dream-lover again because he is unable to sleep, in part because of his anxiety, in part because of his father Phoebus's light. Campion's Phoebus controls not only daylight but the nightfall, too, and becomes angered when Melampus seeks the dark. Campion at once paradigmizes: "As the sun rises, so the moon conceals him ("ise he sun hidden to loca lumine cassa"; "Light detests sorrow, the night and places devoir of light amuse him" (lines 364–65). He borrows Ovid's descriptions of nymphs turning into echoes, streams or stones to describe Melampus fading into literal obscurity as the red blood drains from his body and his motion stills ("tenui de corpore sanguis / Effuit . . . motusque recedat" (lines 393–95)). The nymphs prepare him for burial, but Phoebus, angered by his son's preference for darkness, prevents them from interring him. Melampus is such a light weight ("non gravem pon- dus" [line 401]) that he floats away into the darkness, a shadowy exile damned forever from the light ("per omne / Tempus perpetuo damna-tus luminis exul," lines 403–4).

Like "Followe," "Umbrahas" ends with a triumphant male sun god, who conquers both sleep and death; Phoebus prevents Melampus's successful burial and renders him uncomfortably immortal, as the shadow. There is no satisfactory explanation for Phoebus's excessive anger in the poem; the sun's power is absolute, his edicts final. The sun destroys consensual sex, Phoebus can rape Iole even in the dark, because he muffles his
bright rays in a cloud to prevent them from giving him away. The light further prevents Melampus from going to sleep and encountering his shadowy dream-bride (Morpheus) once more, just as the coy female sun of Campion’s lyric is subdued by a stronger, male sun at the end of the poem.

From Narrative to Lyric: Edward Herbert

Edward Herbert’s poems on blackness and “Black Beauty” differ radically from the other treatments of the Song we have considered in his insistence that the black beauty is consistently, constantly black. He identifies blackness with poetry and argues that blackness becomes poetic not because it can be washed white but because it can generate multiple interpretations. Herbert concentrates not upon color change but upon stasis and elaboration:

Black beauty, which abovethat common light,
Whose Power can no colours here renew,
But those which darkness can again subdue,
Do still remain unwary’d to the sight.
And like an object equal to the view,
And neither chang’d with day nor hid with night,
When all these colours which the world call bright,
And which old Poetry doth so persuade,
Are with the night so pervaded and gone.

That of their being there remains no mark,
Thus they abidest so entirely one,
That we may know thy blackness is a spark
Of light inaccessible, and alone
Our darkness which can make us think it darkness.

Lord Herbert emphasizes black beauty’s opposition to “common light” in order to rank it above all other colors. Blackness is “a spark / Of light inaccessible,” divine illumination rather than earthly brightness, and black beauty radiates a brilliance powerful enough to subsume all other colors. The night, which is stronger than the day, swallows up all the “bright” colors that “old Poetry” sings, red, white, and green, but blackness remains indissoluble, stronger even than the night. Black shines “above that common light,” the sun, and its power to dim bright colors in comparison is likewise stronger than the ability of the sun’s rays to turn things “black.” Old poetry, like the colors it sings, has disappeared without a trace (“no mark”).

Herbert borrows the form of old poetry by using an Italian sonnet, but employs the optical and scientific metaphors of the later seventeenth-century poetry. Old poetry took charge of whitening beauty, celebrated the black bride of Solomon who was made fair or white, but new poetry reverses the trope. It is not the bride who must be transformed and whitened, but the observer, the reader, the poet, who must be turned black. This kind of poetic blackness comes not from the sun, as in old poetry, but from blackness itself and the “light inaccessible” that shines from it. In keeping with his model of new poetry, Herbert avoids a word upon which old poetry relies; he rhymes “night,” “right,” and “light,” but not “white.” New poetry, Herbert implies, will persist because it, too, is black—“entirely one” with the subject that it praises. Old poetry is Petrarchan; new poetry, metaphysical, as Samuel Johnson would say.

Herbert’s poem conveys a sense of movement and change, but on the part of the poet, not the unchanging black beauty, who “like an object equal to the view” remains the same from every angle (like a sphere suspended in the physical universe) and at every point in time (like the ageless verse that replaces old poetry). It is “alone / Our darkness” that obscures the inaccessible light of meaning. The Clarendon text emends line six, giving “Art neither chang’d with day, nor hid with night.” Keeping the 1665 text, however, allows black beauty’s persistence to accumulate through Herbert’s layered clauses (“And . . . / And . . . / When . . .” and “. . .”) and makes its triumph all the more emphatic because the main clause is delayed until line 11, “Thou still abidest so entirely one.” After all the bright colors of old poetry have gone through several changes, first in being praised, then in disappearing, black is “still” there.

In praising black light, Herbert addresses the vexed question in Renaissance optics on the status of black as a color, a topic to which I will return in later chapters. His insistence that ordinary light “can no colours here renew” without succumbing to “darkness” appears to prefigure Newtonian optics, which argues that black alone of all the colors does not form part of the spectrum of light, and that darkness and color, black and white, are therefore absolute opposites. Newton did not present his findings to the Royal Society until 1675, nearly thirty years after Herbert’s death, but Herbert could have encountered similar theories of blackness and light from a variety of classical and medieval sources, which debated whether black was a color in its own right, or merely the absence of light, whether it was made up of all the colors of the rainbow, or whether it demonstrated the absence of all color. Van Norden usefully summarizes the prevailing beliefs. Aristotle and Democritus call black a primary color, as do most medieval scholars. Scaliger believes that black contains all the other colors, and distinguishes between “black” and “dark” objects, because the former are visible, the latter invisible. Cardano and Anaxagoras characterize blackness as “negation” and black and white as opposites.
Aristotle in fact describes three different ways of perceiving black: first, as the “black light” reflected from “naturally black” objects; second, as “no light,” as from “an invisible object surrounded by a visible patch”; third, as the result of seeing objects in “rare and scanty” light. 112 Legh’s _Account of Some Virgins interprets Aristotle’s “black light” as “clearness that is engendered of darkness.” 113 Edward Herbert similarly emphasizes Aristotle’s first sense and denies the two last, distinguishing between the color “black,” which he treats as a positive term, and “dark,” which is characterized by negation or absence. While most writers regard them as equivalent, he argues that the negative connotations of “dark” should not apply to blackness. If we see dimly, our own eyes, not blackness, are at fault.

Edward Herbert’s “Another Sonnet to Black It Self” alludes paradoxically both to the optical theory that black contains all colors within itself, and to the common association of blackness with night, death, finitude, and the absence of light:

_Thou black, wherein all colours are compos’d,
And unto which they all at last return,
Thou colour of the Sun where it doth burn,
And shadow, where it cools; in thee is clo’d
Whatever nature can, or hath dispos’d
In any other here; from thee do rise
Those tempers and complexion, which disclos’d,
As parts of thee, do work as mysteries,
Of that thy hidden power, when thou dost reign
The characters of fate shine in the Skies,
And tell us what the Heavens do ordain,
But when Earth’s common light shines to our eyes
Thou so retir’st thy self, that thy disdain
All revelation unto Man deny’d._

(Doth)

In “To Black it self,” black is not merely composed of all colors, but creates them and can destroy them again. Black itself can reveal the truth of the universe but chooses to withdraw when “common light” (which Herbert dismissed contemptuously in “Black Beauty”) blazes forth. The stars become heaven’s messengers, writing “the characters of fate,” more powerful than the sun in their ability to confer “tempers and complexions” on mortals.

Galileo’s popular _Starry Messenger_ (1610) uses the same metaphor of communication to convey the sense that the stars can communicate with earthly scientists just as foreign emissaries greet distant kings. Like Edward Herbert, Galileo finds a mythical, infinite store of beauty in the heavenly bodies at night, a beauty visible only in darkness, not daylight. 114 Herbert’s references to the stars as fate’s “characters” seem at first to reinforce the association of physical light and spiritual illumination, but he interprets the stars not as reflecting the sun’s glory but as “parts of” “black it self,” parts of the “mysteries” of blackness. The stars cannot be interpreted without the black night as their backdrop. Light may write characters, but only blackness can confer meaning, when light sources are “disclos’d.” 115 As parts of it.

In fact, blackness conveys not just a single meaning upon the characters of light but an “infinite” or infinity of possible significations, as Kim Hall points out. 116 In an earlier poem, “To her Hair,” Edward Herbert wonders why human sight cannot comprehend blackness:

Is it, because past black, there is not found
A fix’d or horizontal bound?
And so as it doth terminate the white,
It may be said all colours to unfold,
And in that kind to hold
Somewhat of infinite? (Doth)

In light of what we now know about Newtonian science, this image of black light separating and enfolding all colors might seem like a poetic reversal of Newton’s famous prism experiment separating white light into the colors of the rainbow. But, as I have observed, Newton had not even conducted his experiments when Edward Herbert was writing, although the opposition between black and white light, and between black and the other colors, was widely debated. Herbert’s blackness is both made up of different colors and opposed to them, bounding or controlling whiteness but enfolding other colors. Human eyes cannot understand the mystery of blackness because it is too rich, too multifarious, and too poetic; its unchanging qualities (as in “To Black it self”) paradoxically enable it to contain every possible meaning and to stay the same. Paradoxically, it holds “somewhat of infinite”: infinity cannot be bounded or divided into discrete quantities, so “somewhat of it” is impossible. For Edward Herbert, new poetry should do likewise: it should contain multitudes, and sing a song of itself.

Narrative of the Lyric: Shakespeare

Edward Herbert believes that old, whitening poetry is dead, and will not mourn for it. Shakespeare’s sonnets also turn the conflict between the fair youth and the dark lady into the battle of old and new poetry, but unlike Herbert’s poems, these sonnets refuse to come down on either side of the debate. Like the song, the sonnets can be read both as a narrative and as a collection of lyrics; each sonnet, come so that, can be read as an individual narrative. The sonnets both praise and parody old
poetry; moreover, they connect old and new poetry not only to historical time but also to modes of writing.

