RACIAL FICTIONS IN EARLY MODERN ENGLAND

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My dissertation, *Racial Fictions in Early Modern England*, asks how race, co-constituted with gender and sexuality, animates early modern English texts. It is only in the past decade that scholarship on race in early modern literary studies has become an urgent topic of conversation, and much of the work has been limited to so called "race texts," in which characters of color appear. I argue that race is a more capacious analytic for early modern literary studies. I theorize race in early modern England as the developing process of categorizing, including, excluding, and hierarchizing people based upon historically contingent features that become essentialized through these acts of categorizing and hierarchizing. Examining race more as a process rather than a stable category or relationship opens three important avenues of inquiry. First, it brings to light the ways in which race undergirds concepts that are central to early modern texts, such as chastity for Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* or universality for John Milton's *Paradise Lost*. The hyper-visibility of these concepts often occludes if not erases the processes and preconditions of their own formations, race being one of them. Making them visible requires finding where they hide: within the language and rhetorical figures in literary texts. Second, examining race as process allows more flexibility to accommodate and explore the ways in which race forms and is formed by other facets of identity, such as gender and sexuality. Third, this conception of race as process allows scholars to track race in contexts in which it is not as easily apparent, such as the early modern period when systems of white

supremacy are not as coalesced into a set of identifiable oppressive strategies and institutions. I make these arguments by reading four canonical early modern texts, three of which are not as strongly associated with race in current scholarship (William Shakespeare's *The Tempest,* Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, Christopher Marlowe's "Hero and Leander," and John Milton's *Paradise Lost*). Ultimately, *Racial Fictions* asserts that race is a crucial analytic lens for reading all early modern English literary texts.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Stephen Kern Kim received his B.A. from Yale University with majors in English and Philosophy in 2012. He received his M.A. in English from Cornell University in 2018 with fields in early modern poetry, early modern rhetoric, and the history of science. As a student in the doctoral program in English Language & Literature at Cornell University, his research and teaching interests included early modern literature, Asian American studies, feminist studies, queer studies, inclusive pedagogy, and intergroup dialogue. He also undertook graduate minors in American Studies and Feminist, Gender, & Sexuality Studies.

For Wonsook Kim and Ihnsup Alex Kim

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No one, at least that I know of, has ever described writing the dissertation as a pleasurable process. Though I am happy to say that process is at its end, I also feel lucky that I found some real joy in writing. Part of that joy came from working through texts and ideas I cared very much about, but most of it came from feeling support from people around me. It is with great relish that I thank them here.

When I was about to quit thinking about race in early modern literary studies because I was exhausted by critiques of anachronism, Jenny C. Mann encouraged me to be intrepid and center race in my dissertation. She helped distill the core motivations of this project from convoluted morasses of thought. She created space for me and my project to breathe when personal circumstances made writing difficult. She possessed both an intellect so sharp that it felt intimidating and a deep wellspring of compassion. She was the most exacting and most generous reader of this project. I am grateful for the years of energy she has given my work, and I am proud to be her student.

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happens in scholarship on historical periods. Mary Pat Brady reminded me to never lose the ethical stakes of my project. She helped me read to expose and challenge power structures, and I could always turn to her for encouragement to challenge my field in productive ways. Most importantly, all four of my committee members were exemplary models as scholars, teachers, and mentors. They were thoughtful. They were responsible. They were kind. My hope for every doctoral student is that they find a committee like mine.

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At the end of the dissertation writing process, I wondered what my training in English could do. Tess Wheelwright gave me the opportunity to see that firsthand by teaching for the Cornell Prison Education Program. I'd like to thank her, the CPEP staff, and my students at Cayuga Correctional Facility for reminding me that what I do matters. But, especially my CPEP students – I'm not sure that you'll ever find your way to this document, but in case you do, know that you are the most motivated and brightest bunch of students I taught during my time as a graduate student at Cornell.

The Intergroup Dialogue Project provided a community that nourished me in so many ways at Cornell. This community, especially the undergraduate facilitators, urged me to think about my own position as a scholar and educator, to articulate the ways in which power was working in a room, and to challenge traditional models of teaching and learning. Baba Adejuyigbe, Thomas Chen, Bryan Garner, Jazlin Gomez-Garner, Lisa Nishii, Kellie Ochs, Natasha Steinhall, Rachel Sumner, and Jum Warritay were especially supportive as I balanced working for the program with finishing my dissertation. Thank you for friendship, warmth, humor, and snacks.