Sonnets 106 is almost analogical in its expression. It argues that the poem’s address to perfection the “blazon of sweet beauty’s best” (line 5) described in “beautiful old rhyme” (line 3), but that “their praises are but prophecies” (line 9) because until now, nobody has lived up to their accolades:

When in the chronicle of wasted time
I see descriptions of the fairest things
And beauty making beautiful old rhyme
In praise of ladies dead and lovely knaves,
Then in the blazon of sweet beauty’s best,
Of hand, of foot, of lip, of eye, of brow,
I see their antique pen would have express’d
Even such a beauty as you master now.
So all their praises are but prophecies
Of this our time, all you prefiguring,
And for they look’d but with divining eyes,
They had not still enough your worth to sing;
For we which now behold these present days,
Have eyes to wonder, but lack tongues to praise. 125

Helen Vendler takes lines 11 and 12 to mean that but for divine inspiration, old poets could not have guessed at the beauty of the young man. 136
But I agree with Stephen Booth that the ironic (and blasphemous) typological reference is more outrageous if the poet is claiming that even religious prophecy could not predict the rariness of his lover. 127 The fact that the line “they had not still enough your worth to sing” can exist as a semantic unit on its own makes it more forceful. Booth emphasizes “still” (line 10) to “skill,” objecting that if we read “still,” “enough” has no referent. But it does not need one: “divining eyes” are not “enough” to sing the lover’s worth. Maintaining “still” emphasizes the contrast between antique and new time. Now beauty has a “master” (line 8), but poetry has none; “these present days,” we “Have eyes to wonder, but lack tongues to praise” (lines 13–14). This is the paradox of perfect beauty: it has only become incarnated now, but the beautiful old rhyme that poets would have used in the past to describe it now sounds “barren of new pride,” as sonnet 76 complains, “far from variation or quick change” (lines 1–2). Alluding to the “fairest wights” (Sonnets 106, line 2) praised by old poetry employs a deliberate archaism to evoke “old rhyme” and “wasted time,” but additionally puns on “fairest whites” to establish the opposition between one lover’s red and white beauty and the other’s blackness.

Sonnets 127 could almost be a response to the claims of “antique rhyme” in sonnet 106:

In the old age black was not counted fair,
Or if it were it bore not beauty’s name.
But now is black beauty’s successive heir,
And beauty slander’d with a bastard shame;
For since each hand hath put on nature’s power,
Fairing the foul with art’s false borrow’d face,
Sweet beauty hath no name, no holy bow’r,
But is profan’d, if not lives in disgrace.
Therefore my mistress’ eyes are raven black,
Her eyes so suited, and they mourners seem
At such who, not born fair, no beauty lack,
Sland’ring creation with a false esteem.
Yet so they mourn becoming of their voice,
That every tongue says beauty should look so.

Booth notes that the alliteration in line 6 sounds artificial, made-up, like the false beauties the poet denies. The religious diatribe of “prophan’d,” “holy” and “creation” links the poem to 106 and its religious typology, while “old age” links back to the antique. There is nowhere for beauty to go; traditionally, beauty lives in a mistress’s brow, but this lady is black, and all others are falsely fair, so beauty has been exiled from Eden. The lady’s eyes are black in mourning for the loss of beauty (like the nympha in Jonson’s Blackness), but, as usual, the couplet reverses the sonnet’s argument. In mourning for creation’s slander, the lady has created a new kind of beauty and a new kind of paradoxical praise poetry: there were no “tongues to praise” the fair youth, but now every “tongue” says beauty should look “black.”

The “black beauty” sonnets of Edward Herbert and Shakespeare suggest that, far from reinforcing religious values, the poetic form of the Song allows it to effect not a Christian but a poetic conversion—from “old Poetry” or “ancient rhyme” to new. In contrast, the masques of Ben Jonson seem to effect what one critic has called “colonial transformations.”128 My final “Ethiopian history” investigates the early modern relationship between emerging national identities and residual theories of skin color through a comparison of three strange lands imagined as potential colonies by the Jacobean court masque—early modern Ethiopia, Ireland, and Virginia.
I end, as I promised, where I began—with an investigation of romance and the marvelous. Where versions of Heliodorus, however, relied upon pseudoscientific evidence from the classical world and upon anecdote, the work of Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, engages with seventeenth-century empiricism. When Cavendish published *Observations on Experimental Philosophy* (*Observations*) in 1666, she became the first British woman to write and publish scientific work.1 Perhaps eager to demonstrate her knowledge of the newest scientific theories, Cavendish added a new section to the second edition of *Observations* in 1668, a section that responded, as Rosemary Kegl remarks, to current debates about racial origin, and in particular to the question of whether white and black men were descended from the same human ancestor—Adam. In the 1668 text, Cavendish argues that black men are not descended from Adam: “Blackmoors [are] a kind or race of men different from the White . . . . For, if there were no differences in their productions, then would not only all men be exactly like, but all Beasts also; that is, there would be no difference between a Horse and a Cow, a Cow and a Lyon, a Snake and an Oyster.”2 The differences between white and black men are as pronounced as those between “a Cow and a Lyon, a Snake and an Oyster.” The comparison is also gendered, contrasting the lactating cow with the fierce lion, the vigorous snail with the flaccid oyster. Kegl suggests that this statement collapses two different senses of the word “race”: species difference and color difference; Cavendish concludes that the “Blackmoors” are as different from “White” people as cows are from lions. But Kegl brilliantly observes that Cavendish’s romantic utopia, *The Description of a New World, Called the Blazing World* [*BW*], which was bound and published together with *Observations*, carefully distinguishes between “race,” meaning species difference, and “race,” meaning variants of skin tone:

> the ordinary sort of men [in the Blazing World] . . . were of several complexion: not white, black, tawny, olive or ash-coloured; but some appeared of an azure, some of a deep purple, some of a greenish-green, some of a scarlet, some of an orange-colour, etc. . . . The rest of the inhabitants of that world, were men of several different sorts, shapes, figures, disposition, and humours . . . some were beard-men, some worm-men, some fish- or near-men [mer-men], . . . some bird-men, some fly-men, some ant-men, some geese-men, some spider-men, some lice-men, some fox-men, some ape-men, some jird-men, some magpie-men, some parrot-men, some satyrs, some giants, and many more, which I cannot all remember. (*BW*, 135)

The subjects of the Blazing World comprise people who are racially diverse in two different senses: they have skins of varying colors, and they belong to diverse species. Cavendish’s romance thus “draws a distinction between difference based on species or complexion, understood as ‘humours,’ on the one hand, and difference based on complexion, understood as ‘colour,’ on the other.” Kegl suggests that this apparent inconsistency on the subject of racial difference between *Observations* and *Blazing World* reflects seventeenth-century confusion about the meanings of both race and color, citing Samuel Pepys’s appreciative description of Cavendish’s “black” Italian waiting woman, Ferrabosco, and of a little “black boy” who ran up and down the chamber when Cavendish visited the Royal Society. Pepys’s editors gloss “black” as “brunette,” but Samuel Minsz imagines the child to have been an “exotic graft in an English garden”: we have no way of knowing whether he was the black-haired son of a lady-in-waiting, or an African page.4

This cultural confusion about the meaning of skin tone and its relationship to racial or species difference might contribute to Cavendish’s fantastic Blazing World of colors, as Kegl proposes, but I will argue that Cavendish’s riot of color is not a response to late seventeenth-century confusion about color as much as a romantic reply to the emerging pseudoscientific discourse that did connect color with race—and the residual humoral discourse that, contra Kegl, interpreted skin color/complexion not as different from humor/complexion but as an erratically visible expression of it. Throughout her romances, Cavendish imagines herself and her heroines in positions of absolute royal power. She also briefly envisions situations in which the hierarchies of race and species difference that were emerging in the seventeenth century do not exist. Both Cavendish and her husband, William, Duke of Newcastle, were ardent Royalists who lost their estate and fortune during the Interregnum and were forced into exile in Antwerp.5 (Since “The Duchess of Newcastle” and “The Duke of Newcastle” both appear as characters in *Blazing World*, I shall henceforth refer to the author as “Cavendish,” her husband as “William,” and their literary incarnations as “The Duke” and “The Duchess.”) Cavendish’s fictional worlds were a Royalist riposte to the Interregnum, a rejoinder that affirmed the supremacy of distinctions of rank above all other categories—race, gender, or religion.
This is only possible, I will argue, in her blazing worlds of fiction. As a scientist, Cavendish affirmed the inferiority both of women to men and of black men to white. As a royalist and a romanist, however, Cavendish’s belief in the primacy of rank as a way of distinguishing between classes of people leads her in her monarchical romances to contradict various theories of sexual and racial inferiority which were current in Restoration England and which she herself espoused in her scientific writings. Fiction allowed her both the freedom to imagine such a world, and the security of knowing that such a world could never come to pass.

Polygenesis and Scientific Racism

When Cavendish adds a commentary to Observations describing "Black-moons" as a separate "race" from white men, she is responding to the newest pseudoscientific theories connecting race, skin color, and species origin, theories that contradicted earlier beliefs that accounted blackness a mystery but did not consider black skin to be a sign of species difference. As we saw earlier, although George Best had connected skin color with biological inheritance as early as 1578, even in the mid-seventeenth century Thomas Browne explicitly states that "Negroes" descend from "the seed of Adam" (PE, 3:240). Nonetheless, Browne offered a "quasi-genetic explanation" for blackness that asserted its essential nature. Like Browne, most early mythologies of skin color assumed that all men and women, regardless of skin tone, are descended from Adam, a theory of creation called monogenesi. Even George Best, who assumed that "black clothes" were "cursed" by God (PN, 7:256), had doubted their kinship to Englishmen. While Jonson carefully annotates Blackness to take account of the classical theories of blackness that suggest that the Ethiopians and Egyptians were created not by God but by the heat of the sun upon the soil, few writers take seriously the notion that black Africans, white Europeans, and tawny Moors descended from different species, or through polygenesis. To do so would be to doubt the word of the Bible.

But in the 1650s, Isaac Le Peyrère and François Bernier insisted that there were several different species of human beings, descended polygenetically, and that "black people were in some way intermediate between white people and apes." Le Peyrère speculated that there were Men Before Adam and propounded a theological system that denied that human beings were all descended from the same race or root. According to Le Peyrère, Adam was not the first man; the Jews were descended from Adam, but the Gentiles sprang from the very first man, who lived on Earth before the creation of Adam. He argues that these Gentiles who converted to Christianity became a newer (and superior) race of Jews through a "mythical adoption," which changed "both their kind and their lin[e]age," both their race and their rank. Le Peyrère’s argument has clear implications for the status of African slaves in early modern British and American fiction. His prose offers a theological basis for polygenesi, and for the belief that certain races or species of human were created superior to others. One part of his argument has a particularly pointed resonance for the slave trade: he implies that the unconverted Gentiles are "servants," while Christians become "free-men." According to this belief, unconverted Africans had not undergone a "mythical adoption" into the race of the Jews and were therefore slaves, not free men. This religious excuse was so powerful that, as Jordan and others observe, during the 1660s New England slave-owners grew anxious lest their slaves’ conversion force their masters to set them free and hastily enacted a law in 1664 that "provided that this Law shall not extend to sett at Liberty Any Negroe or Indian Servant who shall turne Christian after he shall have been bought by Any Person." The wording of the law is exemplary of its kind: the future perfect tense ("shall have been bought") suggests that there is no destiny, apart from slavery, open to Native American or African slaves, while they are carefully denied humanity, in contrast to the "Person" who might buy them.

Polygenetic theories, and the notion of an inherited slave caste, were more common in New England and the West Indies than in Britain. Richard Ligon divides the inhabitants of Barbados into three groups, "Masters, Servants and slaves," concluding that "the slaves and their posterity" are "subject to their Masters for ever." Henry Wheler lists in 1655 "all sorts of English, French, Dutch, Scots, Irish, Spaniards then with us and now with us, white and black Jues [Jews]" and finally "Inganes [Indians] and miserabell Negores borne to perpetuall slavery thay and thayer seed." A tract in defense of the tobacco colonies which circulated in 1656 maintained that, while white women could do domestic work, black women should be sent to work in the tobacco fields because they were "nasty, and beastly." Theories of polygenesis did not become widely popular in Britain until the eighteenth century, but their first appearance marks a radical change from the mythologies of color that predominated during the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods. The notion of species difference was not a cause but a symptom of Britain’s increasing involvement in the slave trade, and polygenesis provided a convenient explanation of racial difference that conflated variation with inferiority. Cavendish’s own addition to Observations in 1668 is one of the earliest British statements of polygenesis. But, as we have seen, in Blazing World she distinguishes between species difference and skin color as signs of race, in a fictional challenge to her own polygenic beliefs. This romantic challenge to the analysis of
skin encompassed not only pseudoscientific pamphlets from the New World but also the emerging empirical discourse investigating the origins of color itself, a discourse that Cavendish interrogated in both “philosophical” and fictional terms.

Observations of Color

Robert Hooke explains blackness as absence or “privation of Light.” The first person to observe cell structures through a microscope (and to use the word “cell” to describe them), he usually calls these plant and animal cells “pores” and believes that the depth, frequency and dryness of these pores in charcoal, coals, and burnt objects explains their blackness: certainly, a body that has so many pores in it . . . from each of which no light is reflected, must necessarily look black . . . black being nothing else but a privation of Light, or a want of reflection; and wheresoever this reflecting quality is deficient, there does that part look black . . . from a porosity of the body.\(^\text{11}\)

Hooke defines the color black as an absence not only of light but of matter and movement, suggesting that burnt objects have lost the water that filled their cells and reflected the light back to the eye of the viewer. Black objects enjoy a strange “universal kind of transparency . . . that light only is reflected back which falls upon the very outward edges of the pores, all that enter into the pores of the body, never returning, but being lost in it.”\(^\text{12}\) Thus we can see the shape of a black object, but its center is like a black hole, to use an anachronistic comparison: once light or energy goes into it, it cannot come out again. Hooke and his Royal Society colleague Robert Boyle discovered independently that light was a wave (or, as Hooke put it, that “there is no luminous body but has the parts of it in motion more or less”).\(^\text{13}\) They also argued that the phenomenon of color was dependent upon this motion of light (we would now say, upon its wavelength) and upon its refraction and reflection in various media, such as air, water, or “Muscovy glass” (mica).\(^\text{14}\)

Cavendish knew and responded to the work of Hooke and Boyle. She was an interested, indeed, keen observer of the new science; when she visited the Royal Society in 1667 she was reported to be “full of admiration, all admiration” for its “Fine experiments of Colours, Loadstones, Microscope, and of Liquors.”\(^\text{15}\) Mintz conjectures that the “experiments of Colours” that Pepys and Cavendish observed were probably those described by Boyle in Experiments and Considerations Touching Colours (1664), in which he produced “a red colour out of two transparent liquors” and turned red Rhenish wine “a lovely green.”\(^\text{16}\) On her visit to the society, Cavendish professed her admiration for their experiments, but both Observations and Blazing World regard empirical science with a quizzical, sometimes satirical, eye. She expresses her critique partly through what seems like the incongruous yoking of a scientific treatise and a romance in a single volume. Cavendish links the two works expressly in her “Epilogue to the Reader,” calling the one her “Philosophical World,” the other her “Blazing” one, and claiming that they both come from “the most pure, that is, the most rational parts of . . . my mind,” a “pure” rationality that she contrasts to the “conquests of Alexander and Caesar” (BW, 224). In her praise of the “rational,” Cavendish is extolling a Cartesian model of abstract thought over experimental science. She argues that her imaginary, female worlds are superior to the masculine model of colonial domination exemplified by Alexander because she has not “caused so many . . . deaths as they did,” “destroying peace before war” (BW, 224). In the same way, Cartesian rationalism provides Cavendish with her response to the Baconian empiricism of the Royal Society, whose experiments attempted a kind of experimental “conquest” over the natural world.

Cavendish challenged the new science in specific instances as well as in her general approach to natural philosophy. As Anna Battigelli points out, Cavendish’s Observations and Blazing World both include direct responses to Hooke’s Micrographia. Battigelli argues that Cavendish mounts a threefold attack on lenses, both microscopic and telescopic: first, far from demonstrating an objective truth, as their adherents claim, they distort the true nature of things (for example, by showing a house to be as big as an lobster); second, they cannot alter the characteristics of the creatures they show (they cannot prevent the house from biting its host); third, and most important, they refuse to “acknowledge the inevitable interference of their own subjectivity.”\(^\text{17}\) Cavendish thus attacks both the physical means (lenses) and the philosophical methods (observation and experiment) of the new science.

She continues to criticize Hooke’s discoveries in a section of Observations that pointedly parallels his discussion of charcoal. First, Cavendish insists, colors cannot be caused only by the presence of light, because refraction or reflection (she does not distinguish between the two) alters continually, and “if [the reflections] were the true cause of Colours, no Colour would appear constantly the same, but change variously . . . whereas on the contrary, we see that natural and inherent Colours continue always the same” (Observations, 51). Cavendish argues here that color remains constant despite the fluctuations of light, which is constantly changing.

Second, she argues that blackness cannot be caused by the absence of light and the presence of “pores,”
for if the blackness of a Charcoal, did proceed from the absence of light in its pores, then a black Horse would have more or lesser pores than a white one . . . also a black Moor would have larger Pores then a man of a white complexion; and black Sattin, or any black Stoff, would have deeper pores then white Stoff: But if a fair white Lady should bruise her arm, so as it did appear black, can any one believe that light would be more absent from that bruised part then from any other part of her arm that is white, or that light should reflect otherwise upon that bruised part, then on any other? (Observations, 52)

It is unclear whether Cavendish is using "pores" in the sense that Hooke intends; she mocks a science that is based on observation, but here she uses her own observations to challenge its results. Her examples reflect her gender and rank: Hooke observed charcoal, cork, and "Moscow glass," but Cavendish observes horses, the African slaves of her acquaintance, satin, and her own skin, and finds no difference in their apparent porosity. Reducing colors to pores, she feels, is ridiculous, and her examples get progressively more farfetched (she argues that, if the porous theory of color is true, then, because the eye has a vast number of pores, light entering the eye ought to make it perceive all objects as if they have as many colors as a rainbow). Moreover, darkness cannot be merely the absence of light, she avers, because if we can only perceive sensations or objects through light, we would be unable to recognize the dark and distinguish night from day, which is "contrary to common experience, nay, to sense and reason" (Observations, 54). Cavendish's appeal to "common experience" and "sense" contrasts the kind of observation that she prizes (like the appearance of black versus white satin) with the microscopic observation of Hooke, which she finds so misleading.

Eyes are misleading, reason tells the truth; thus colors, to be no means "lost or lessened in the dark, but . . . only concealed from the ordinary perception of humane sight" (Observations, 55). Just because you can't see them doesn't mean they aren't there. If we cannot see colors at night, it is our sight that is imperfect; Cavendish interprets night vision as a sign of the inferiority of the physical senses next to the superior sense of reason. She insists that colors do not change or disappear, thereby combining a belief in both the similarity and the difference of the "black Moor" and the man of a "white complexion"; they have similar pores or cell structures, but their skin colors are "fixt and inherent" (Observations, 56). Cavendish's chapter on blackness concludes with a vehement belief in the fixedness of colors.

She modifies her theory of colors, however, in her next chapter, "Of Colours," in which she concedes that there may be two sorts of colors, "Homogeneous" and "Heterogeneous," that is, colors that are fixed, innate, and unified and colors that are changeable, external, and varied respectively. Superficial colors, like those caused by "the Yellow or black Jaundies," by blushing (and, presumably, by the black bruises on the arm of a "fair white Lady") are heterogeneous, but underlying colors are homogeneous and unchanging (Observations, 59, 61). Where a residual geohumoral discourse might have explained all skin colors in environmental terms, Cavendish offers an emergent racial logic to distinguish between the skin color with which one is born, and the tones that extraneous events and influences may cause. She provides a characteristically personal example to illustrate heterogeneous color change: she compares color change to the unchanging appearance of a "Traytor" in "the Politick body of a Commonwealth," who encourages "all the Kingdom to take arms," even if those members "know not particularly of the Traytor, and of the circumstances of his crime" (Observations, 61). The initial crime is the stimulus that prompts the whole body politic to blush or grow pale; color change is a sign of "Civil War" (Observations, 62).

Arguing both for and against the possibility of color change is typical of Cavendish. In Blazing World, she mocks both the experimental scientists of the Royal Society for their need to find a logical explanation for everything, and her own desire to avoid a single, unified conclusion. But whereas in Observations, she comes up with an answer to the communum of color, however concessionary, in Blazing World she refuses outright to explain why her Blazing Worlde have complexions of such astonishing shades as "azure," "deep purple," "grass-green," "scarlet," or "orange-colour":

Which colours and complexions, whether they were made by the bare reflection of light, without the assistance of small particles, or by the help of well-franged and ordered atoms; or by a continual agitation of little globules; or by some pressing and reacting motion, I am not able to determine. (BW, 138)

This tongue-in-cheek parenthetical alludes to several different competing theories of light, color, and matter. In 1637 Descartes argued that light was made up of particles or atoms, that light was stable, unified, and homogeneous, and that color was the result of refraction or modification to a beam of white light. In 1669, while the plague ravaged Cambridge, Newton was writing a treatise "On Colours" that subscribed to the particle theory, but he suggested that light was unstable, various, and heterogeneous, and that color was not a modification of white light but the result of separating white light into its constituent colors. The same year, Boyle and Hooke were arguing that light was not a particle but a wave that pushed forward ("made by . . . a pressing and reacting motion"). Hooke and Newton would in fact light so bitterly on the subject of waves versus particles that Newton would retire to Cambridge in disgust, to study alchemy. In her lighthearted summary of competing theories of color, and in refusing to cite any one of them to explain the experiments of colors. 227
skin colors of the Blazing Worlders, Cavendish steps whimsically over the whole dispute.