While I feel lucky to have had so many home-like spaces at Cornell, my actual home during graduate school was Hans Bethe House. After performing all sorts of intellectual and pedagogical labor, it was lovely to come home to a team that was quirky, caring, and fun. While everyone I worked with in Bethe brought joy to the time I spent working on this project, I'd like to thank Trey Driskell, Drew Hicks, Erin Krichilsky, Monét Roberts, Belinda Tang, Julia Thom-Levy, and Jenny Tindall in particular for making Bethe House a home for me.

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Friends provided shelter, cheer, and camaraderie during my time working on this project. In Ithaca and elsewhere. You all made writing much more bearable, and my life outside of it much more gratifying. There were very few upsides to writing a dissertation during the COVID-19 pandemic, but one of them was that I got to reconnect with so many friends in the final stretches of writing, including Kai Chao, Garrett Quinn Fiddler, David Gardner, Adrian Khactu, Grace Kim, S. Elizabeth Kim,

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I'm almost done. Bada and Gaeul have shown me unconditional love in ways only dogs can. While they never quite learned to not bark at me when I visited my parents, they made up for it by nudging me for pets whenever I tried to sit down to work during those visits. What a wonderful excuse to procrastinate.

In the very last week of dissertation writing, my partner and I adopted a cat. We named him Bori. The shelter cautioned us that Bori would need two weeks to come out of hiding because he was such a shy and nervous cat, but two days after he came home, he was already meowing for attention and jumping all over our furniture. Instead of spending the last weeks of writing in utter agony, I pet my cat and took

occasional breaks to write. I am grateful to Bori because I can think of no better way to finish a dissertation.

My brother, John Kim, gave me love and support throughout the years I was writing mainly by distracting my parents when they were questioning my life choices (one of which was to pursue a PhD). Also, to Roma Menon for reminding John that he should occasionally contact his older brother.

I dedicate my dissertation to my parents, Wonsook Kim and Ihnsup Alex Kim, as a token of my gratitude for the years they dedicated to me. When I think about all they have done for me and all the love they have shared with me, I'm left with a gut-wrenching gratitude familiar to many children of immigrant parents. I know that my intellectual fascination with how power becomes reified through language comes from them. My parents taught me to be aware of how I communicate and pointed out inequities that they lived through and observed, partly in the hopes that I would become a lawyer. They did too good of a job. I became fascinated by the interaction between power and language, and I felt this obsession would not have been fulfilled by a career in law. I will always think of them as my first teachers, ones who I've only grown to admire more as they've become more human to me.

Finally, to Juhwan. When we first met, I asked you to read James Baldwin's last novel, so you could get to a certain passage. To this day, you have stubbornly refused to read it, so I'll quote the passage for you:

> I mean that Jimmy's presence in Arthur's life, Jimmy's love, altered Arthur's estimate of himself, gave him a joy and a freedom he had never known before, invested him with a kind of incandescent wonder, and he carried this light on stage with him, he moved his body differently since he knew that he was loved, loved, and therefore, knew himself to be both bound and free, and this miracle, the unending wonder of this unending new day, filled his voice with multitudes, summoned from catacombs unnameable, whosoever will.

I am no jazz musician, and I am no Baldwin. But in writing this dissertation, I have felt inspired and nourished by this tonic of wonder and love that you offered me daily. Now that my dissertation has come to a close and you are embarking upon yours, I hope that I too can provide you with incandescent wonder and love to sustain you through the years ahead.

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PREFACE

An English Major's Minor Feelings

> *If we look past Milton's bogey, for no human being should shut out the view…*
> --Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*

> *To be forced to excavate a history is, also, to repudiate the concept of history, and the vocabulary in which history is written; for the written history is, and must be, merely the vocabulary of power, and power is history's most seductively attired false witness.*
> --James Baldwin, *Just Above My Head*

I think about how my career in graduate school has been bookended by stark reminders of the racial inequities that exist in this country. I started in August 2015, the Black Lives Matter movement in full swing, and the next year in 2016, Donald Trump was elected President of the United States. I am finishing up during mass protests against anti-Black violence in this country and the COVID-19 pandemic. As I entered graduate school and as I am about to leave, race has been very much in the public consciousness of this country.