Cavendish complained in the preface to *Observations* that she was insufficiently educated to understand the new science, but she clearly knew the terms of the debate—she just couldn’t or wouldn’t accept them. In particular, she saw no place for a unified theory of color in a *romance*, any more than she saw the need for a notion of identity that cohered around any characteristic other than nobility. Her understanding of identity in the romances veers between essential characteristics that cannot be changed (this is the case with rank and, in *Blazing World*, with gender) and fluid attributes that change constantly within the narrative (such as color, race, nationality, or the direction of sexual desire).

**Assaulted and Pursued Chastity**

Cavendish first addressed the connections among fiction, skin color, rank and gender in her romantic fable *Assaulted and Pursued Chastity* (*APC*, 1656). *APC* plays in a controlled manner with the limits of identity—royal, racial, and gendered—by erasing these limits briefly during the narrative only to redraw them at its conclusion. Cavendish’s heroine changes her name and her gender according to her circumstances. She goes by the name “Misera,” which refers to her first state of “assaulted and pursued chastity,” when she is pursued by a rapacious Prince; “Affectionata,” when she shoots and wounds this Prince to preserve her chastity and escapes on board a ship; and “Travella” when, dressed as a boy, she is adopted by a Captain and travels the world. Cavendish, somewhat confusingly, often uses the male personal pronoun to refer to the cross-dressed Travella, as if the heroine (like Woolf’s Orlando) does indeed change sex for the duration of “his” adventure (until the Prince discovers “him,” when “she” becomes female once more). Marina Leslie argues that the pronoun confusion, like the unorthodox methods by which Travella preserves her chastity, thwarts a reader’s expectations of the narrative; as Orgel observes, however, such pronoun ambiguity is typical both of early modern romances and of Elizabethan and Jacobean accounts of the transvestite theatre.21

On their voyage, Travella and the Captain encounter and civilize a land of royal cannibals before being sold into the service of the Queen of Amity. It turns out that the Prince has likewise been sold into servitude—to the King of Amour, who is waging war on the Queen of Amity. Travella, who becomes captain of the Queen’s army, escapes the Prince’s military assaults and his recognition until, in a parody of the masculine exchange of women in marriage contracts, the Queen of Amity, who has fallen in and out of love with Travella, hands him/her over to the Prince as part of a peace treaty with the King—on condition that Travella become “Viceregency” of the Kingdom of Amity, and that the Queen shall marry the King of Amour (*APC*, 116). Travella is perfectly willing to marry her Prince at this point, having defeated him in battle and won the hearts of the people.

Disembarking in a strange land with the Captain, the cross-dressed Travella encounters “such complexioned men” as she never saw... for they were not black like Negroes, nor tawny, nor olive, nor ashamed, as many are, but of a deep purple, their hair as white as milk, and like wool, their lips thin, their ears long, their noses flat, yet sharp, their teeth and nails as black as jet, and as shining; their stature tall, and their proportion big; their bodies were all naked; only from the waist down to their knees [crotch] wore there brought through their legs up to the waist again, and tied with a knot, a thin kind of stuff, which was made of the barks of trees, yet looked as fine as silk, and as soft; the men carried long darts in their hands, spear-fashion, so hard and smooth, as it seemed like metal, but made of whales’ bones. (*APC*, 63)

At first it seems that these natives contradict all a seventeenth-century reader’s expectations and assumptions about foreign climes, with their brilliant, nonnatural skin tones that Cavendish carefully contrasts to the inhabitants of the world we know. Cavendish explicitly distances her natives from “Negroes” and their skin tones from the “many” that are familiar to Earth-dwellers. But with closer inspection, her description repeats the orientalist tropes of the travel narratives we considered in Chapter Eight. Her natives are “naked” but for a loincloth, like the savages that Leo Africanus describes; they carry spear-like implements, again like wild men or savages; although their clothing looks like silk and their hair like metal spears, in fact they use “the barks of trees” as if “whales’ bones,” products of the natural world, rather than artifacts of artisanship or civilization. Despite the fact that they are “not black like Negroes,” their noses are “flat” and their hair curls “like wool,” a combination that evokes common stereotypes about African features. Later in the novella, Cavendish directly compares their hair to “wool, and very short as Niger have” (*APC*, 71). This “wool” in fact saves Travella from human sacrifice: when “he” lets down “his” long hair, the Prince is amazed at the sight, because he has never seen such long locks before, and lays down the knife before worshipping “him” as a god. Travella’s long hair is a sign of her female gender, but it saves her life despite—or even because of—the fact that her captors cannot interpret it as a sign of femininity. For the natives, Travella’s hair signifies not sex but rank and power; this is part of a larger pattern in the novella that inverts femininity and masculinity in an effort to account.

While Travella can transcend gender because of her rank and superior knowledge, none of the people she encounters can transcend their
rank, here explicitly connected to skin color. As Kate Lilley remarks, in this world skin color illustrates "a profound physical difference between subjects of different rank." While the common folk are purple, "all through the royal blood, were of a different colour from the rest of the people, they were of a perfect orange colour; their hair coal black, their teeth and nails as white as milk, of a very great height, yet well shaped" (APC, 68). In addition, while the commoners have teeth "black as jet," the royals have teeth and nails "white as milk;" while the commoners have hair "white as snow," the royals have hair that is "coal black" (APC, 68). The royal family and its subjects belong to tribes who are physically opposite.

Just as the inhabitants of this new world recall distant African tribes, so the landscape is rich in exotic and marketable commodities such as nutmeg, mace, cinnamon, ginger, oranges, and lemons. One of the "governors" that Travellia meets lives in a house

built with spices; the roof and beams . . . made of cinnamon, and the walls . . . plastered with the flakes of mace . . . the planches . . . out of nutmegs; the long planches out of ginger . . . ; the house was covered on the top, some with pomegranates' rinds, others of oranges and citrons but the pomegranates last the longer, but the other smelled the sweeter, and looked the more pleasant to the eye. (APC, 66)

The house is like an oriental version of the witch's gingerbread cottage in Hansel and Gretel, edible from roof to floor. Another palace is inland with "Turkey stone," as if to heighten the Eastern opulence in Cavendish's mind (APC, 67).

Such opulence can be a sign of barbarous excess or of absolute royal power, both of which are characteristic of this savage monarchy. It turns out that not only is the governor's house consumable, but so are his people:

they had a custom in that country, to keep great store of slaves, both males and females, to breed on, as we do breed flocks of sheep . . . The children were eaten as we do lambs or veal, for young and tender meat; the elder for beef and mutton, as stronger meats. (APC, 69)

Cavendish's tone is deliberately sardonic; from her enforced exile in Antwerp, the duchess can contrast the "tyrannical" monarchy of her fictional world with the comparatively gentle regime that her real competitors had overthrown (APC, 69). At the same time, the fact that the cannibals are royal connects them viscerally to the ancient sovereigns of England: "these of the royal blood all their skins were wrought, like the Britons" (APC, 69). "Wrought" means decorated, perhaps with blue woad, which the ancient Britons were known to use, or perhaps with tattoos or

scars, like the Sapiens described by John Sparke in my previous chapter. Compare Dionise Settle's description of the Inuit. The natural skin color of the Eskimos makes them resemble the "Sunne burnt country man" in England, but they scar themselves with indigo ink, for beauty: "some of their women race [scar] their faces proportionally, as chinnie, cheeks, and forehead, and the wrists of their hands, whereupon they lay a colour which continueth darke azenure [blue]" (PN, 7:224). The blue color of their markings links the Inuit to the woaded ancient Britons. In APC, the image of the ancient Britons evokes both difference and kinship; the cannibals are primitive, like the ancient Britons, or like distant tribes who scar themselves, but they are also potentially civilized relatives to the English. Part of what makes Cavendish's vision utopian (for her) is the fact that the cannibals have power that is so extreme that they can eat their subjects; she expresses a slight wistfulness that civilization entails a necessary sacrifice of royal authority.

The cannibals' royalty and their respect for social hierarchies render them morally recuperable in Cavendish's worldview; it also makes it possible for Travellia to reinscribe the colonial and masculine power structures of Cavendish's own world, as Leslie observes. Cavendish does not provide a "popular or populist feminist vision"; women can become powerful rulers, but only through marriage. Having married her Prince, Travellia responds to his submission by giving him back his authority:

all the soldiers . . . cried out, Travellia shall be Viceregeny.

But the Prince told his mistress, she should also govern him. She answered, that he should govern her, and she would govern the kingdom. (APC, 116)

This formulation contrasts female political power with domestic order; while Travellia will continue to rule the people, she will give up her personal authority to her husband.

Travellia's sacrifice of domestic power for political control corresponds to the strain of "Tory feminism" that Catherine Gallagher identifies in Cavendish's writing. Gallagher observes that Cavendish imagines herself as absolute and omnipotent; she even sets herself up as a monarch in her own right. Consider her well-known defense of Blazing World:

though I cannot be Henry the Fifth, or Charles the Second, yet I endeavour to be Margaret the First, and although I have neither power, time nor occasion to conquer the world as Alexander and Caesar did, yet rather than not to be mistress of one, since Fortune and the Fates would give me none, I have made a world of my own: for which no body, I hope, will blame me, since it is in every one's power to do the like. (BW, 124)
Gallagher observes that such a "self-sufficient" sense of self might seem to contradict a belief in the supremacy of the real monarch, but that, for Cavendish, "the monarch becomes a figure for the self-enclosed, autonomous nature of any person." Gallagher's influential article argues that Cavendish's blind faith in the monarchy might have been what enabled her to question the subordination of women and that "the ideology of absolute monarchy provides, in particular historical situations, a transition to an ideology of the absolute self." She maintains that Cavendish sees only two possible ways of conceiving the self, as monarch and as subject; however, since women are excluded from citizenship and full subjecthood, the only available position for them is absolute sovereignty. In exile from England, kingship, writes William, loses its sense of self because he is no longer a subject (he becomes abject, lost, incomplete), but his wife becomes an absolute monarch, one whose feminine, imaginary realm poses no threat either to the exiled English sovereign whom they both support or to her husband's domestic authority.

Exchanging power in the home for power in the province enacts precisely the gendered Royalist paradox that Gallagher identifies: a man can achieve autonomous subjectivity through service to a monarch, but a woman can become an autonomous subject only by being a monarch herself, which in APC immunizes her from gender. When their leader announces that she is a woman, "although . . . habitied like a man," the faithful soldiers of Amity exclaim, "Heaven bless you, of what sex soever you be" (APC, 115). Travellia's sex makes a vast difference to her love life, but none "what . . . soever" to her subjects. Her compromise allows both herself and her Prince to be complete subjects, at least in Cavendish's Tory utopia. We need to extend Gallagher's model, however, to take full account of Cavendish's utopianism. What gives Travellia her authority to civilize the cannibals (who are, after all, royal by birth, as she will become by marriage) but her own sense of superiority to beings different from her in color, shape, and culture? In APC, rank can outweigh differences of gender and color, and women can appropriate the power of rank, but only through marriage; likewise, "moral" or rational knowledge can replace all these categories as a ground for authority. Ten years later, Cavendish undertakes another literary experiment with race, romance, and royal power. In Blazing World, however, rank is displayed not through but in spite of variations in skin color and species, perhaps in response to the observations of the new science.

Blazing World

The fantastic plot of Blazing World recalls APC in several ways, beginning with an attempted rape, featuring multicolored natives, and concluding with a successful female monarchy. A young Lady, kidnapped by a rapacious merchant, finds herself adrift at sea, progressing through the Arctic; while the sailors on board the ship die of cold, her chastity preserves her and she crosses the North Pole to the adjoining pole of the Blazing World, of which she eventually becomes Empress. Like Cavendish herself, or like Travellia in APC, the Empress takes the role of her husband, the Emperor, whose narrative function is to forward the romance plot by enrolling the Lady (the only instance of class mobility that Cavendish countenances). Deciding to write a Cabala, the Empress summons the Duchess of Newcastle from Earth to be her scribe. Having left their bodies behind in the Blazing World, the Duchess and the Empress travel to our world as souls in order to investigate alternative forms of government. When the Duchess of Newcastle becomes convinced because she wishes to rule a world, like her friend the Empress, the Empress counsels her to make a world of her own in her imagination, where she too can enjoy absolute power.

The people of the Blazing World exist in a variety of colors and humors (as in the quotation with which I began this chapter), but these physical variations replace cultural or religious ones:

the men were of several complexities, but none like any of our world . . . there was but one language in all that world, nor no more but one Emperor, to whom they all submitted with the greatest duty and obedience, which made them live in a continued peace and happiness, not acquainted with other foreign wars, or home-bred insurrections. (BW, 130)

Enjoying absolute power over her subjects, scientists and soldiers, and their absolute devotion, the Empress rules by controlling knowledge and its production; the narrator implies that if subjects can be kept ignorant of foreign uprisings or domestic troubles, they will remain at peace. Carrie Hintz suggests that female autonomy in Blazing World exists only under conditions of political control and censorship; there is one language, one ruler, and one religion. Within that religion, there is "no diversity of opinions in that same religion" (BW, 135), and only one form of worshipping. In this sense it is Restoration England's opposite: in England there are fewer variations in human color, and none in shape, but multiple religions, varying opinions within single religions, and even more forms of worship.

In the Blazing World, the most important cultural or social distinctions are those between "the imperial race," who are princes "made emuch for that purpose", "the ordinary sort of men," who are multicolored; and the "rest of the inhabitants," who are animal-men scientists (BW, 133). These distinctions seem to replicate some of the divisions of Restoration England, but with important differences. Rank is not inherited in the
usual sense, since the princes are "eunuchs," nor is it visible through bodily variation (in contrast to APC), but has to be enforced through what Kegel rightly identifies as "sumptuary laws".29

None was allowed to use or wear gold but those of the imperial race, which were the only nobles of the state; nor durst anyone wear jewels but the Emperor, the Empress, and their eldest son, notwithstanding that they had an infinite quantity both of gold and precious stones in that world. (BW, 133)

As in APC, the "imperial race" of the utopian world is verbally linked to "the King, the Queen, and all the royal race" of England (BW, 192). England serves as both tacit parallel and counterexample, where royalty is likewise established through custom and taboo rather than through explicit bodily differences, but where reproduction is of paramount importance.

The three distinct classes of people in the Blazing World cannot be identified as separate "races" by many of the usual criteria of Restoration England (sex, skin color, religion, species difference). The "imperial race" lacks the physical signs of gender difference, the "ordinary ... men" lack a recognizable taxonomy of skin color, since the parasitic parade of colors in the Blazing World contrasts knowingly with the hierarchies of color in Cavendish's real world (they are "not white, black, tawny, olive or ash-coloured"); the variously shaped "inhabitants" are both "men" and animals, rational scientists and irrational beasts (BW, 135). Occupation or caste seems to figure as the main distinction among the three groups, although even this system breaks down; we don't really know how the "ordinary," multicolored men spend their time (perhaps this reflects Cavendish's own ignorance of middle-class life).

The Empress reinforces the loose connection between vocation and species difference by setting the various fish, bear, bird, ape- and fox-men to various types of scientific experimentation "proper to their species." For example, bird-men investigate the nature of the wind, fish-men enquire why the sea is salty, worm-men look for the sources of minerals, and lice-men—in a somewhat curiously move at Robert Boyle—attempt to weigh air. The tasks assigned to the scientists connect physical shape and species to intellectual function, creating a scheme of classification that repeats the real-world associations of various races (in Cavendish's pseudoscientific thinking, different species) with particular qualities. Just as species difference in Cavendish's seventeenth-century world is used to assign "beastly" work to black women and domestic work to white ones, just as gender difference is used to assign domestic work to white women and intellectual work to upper-class white men, so species difference among the "ordinary sort of men" in Blazing World alters the kind of scientific work that they can do. Unlike the real world, however, species difference does not bar them from participating in intellectual work altogether, but it does limit them to engaging in empirical science, in observations of physical objects in the material world.

The Empress, on the other hand, can enjoy pure Cartesian logic, with no material or tangible basis. She convinces the scientists that, for example, black cannot be caused by the absence of light, because we can still see black objects; on another occasion, she unceremoniously dismisses her chemists (ape-men), who cannot give a straightforward definition of the elements of nature (BW, 143). Having "imposed a general silence upon them," she concludes vigorously that "nature is but one infinite self-moving body, which by the virtue of its self-motion, is divided into infinite parts, which parts being restless, undergo perpetual changes and transmutations by their infinite compositions and divisions," triumphantly adding that this conclusion by rational speculation, without the aid of animalistic empirical observation or testing (BW, 154). The source of the Empress's power is her rational ability and her knowledge; just as Travelli's knowledge outranked the royalty of the cannibals and allowed her to "civilize" them, so the Empress's abstract Cartesian logic renders all others inferior—regardless of their shape, color, or gender.

Asserting this logic as the basis for power allows Cavendish to avoid declaring a belief in either mono- or polygenesis in her romance, just as she avoids declaring a preference for one theory of light above another. When the Empress speculates that a single seed or "seminal principle" might be responsible for the creation of vegetables and minerals (a single origin for all species), the Blazing scientists reply that, although vegetable seeds retain their "species" or character after reproduction, they "increase not bare of themselves, but by joining and commixing with other parts, which do assist them in their productions, and by way of imitation form or figure their own parts into such or such particulars" (BW, 152). Paradoxically, Blazing vegetable seeds retain specificity—remain true to their species—but produce various differences in their offspring through a process of grafting rather than, as in the real world, through cloning (cuttings) or sexual reproduction (pollination). Helped by the "art" of "creatures that live within the earth," seeds can even yield "mixed species," which are useless "seeds to humans." "[G]ardeners and hothouse men" should not, however, interfere in the earthworms' mixed grafting, because "tis a great prejudice to the worms" who are simultaneously sustained and generated from each species of plant (BW, 153). Species difference is both essential, in that each "particular" kind of worm is descended from particular flowers, fruits, or roots, and mutable, because "in general ... like ... all other natural creatures," the worms derive from "the corporeal figurative motions of nature" and can themselves produce new life forms.
Difference is essential, but it is not essentially hereditary, because reproduction is a collaborative project that can have uncertain outcomes. This erratic reproductive process partly explains the confusion that the Empress elicits when she asks what “opinion [the scientists] had of the beginning of forms” only to be told that “they did not understand what she meant by this expression”: there is no point of origin, “nothing new in nature, nor . . . a beginning of anything” (BW, 152, 153). Later we learn that Blazing human reproduction is based not on sexual relations but upon spontaneous generation, a system that “can project the disabling of patriarchy,” as Neely observes, even as it evades the question of where, when, and how all species, and their differences, originate—a question that was intriguing philosophers, and Cavendish herself. Like systematic explanations of light and color, coherent theories of species difference and heredity are out of place in a romance that accepts only the rules of Cartesian logic and timeless, endless, boundless “nature.”

The Empress’s statements on the nature of nature—infinitude, ever changing, self-moving, yet divided into discrete parts whose divisions are always collapsing—could equally well be a statement of Cavendish’s views on the “female monarchical self,” to borrow Rachel Trubowitz’s phrase. Trubowitz observes that Cavendish states outright her belief in the inferiority of women to men in her scientific writings, and suggests that the “female monarchical self” in Blazing World allows the possibility of female autonomy but requires the antifeminist exclusion of women from “employment in church or state” in order to preserve the Empress’s “imperial singularity.”

When the “female monarchical self” is embodied, certain physical characteristics cannot be changed. One of these attributes is a color, which Cavendish sees as essential to the body but irrelevant to the mind. The scientists of the Blazing World explicitly deny that color is a superficial or light-dependent characteristic on one of the few occasions when they convince the Empress, instead of being convinced by her:

Why, said the Empress, colour is only an accident, which is an immaterial thing, and has no being of itself, but in another body. Those, replied they, that informed your Majesty thus, surely their rational motions were very irregular; for how is it possible that a natural nothing can have a being in nature? . . . there is no body without colour, nor no colour without body; for colour, figure, place, magnitude, and body, are all but one thing, without any separation or abstraction from each other. (BW, 151)

The Empress moves from believing that color cannot exist without light to believing that color is an essential part of physical embodiment. As aspects of physical nature, “color, figure, place, magnitude, and body” are all functions that imprison the soul. Spirits have no permanent or essential colors, as one of these spirits tells the Empress: “colour belongs to body, and as there is no body that is colourless, so there is no colour that is bodiless” (BW, 175). When the spirits travel to various worlds, they have to take a material “vehicle,” or body, and when they have a vehicle, they have a color. Human beings, in contrast, have not “immaterial spirits” but “material souls.” These souls can travel in vehicles of “the purest and finest sort of air” because they are “self-moving, living and self-knowing” (BW, 193, 176). Cavendish does not address the question of whether air has a color; since she wrote Blazing World before she saw Boyle’s experiment with the air pump, she probably considered air to be bodiless, and therefore colorless. It is as “material souls,” clothed in air, that the Duchess and the Empress embark upon their travels.