I also think about how when I was in elementary school, I was immediately placed into speech therapy and ESL. Though I was born in the United States, my first language was Korean. I remember after years of speech therapy, the well-intentioned speech therapist told my mother and me that it was time to end it. Not because I didn't need it anymore, but because it was unlikely I would ever learn to speak English properly. I remember being elated that I would never have to go to speech therapy again, but I wonder how much of that elation might have been relief – I would not have to hear weekly how improper my English was anymore.

I think back to college. During freshman year, I was mistaken almost daily

for someone else on campus, usually by someone asking for the homework in organic chemistry or multivariable calculus. I politely mentioned each time that I wasn't in either of those classes, and I was met with puzzled looks and then either embarrassed apologies about how I looked so much like someone in those classes or expressions of disbelief. Even if I wasn't the person these other students were thinking of, how could I, looking the way I did, *not* be taking chemistry or math? Motivated by spite, I declared a major in philosophy. That wasn't far away enough from the stereotypes I encountered, so I declared another in English. But, I also did not have a single professor of color in any of my English classes. I read up on rhetorical devices and arcane grammar rules to make myself feel more secure about belonging. I remember how proud I was when I was the first person to make a comment about the polyptoton or the switch to the subjunctive or the trochee in a line otherwise laden with iambs. I now realize how insufferable I must have been in those classes.

Reflecting on my time in graduate school and my own education in English, I am not surprised that I wrote about race, and I am also not surprised that I wrote about the early modern period. If there were a period that was the most English of the English, it seemed to me like it was the early modern. This was reflected in my undergraduate curriculum. I took three different courses on Shakespeare, two different courses on Milton, and a course on Renaissance lyric. In the required two-semester sequence of eight major poets for majors, four were from the early modern period (Spenser, Shakespeare, Donne, Milton). None were women. None were poets of color. To put it further into perspective, the Asian

American literature course (which I did not take) included *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* on its syllabus.

I realize now that my path through the major was the path of strategic least resistance. It felt weird to only read white men post Civil Rights era. I learned in history classes that everything was better, that racism was defeated, and yet here I was only reading white men. I chose to suppress this unease, the friction caused by venerating white men in an era dubbed "post-race" (my time in college started with Obama's first election). These feelings seemed minor, especially if the institution was telling me they weren't important. The poet Cathy Park Hong terms these kinds of feelings "minor feelings."

> Minor feelings occur when American optimism is enforced upon you, which contradicts your own racialized reality, thereby creating a static of cognitive dissonance. You are told, "Things are so much better," while you think, Things are the same.[1]

My undergraduate English curriculum in no way reflected the world around me. It seemed sequestered from tumultuous conversations about race and gender, and perhaps I was drawn to that veneer of tranquility, something a college student beginning to make sense of his own queerness could not have. But, this illusion was maintained by small, active suppressions. It was impossible to talk about power in many of my classes. Professors would dismiss questions about race, sidestep points about misogyny, and ignore questions about sexuality. In worse cases, students asking these questions were characterized as hostile. As Hong also notes, "minor feelings are… the emotions we are accused of having when we

[1] Cathy Park Hong, *Minor Feelings: An Asian American Reckoning* (New York: One World, 2020), 56.

decide to *be* difficult – in other words, when we decide to be honest."[2] I learned that an effective way to be taken seriously as an English major was to be fluent in the works of white poets (the older, the better) and to feign ignorance to power. I doubled down with Milton, more elitist than even Shakespeare. I am not proud of any of this.

This isn't to say I didn't love the poetry – I remember reading *Paradise Lost* for the second time in college (I hated it the first time) and reciting the lines out loud to myself in wonder (I really was an insufferable classmate to my peers). But, I also remember the reading outside of class that I felt strangely ashamed of admitting I did (for example, Anzaldúa's *Borderlands*, Baldwin's *Giovanni's Room*, Morrison's *Song of Solomon,* even Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*). I sometimes ask myself what would have happened if instead I went with Anzaldúa instead of Shakespeare or Morrison instead of Milton. Nonetheless, early modern literature felt seductive because it implied power and mastery over English. It contained something integral to whiteness.