Color, however, must be left behind when the soul travels out of the body, but gender is an essential attribute of the soul, and cannot: “they were both females,” confirms the narrator (BW, 183). What seems at first to be a binary distinction between material/immaterial becomes blurred by the Duchess’s and the Empress’s travels as gendered, “material souls,” just as the confusion between materiality/immateriality challenges the Empress’s earlier assumptions about the superiority of rational Cartesianism over physical scientific investigation; perhaps the two spheres of intellectual enquiry are not as different as the Empress believes, since souls can be both abstractions and “material” objects clothed in air, all at the same time.

The narrator ionizes the Empress’s beliefs further by breaking down another material/immaterial distinction—the difference between “paltotic” and earthly love, between friendship and sexual desire. It is not simply the case that “material souls” retain a vague gender identification; they appear to retain the physical possibilities of sex as well. When an “immaterial spirit” suggests that the Empress enlist the Duchess of Newcastle to be her scribe, the Empress agrees, adding:

neither will the Emperor have reason to be jealous, she being one of my own sex. In truth, said the spirit, husbands have reason to be jealous of platonic lovers, for they are very dangerous, as being not only very intimate and close, but subtile and insinuating. You say well, replied the Empress; wherefore I pray send me the Duchess of Newcastle’s soul. (BW, 181)

The spirit seems to be contrasting the dangers of opposite-sex platonic lovers, whom he characterizes as crafty and “insinuating,” with the safety of a female scribe, and the Empress seems to agree. This passage defuses the threat that female friendship or love might supersede the marital tie, but once the Duchess (or rather, the Duchess’s “soul”) is brought to the Blazing World, the Empress finds that platonic lovers do not have to be male: “truly their meeting did produce such an intimate friendship
between them, that they became platonik lovers, although they were both females" (BW, 185). Presumably we are meant to keep the spirit's strictures on platonism in mind still: the Duchess is evidently as "subtle and insinuating" as any of the male scientific scribes could have been, but her gender prevents the Emperor from experiencing jealousy. Although the gender of the Duchess's and Empress's souls is fixed, the direction of their erotic desires (their "sexual orientation," to use an anachronism) is not.

We see this dual status of platonik love (as something that both replaces and consolidates opposite-sex marriage) when the souls of the Duchess and the Empress, while visiting the Duke, both leap into his body. The narrator observes that, "Had there been but some such souls more, the Duke would have been like the Grand Signior in his seraglio, only it would have been a platonik seraglio" (BW, 194). Kegel analyzes this image in terms of seventeenth-century anxieties about the power of the Ottoman Empire (arguing that Cavendish constructs the Blazing World both in tension with and in collaboration with the Turkish realm), and suggests that Cavendish's denial of sexual activity here "precludes the possibility of sexual contact between women and allows the continued representation of the mobilization of their desire."

The image does both these things, but it also mocks the narrator by highlighting the absurdity of a "platonik seraglio." Critics have tended to underestimate the degree of witty self-consciousness in Blazing World, even Kegel's theoretically sophisticated account collapses "Margaret Cavendish" the narrator with the "Duchess of Newcastle" who appears in the text. The hasty "only it would have been a platonik seraglio" destroys not the vision of the harem, but the notion of platonik love, particularly when it is followed by an account of the Duchess's jealousy:

But the Duke's soul ... afforded such delight and pleasure to the Empress's soul ... that these two souls became enamoured of each other, which the Duchess's soul perceiving grew jealous at first, but then considering that no adultery could be committed amongst Platonik lovers, and that Platonism was divine, as being derived from divine Plato, cast forth of her mind that Idea of jealousy. (BW, 194-95)

Cavendish is surely satirizing the Duchess's logic as well her own authorial idealism: the slangy phrase, "divine Plato," parodies her own enthusiasm for idealistic philosophy, and points out the inefficacy of ideal, Blazing-World solutions to real-world problems. The narrator writes as though the Duchess has entirely suppressed her jealousy, but this solution to the problems of sexual competition is in every respect imaginary. Only in a platonik world can all three subjects (Duke, Duchess, and Empress) continue to be intimate yet autonomous, connected yet apart, just as only in a "romantical" world can Margaret Cavendish become "Margaret the First" and triumph over "Alexander and Caesar" (BW, 124).

Gallagher characterizes Cavendish as a "Tory feminist," but we might equally call her a "Tory utopian," for whom freedom depends upon both the subject's own individuality and the suppression of other, lesser ranked subjects. Just as Cavendish argued that science proved that women were essentially different from and weaker than men, so she argued that science proved that black men were essentially different from white ones, who alone were descended from Adam. And just as her model for female subjectivity depended upon an imaginary female monarchy, so her model of racial equality and plurality in Blazing World was chimerical, fictionally possible because it seemed historically impossible.

Battigelli suggests that Blazing World offers an alternative model for both scientific discovery and subjectivity, one in which fancy, instead of being an unwanted side effect of intellect, takes the central position in defining subjecthood. But Cavendish clearly contrasts her scientific endeavors with her "romantical" ones, and imagines that they have very different purposes:

If you wonder, that I join a work of fancy to my serious philosophical contemplations; think not that it is out of a disparagement to philosophy; or out of an opinion, as if this noble study were but a fiction of the mind, ... though philosophers may err ... this does not prove, that the ground of philosophy is merely fiction ... since there is but one truth in nature ... But fictions are an issue of man's fancy, framed in his own mind, according as he pleases, without regard, whether the thing he fancies, he really existent with his mind or not. (BW, 124)

Despite her disagreements with both the physical means and the philosophical methods of the experimental scientists, Cavendish distinguishes their motives from her own in writing "fiction." Cavendish believes that it is a philosopher's duty to seek out the truth, and many philosophers err because there is "but one truth" to be discovered; those who fail to see this "one truth" are therefore bound to fail. But fiction writers can indulge themselves and their readers. Note that Cavendish has separated the two uses that Sidney attributed to poetry: "philosophy" now has the duty to teach, "fiction," to delight. Part of the delight, for Cavendish, stems from the constant awareness that her Blazing World is imaginary. The Empress's freedom depends upon the subjection of those lower in rank; the ranks in certain ways correspond to the emerging racial classifications of seventeenth-century England; but Cavendish's imagined infinity of worlds also allow the possibility of freedom—not in another's fictional universe, but in one's own.
Thus when Pepys wrote about Cavendish, “The whole story of this Lady is a romance, and all she doth is romantic,” his analysis was correct. Cavendish both wrote and lived a romance: willfully presenting herself in frontispieces as eccentric genius and devoted wife to defuse her critics, as James Fitzmaurice argues; deliberately cultivating the appearance of eccentricity with the “antique” appearance and “extravagancies” of clothing that Pepys and others found fascinating; creating romantic versions of herself both in print and in person. A romantic public persona allowed Cavendish to write and publish; a romantic attachment allows her Blazing Empress to become an absolute monarch; and only in and through romantic invention can women, and human beings of different colors and shapes, become complete and autonomous subjects. In Restoration England, natural philosophy offers a unified myth of white, masculine superiority, and only fiction can offer multiple mythologies of femininity and color.

Afterword: Nancy Burson’s
Human Race Machine

From its very beginnings, the myth of discrete and multiple human races has been used to justify existing hierarchies of power. Cuvier, following Linnaeus, divided human beings into four races, arguing that the white race was not only the most attractive race but also superior to the others in intelligence, courage and energy.¹ The nineteenth century saw the proliferation of races; in 1854 Pickering identified eleven and Bory St. Vincent, fifteen, each thought to have originated from its “own peculiar Adam” and each thought to represent a different step on the developmental ladder.² During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a three-race model replaced earlier schemes, simplifying the human hierarchy but still retaining it.

Today, we encounter a split between geneticists’ determination that there is no biological basis for dividing up the human race and the persistence of that division in social life. Thus Bryan Sykes concludes in The Seven Daughters of Eve that research on mitochondrial DNA “makes nonsense out of any biological basis for racial classification,” but a twentyninth-century physician defends her right to treat her patients differently according to their perceived race.³ The contemporary artist Nancy Burson’s Human Race Machine—both as a device and as a process or encounter—seems to enact these contradictions and ambiguities of race in the twenty-first century. The Machine aims to emphasize human similarities rather than their differences—an unabashedly optimistic goal for the new millennium (and indeed, her project was originally produced for Britain’s Millennium Dome, commissioned like a modern-day masque). Faced with a digital photograph of themselves inside a booth, participants use the computer to measure the distances between their eyes, chin, nose, and other major facial landmarks, and indicate to which “race” they would like to belong: White, Black, South Asian, Asian, and—in response to September 11, 2001—Middle Eastern. At each choice, the viewer reviews her own face: lengthened, broadened, darkened, lightened, oval- or round-eyed, snub- Grecian- or aquiline-nosed, high-, low- or middle-browed. Since participants do not choose a
Notes

Introduction

1. OED, "race," sb.3; v., 3; Towserven, "First Voyage," in Hakluyt, Principal Navigations (PN), 6:184. Hereafter cited within the text.

2. Quotations from Shakespeare’s works and from The Passionate Pilgrim come from the Riverside edition unless otherwise indicated, and are cited within the text. Plays are cited by act, scene, and line number; longer poems by line number; sonnets by sonnet number and line number.

3. OED, "race," sb., 2.7.


5. Fowler, 3.

6. OED, "kind," sb., 3c.

7. Cole, 68.


10. Raymond Williams, 125.

11. Dollimore, 531.

12. See Jordan; Fryer.

13. See Appiah and Gates.

14. See Allen.

15. See Du Bois; Fanon; Asante.

16. See hooks.

17. See Guinier and Torres, passim.

18. Spivak, "Three Women’s Texts."


20. Sinfield; Loomba, "Local-Manufacture."

21. Erickson, "Moment of Race," 33. See Eldred Jones, and G. K. Hunter, for the first wave. For the second, see Loomba, Gender, Race, Renaissance Drama; Masten and Wall; Barroll, ed., Shakespeare Studies; McGiffert; Hendricks and Parker, eds., Women, "Race" and Writing; MacDonald, ed., Race, Ethnicity, and Power; Kim Hall, Things of Darkness; Bartels, Spectacles of Strangeness; Shapiro; Gillespie, Shakespeare and the Geography of Difference; Habib; Singh, Colonial Narrative; Seusa; and Matar.

22. See Baker, Diawara, and Lindeborg; Dabydeen; Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin; and Dyer.

23. See also Little; Vitkus, Three Turk Plays; Gallaghan, Shakespeare Without Women; Kamps and Singh; Archer; Raman; Gary Taylor, Buying Whiteness; Floyd-Wilson, English Ethnicity. I thank Gary Taylor for letting me read part of his manuscript.
25. See Cavalli-Sforza and Cavalli-Sforza for a refutation of racialism on genetic as well as political grounds.
26. See Diamond.
27. Kim Hall, Things of Darkness, passim.
28. See Habib.
29. Best, in PN, 7; Browne, in Pseudodoxia Epidemica (P), 3. Both hereafter cited within the text by volume and page number.
30. Pliny, Natural History, 7.12.51. References to Pliny's Natural History come from Rackham's translation and will be cited by book, section, and paragraph number.
31. I follow Jonathan Bate in calling this character "Moby" rather than "Multo" (see his Arden 3 edition of Titus Andronicus). As Francesca Royster argues, Moby & Moby's white baby "both disrupts the motives of the fathers as the primary agent of reproduction, the mother a mere receptacle, and undermines assumptions about the white race as originary, blackness as secondary" (452).
32. MacDonaId, "Subject of Blackness," 59.
34. Bourne, 5E6.
35. Ibid., 5E2.
36. Baron, D2r; Peaps, A3c; Dekker and Middleton, 288.
37. Hendricks, "Obscured by Dreams."
38. Fryer, 135–34.
40. Minshew, "ethnick."
41. Bakhtin, 17.

Chapter 1. Pictures of Andromeda Nahid

1. J. R. Morgan puts the Aethiopia as late as the fourth century a.d. Modern classical scholars transliterate the author's name as "Heliodorus," but Renaissance texts Latinize the name to "Heliodorus," and I follow their example. Unless otherwise indicated, the modern translation used is by J. R. Morgan, An Ethiopian Story (2E), hereafter cited within the text. The standard Greek text appears in Heliodorus, Les Ethiopiennes, ed. Rattenbury and Lamb.

2. All references to these works hereafter appear within the text. Matthew's edition of The White Ethiopian reproduces the author's revisions, not the unrevised irregular couples of the original, so I cite the British Library manuscript. Other copies consulted include the British Library copy of Amory's Historie (1579) and the British Library copy of Gough's Strange Discovery (1640). Underwood, Lisle, Gough, and the author of The White Ethiopian seem not to have influenced each other, although Lisle's Fair Ethiopian may have inspired a 1687 prose translation begun by "a Person of Quality" and completed by Nahum Tate.

3. Crooke, Microcosmographia, A3r. Hereafter cited within the text.
5. See Dille.
6. Mary Nequin, in conversation. Archer argues that "although human sacrifice is abolished altogether at the end of the tale at the behest of the sages or 'gymnosophists,' its role at court already tarnishes the luster of Ethiopian civilization" (35). On the historiography of the gymnosophists, see Archer, 144–47.


8. See Dille for Philostratus's influence on Heliodorus.
10. Reardon, quoted in Heliodorus, trans. Lamb, 301.
11. Ibid.
15. Heliodorus, trans. Lamb, 64.
18. OED, "mitre," s.b., 2d.
20. Ibid.
21. Dille, 299. R. Margo Hendricks has suggested (in conversation) that in the Renaissance there may exist a distinction between Christian "Ethiops," warlike "Moores," and savage "Blackamoors." While I have not found a systematic use of the three terms, it is interesting that the King James Version uses "Ethiopian" where Geneva gives "blackamoor" or "Moor" or Ethiopian" indiscriminately, and the Bishop's Bible gives "Moor" or "Morien" (compare Jer. 37,77, Num. 12,1). 22. Alvares, ed. and introd. Beckingham and Huntingford, "Introduction," 11.
24. Ibid., 1:294.
25. Ibid., 1:304; 2:933. The historical Ethiopian king identified as Prester John by Alvares was Lebna Dengel, born in 1496, who ascended the throne of his father Na'od when he was only twelve years old. His mother, Queen Na'o Mogasa, and his stepgrandmother Eleni served as regents. After he came to power, the Muslims of Asad began the practice of invading Ethiopia every year (Alvares, ed. and introd. Beckingham and Huntingford, 1:15). Fray Tomas de Padilla translated Alvares's treatise into Spanish in 1557.
26. Mandeville, 43r; Archer, 93.
27. Africaans, Trans. Pory, title page and marginal note, A6b. Hereafter cited within the text as HDA.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
34. All translations from Histoire are my own unless otherwise noted. The British Library edition gives "leurs beaux temps to deux de blanche ennue," "their lovely temples" in a pun (or perhaps eye-skip error) that compares their brows to the temple where they met and alludes to Chariclea's vocation as priestess.
35. I thank Wes Williams for pointing out the pun to me.
36. Webbe, B3v.
37. Knight, F2v. Hereafter cited within the text. Muter offers some statistics: "By the mid-1620s there were between 1200 and 1400 captives in Salis alone; between 1622 and 1642 over 8000 Britons were taken captive; between 1627 and 1640 there were 2828 British captives in Algiers alone" (91).
38. Nicolas, 47v, 48r.
40. Higginson, quoted in Euripides, 150.
41. Pliny, Natural History, 7.12.52.
42. Fontanesi, 154.
43. Munich, 14.
44. Woodward, 34.
45. Ibid., 84.
46. Ibid., figures 9a, 9b.
47. Ibid., 84, 90.
48. " Candida si non sum, placuit Cepheus Perseus/ Andromeda, patrict fisca colorum vitae mea" (Ovid, Heroides, "Sappho to Phaon," 15.33-36). The Loeb edition translates the lines thus: "I am not dazzling fair, Cepheus' Andromeda was fair in Perseus' eyes, though dusky with the hue of her native land," but I see no reason to modify the sentiment by adding "though," an interpolation that recalls the controversy over the "black and comely" or "black but comely" bride of the biblical Song of Songs, explored in my next chapter.
49. Otho Vaenius, 172-73.
50. Virgil, Eclogues, 2, line 18; Barnfield, The Tores of an Afectionate Shepherd, "The Second Day," lines 225-307 and passim. References to Barnfield’s Tores of an Afectionate Shepherd come from Klawitter’s edition. The first and second days’ "lamentations" of The Tores of an Afectionate Shepherd (A) are designated as 1 and 2 in my text respectively. Hereafter cited within the text by "lamentation" and line number.
52. The illustration comes from a French text in better condition than the English.
54. Ibid., 152-3.
55. Ovid, Metamorphoses, 4.670: "Andromedan Perseus nigris portarit ab Indius;" Ars Amatoria, 1.53.
56. "Nec sum Andromedae color est obiectus ab illo, / Mobilia in gemino cui pede pinnam fuit;" Ovid, Ars Amatoria, 2.641.
57. Euripides, 158; Dille.
59. Ovid, Love’s School, trans. (attrib.) Heywood, 24b; 35r.
60. Baron borrows this tag (without an acknowledgment) for his pastoral Grizes and Hegia (1647), itself part of his new "Cyprian Academy," or "Erotopaignon": "At Perseus amongst the Negroes sought / And faire Andromade from Inde brought;" (Chv)
61. Chapman, Andromeda Liberata, Ex. Hereafter cited within the text. The poem proved controversial, judging from Chapman’s speedy follow-up apology, A Free and Offencers Justification of a Lately Published and most maliciously mistranslated Poeme entitled "Andromeda Liberata" (1614), a pamphlet disclaiming any political allegory or intention. Apparently some of the "maliciously interpret[er]s" took umbrage at Chapman’s neoplatonic conceit that lovers die and are reborn in their love for one another, and that those who deny love are therefore "Churlish Homicides" (Andromeda, Ex). Perhaps there were already rumors circulating about Frances Howard’s role in the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury (for which a year later she would be tried), and "Homicide" was not a word to be thrown around this couple casually, even in a Neoplatonic sense. Other readers apparently took the “harraine Rocke” (Andromeda, Bv) to which Andromeda was chained to refer to Frances Howard’s first husband, an impression that Chapman is at pains to dispel:
   as it ever said
   A man was harraine? Or the burthen layd
   Of bearing fruitre on Man?
   he asks, only to find himself then obliged to clear his Andromeda, too, of the stigma of infertility and to state clearly that she comprised “All beauties” (Free and Offencers, 4).
62. See Cave, Recognitions.
63. Heitseman, 179.
64. Crooke, 23r.
65. Heliodorus, trans. Hadas, 63; WE, fo. 34.
66. Sandford, Cscr.
67. Hilton, 89.
68. Stephens, 72.
69. Heliodorus, trans. Warchewicz, 23r.
70. Hawkins, 1052.
71. Hilton, 89.
72. On this emblem and its historiography, see Newman.

Chapter 2. Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Black Bride

1. King James Version, Song of Songs, 1:5-6. Hereafter cited as KJV within the text. Other versions of the Bible cited within the text are Geneva, Bishops’, and the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV). Translations after and including KJV treat the title, "The song of songs, which is Solomon’s," as verse one, chapter one, so that "black but comely" Song 1:4 in translations after KJV but 1:4 in Geneva and Bishops’.
2. Dove, 52r. Hereafter cited within the text.
3. See Pope for the most detailed commentary on the Song and useful summaries of critical and exegetical interpretation. The Talmudic and Midrashic commentaries on the Song read it as a narrative and identify the male beloved with Solomon and his bride with Israel (Pope, 92-112; Van Norden, 51). An early Christian school of thought interpreted the Song as a poem to the bride’s virginity (Methodius, quoted in Van Norden, 55; Pope, 188-92). Alain de Lille argued that the song itself praised the Virgin Mary (Denys Turner, 291-305). German and French scholars, following a suggestion by Origen, suggested in the nineteenth century that the Song was a drama, or a sequence of wedding songs (Pope, 34-37, 141-45). Following the wedding-song tradition, NRSV treats the Song as a cycle of marriage-songs honoring the consummation of a union between an unspecified king and his foreign bride. Bloch and Bloch, like other recent poets and critics, treat the Song as a coherent, unified poem concerning "the sexual awakening of a young woman and her lover" (Bloch and Bloch, 3; Pope, 195-205). More recently, readers have found the remnants of a female fertility cult and its liturgy (Pope, 145-53), or an anthology of unrelated love lyrics (Pope, 198-99; Falk, 105).
4. Although the four-fold system did not originate with Aquinas, he codified it.
5. Van Norden, 64.
7. Braceli, B3v.
8. Legh, 20v.
9. Markham, B1v.
10. Ibid., B2v.
12. Origen, 92-93.
15. The Zohar, quoted in Van Norden, 51.
17. Origen, 277. The Latin text, “ut sua dicat, Aethiopici decorat,” literally means, “If I may put it like this, you will beautify yourself in the Ethiopian style” (Erasmus, fo. 61v).
18. Origen, 277, original emphasis.
19. Ibid.
20. Erasmus, fo. 61r (emphasis mine).
22. Snowdon, Blacks in Antiquity, 198.
23. New Revised Standard Version, Song 1:5. Hereafter cited within the text as NRSV.
24. Bloch and Bloch, 140.
25. Falk, 168.
26. Bloch and Bloch, 47.
27. I thank Nathan Gilmour for the Hebrew transliteration and Michael Fancher for pointing out to me the high number of hapax legomena in this text.
28. Ainsworth, 21r.
29. Van Norden, 46.
30. Bloch and Bloch, 47; Falk, lyric 2.
31. Pope, 307; Falk, lyric 2.
32. Robotham, M1v.
33. Falk, lyric 2.
34. Ibid.
35. Bloch and Bloch, 140.
36. Ibid.
37. See Said, Orientalism.
38. Clapham, 8r; Hereafter cited within the text.
39. Luther, B7r.
40. Kim Hall, Things of Darkness, 111.
41. Ainsworth, Cr.
42. Fenner, Br-Bc.
43. Drayton, The Most Excellent Song, 15.
44. OED, “notwithstanding,” prep., 1, 2.
46. Fenner, B4r.
47. Ibid., B4r.
48. Legh, B6v-B7r.
49. On the changing significance of the words “slave” and “villain” in the sixteenth century, see Woodbridge, Lignities, 230. Fryer suggests that the men were domestic slaves borrowed from an African monarch.
50. Fraser, 255.
52. Ibid., 17.
55. Great Britain, Sovereign, Tudor Royal Proclamations, 3:221-22.
56. Fraser, 259; Gesta Greyramen, 12; De Graziac.
57. Kim Hall, Things of Darkness, chapter title; Fryer, 22.
58. Kuyper, As.
59. Lewalski, Protestant Poetics, 5-7; Pendergast, 65.
60. Quoted in Hill, 364.
61. Jud Smith, As.
62. Quarles, 82r; Hereafter cited within the text.
63. Jelinger, As.
64. Ibid., B2v.
65. Sprigg, 33v.
66. Ibid., C5r.
67. Quoted in Pollard, 46.
68. Baldwin, As.
69. Ibid., B2v.
70. Quoted in Pollard, 297-98.
71. Hammond, 140.
72. Ibid., 143.
73. Hillebrand, 2:36. Simplifying the debates to such a facile opposition is obviously reductive; in my defense, let me cite Donne, who sarcastically leaves “My faith . . . to Roman Catholiques: / All my good works unto the Schismatics / Of Amsterdam” (“The Will,” lines 19-21).
74. Pendergast, 59-60.
75. Ibid., 65.
77. Ibid., line 8.
78. Ibid., line 26.
80. Hillebrand, 2:36.
81. Donne, Sermons, 3:358; quoted in Pendergast, 52.
82. On extreme Protestant sects, see George Williams: Baylor. On heresy and the Reformation, see Drees; John Davis. For general information on the history of the church, see Cross and Livingstone; Hillebrand. The Familists, or the Family of Love, were characterized in popular literature (such as Middleton’s The Family of Love, pub. 1698), as hypocrites who believed that, once elected, they could not
sin and that therefore any acts they committed could not be sinful. The "love" in their chosen name was intended to reflect divine love, but was often willfully misunderstood to mean sexual or earthly indulgence.

85. Kim Hall, Things of Darkness, 111, n.41.
86. Clapham, Ch.5.
87. G. K. Hunter makes this assumption the centerpiece of his argument about Othello: Julia Reinhard Lupton’s more sophisticated account acknowledges the play’s enmeshment in racism even as she argues that Othello reverses the Charnicet curse (77).
88. Beza, I.26, I.27, M2r.
89. Ibid., I.4.
90. On Beza and predestination, see J. S. Bray.
91. Samuel Smith, R4v, St.
92. Shapiro, 11.
93. Shapiro, 11.
94. Shapiro, 11.
95. Finch, B2v.
96. Ibid., C5r.
98. Ibid.
100. Sandes, Paraphrase, A1v, A2v.
101. Ibid., A2v.
102. Hornes; Jackson; Sprigg, B3r.
103. Hornes, 92, 93.
104. See Cotton.
105. Brightman, Works, 7N4r.
106. Hornes, 92.
107. Jackson, 7Q3r.
108. Aylett, B5v.
109. Ibid.
110. Origen, 92-93.
111. Baldwin, B5v; Kim Hall, Things of Darkness, 113.
112. Ernestus Vaeinus, Civ-C5r. I cite the copy in the National Library of Medicine, although I reproduce a clearer illustration from the copy in the Duke University Rare Books and Special Collections.
113. Ibid., C5r. The free translation is my own. The original reads:

Dum sub suntu sedula Sirio,
Phaebeque salutis sponsa coloribus,
Formam nigredo fusca vastat,
Et speciem populatam ornat.
Excusat ergo, non ebur aut rosam
Inesse malis, nec teneros simus.
Quid te molestas, virgil Regi
Gratior est color istic, lux. (C5r)

114. Rosseter, Ch. The last line of this song presents a crux. The British Library copy gives "prout d," with a space between the u and the d. Walter Davis’s edition gives the final line as "The Sun stil prout’d, the shadow stil disclaim’d," glossing "prout’d" as "approved." It is conceivable that the printer omitted an apostrophe between the u and the d, or that the faint mark visible between the two letters under magnification is the broken tail of an apostrophe that might have appeared in the first copies off the press. But the spacing between letters elsewhere in the book is irregular enough that "prout d" might simply mean "proud." Over the page, in the madrigal "My lone hath vowe here will forsaie mee," stanza two, in the line "When a man alone is weeping" the word "alone" appears as "a lone" (Rosseter, C5v). I have therefore preferred "proud" over "proved," feeling that it gives a more straightforward reading and a better line.
115. See Ridley.
117. Kim Hall reads "the new alternative" to old poetry "to be focus on darkness while recognizing that its heterogeneity puts it ultimately beyond poetic control" (Things of Darkness, 120), whereas I read the schism between old and new as a converted conversion narrative that consciously evokes a scientific model over a religious one.
118. Edward Herbert, D4v. Hereafter cited within the text by signature.
120. Van Norden, 4-6.
122. Legh, B6r.
123. Galileo, Storia del pontificato di Papa Sisto V. I thank Angelica Duran for suggesting that I look at this text.
124. Kim Hall, Things of Darkness, 120.
125. Citations of Shakespeare’s sonnets come from the Riverside Shakespeare, but I have on occasion modified the editorial punctuation or preferred variant readings.
126. Venable, 448-50.

Chapter 3. Masque and Race

1. Erickson, "Moment of Race," 30-31. References to Jonson’s Blacknox and GM come from Orgel’s edition of the Complete Masques unless otherwise indicated, and will hereafter be cited within the text by line number. References to his Irish Masque quote the 1616 Folio, including variant spellings, because Sullivan has recently and convincingly argued that Jonson’s command of Irish dialect was excellent and his spellings deliberate. Hereafter cited within the text by signature.
2. Little; Murphy.
3. Little, 122-34.
4. See Ann Jones’s “Italians and Others,” however, for sustained attention to the link between the black “Moor” Zanche and the wild Irish in John Webster’s The White Devil.
body politic in her capacity as powerful queen and plotting playwright (147-63). Cleopatra may be deliberately using her sexuality to wield power, as Janowski argues, but in so doing, argues Archer, she encourages herself in emergent and imputing norms of race and heterosexuality (Archer, 62).

68. Butler, 234.
69. Ibid.; emphasis original.
70. Charles, 127.
71. Scarry, Body in Pain, 290-91.
74. Adorno, 3.

Chapter 8. Sustained Slaves

1. Munday, Bv.
4. See Kim Hall, Things of Darkness, for a reproduction of Hawkins's crest (20).
5. Sparkle, in Hakluyt, PN. Hereafter cited within the text by volume and page number.
9. Bragge, fo. 65r; Pinkerton.
10. Ibid., fo. 65v.
11. Fryer, 462n.18; Bragge, fo. 65v. See also Pinkerton.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid., ff. 65v-66r.
15. Butts v. Penny, Levitz, 2:201. On the etymological connection between "slave" and "slay," and the progressive "blackening" of Russia or Tartary, see Archer, Old World, Chapter Three.
16. Smith v. Browne and Cooper, Salkeld, 2:666-67. The plaintiff complained that the defendant owed him £20 for a slave. Justice Holt argued that slaves were free in England (as cited above) but found for the plaintiff, arguing that the latter did indeed owe the former money, but not for the sale of a negro in London, where such a sale was legally impossible, but for the sale of a negro in Virginia. But "[t]hen the attorney-general coming in, said, they were inheritances, and transferable by deed, and not without: And nothing was done."
18. Fraser, 258. See also Catterall, 9-12; Shyllon, 17; Fryer, 113-14. On the status of eighteenth-century Afro-Britons, and the important legal consequences of transatlantic slavery, see also Gerzina.
19. Fryer, 32; Shyllon, 29.
20. Fraser, 258.
21. See Harbage and Schoenbaum.
23. Bach, 159.

Chapter 9. Experiments of Colors

1. All quotations from Observations on Experimental Philosophy come from the first edition, with the exception of the passage on "Blackmoors" cited below, and hereafter appear within the text. Quotations from Assailed and Pursued Charity (APC) and Blazing World (BW) come from Lilley's edition and hereafter appear within the text. Cavendish's punctuation and grammar are idiosyncratic, but I agree with Lilley that standardizing the text loses the flavor of Cavendish's prose. I have followed Lilley in retaining Cavendish's punctuation except where the sense is hard to decipher.
2. Quoted in Kegl, 135.
3. Ibid.
4. Pepys, 8:243; Samuel Mintz, 175.
5. On Cavendish's life, see her own autobiography, A True Relation of My Birth, Douglas Grant; Kathleen Jones; Hilda Smith, Reason's Disciples.
7. Fryer, 144.
8. La Peyriere, 31v.
9. Ibid.
10. Quoted in Jordan, 93.
11. Ibid., 65.
12. Ibid., 66.
15. Ibid., 54.
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Bann, 163.

Bann, 186.

Bann, 240.

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