It took me a while to figure this out, and much of it was through needed coursework in feminist studies, queer studies, and ethnic studies in graduate school. I told people I went back to graduate school because I felt like my studies in English literature were incomplete, and I recognize now that much of that yearning was to go back to a classroom and give writers like Anzaldúa, Baldwin, Morrison, and Woolf their due. I found new favorites like Octavia Butler, Theresa

[2] Hong, 57.

Hak Kyung Cha, Indra Das, Louise Erdrich, Jamaica Kincaid, R. Zamora Linmark, Ruth Ozeki, Tommy Pico, Justin Torres, Helena María Viramontes, Ocean Vuong, and Craig Womack. When I turned the theories from these courses back onto early modern texts, whiteness came to the forefront. It became more apparent to me that the texts I was engaging with were cultural lodestones of white supremacy, texts in which whiteness was already articulating itself into what we know today.

Contrary to what I may have been suggesting up to this point, I saw whiteness in early modern texts not despite formalism but because of it. Race didn't exist in the "obvious" places, so it was either irrelevant or niche. How could I demonstrate to others how I felt when I read early modern English texts, that race was everywhere, when I was told it was nowhere? I found it in a tree, or rather, a simile involving a tree. A class in ecocriticism made me hyper-aware of trees for a while, and Milton's banyan tree, appearing right at the Fall of Adam and Eve seemed odd. As I began to unravel Milton's simile, race became more apparent. I found race was locked into many of the rhetorical devices existing in Milton's poems and in those of others. Some scholars, in response to these moves, accused me of bad reading. I was not following the intentions of the text by reading race into it. I was initially embarrassed when these criticisms were lobbed against me at conferences, but as my dissertation has shown, the intentions of these texts are to hide race rather than to not engage with it, to zip race up so it is not visible.

I have grown more comfortable with "bad reading," similarly to how Hong became comfortable with "bad" English:

Bad English is my heritage. I share a literary lineage with writers who

> make the unmastering of English their rallying cry – who queer it, twerk it, hack it, Calibanize it, *other* it by hijacking English and warping it to a fugitive tongue. To *other* English is to make audible the imperial power sewn into the language, to slit English open so its dark histories slide out.[3]

For Hong, language and power are stitched together, and to *other* English is to reveal the hidden stitches, to make evident the invention of a "proper" English used to delegitimize the experiences, thinking, and lives of certain peoples. To Calibanize a language is to make it one's own, even if it has been an instrument of one's own oppression, to curse one's captor in that language rather than be grateful for knowing it. As I state in my first chapter, I do wish that the analysis of Caliban were more intersectional. In *the Tempest*, Caliban's Calibanization of English is inseparable from his attempted rape of Miranda. What does it mean then that this figure of rebellion against white supremacy is also a figure of sexual violence against women? Again, this is no easy question, but I came to these insights because of formalism. Formalism was what allowed me to slit English open, to make legible its dark histories. To modify Audre Lorde, the master's tools indeed cannot dismantle the master's house, but they can show you how it was built.[4]

My dissertation has led me to the conviction that searching for a cohesive racial ideology in the early modern period has occluded the myriad of ways in which race operates in early modern texts. For example, my readings of both "Hero and Leander" and *Paradise Lost* argued how racial visions in those texts did not cohere and led to either ambiguity or paradox. *The Faerie Queene* perhaps has

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[3] Hong, 97.
[4] Audre Lorde, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House," in *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (Berkeley: Crossing Press, 1984), 112.

the most coherent racial ideology informing it (or at least its conception of chastity), but race in *The Faerie Queene* operates differently from race in *The Tempest*, even though both tied race firmly to the sexual behavior of women. As Kim Hall puts in the epilogue to her book,

> The contingency of race also suggests that critics and teachers of Renaissance texts need to be more flexible and subtle in their identification of language and images as "racialized" or "race neutral."… the absence of a term for race in the Renaissance and of a distinct and coherent racial ideology does not make early modern English culture (or Shakespeare) race-neutral.[5]

My project sought to be flexible and subtle in locating race in these early modern texts, but the risk of emphasizing flexibility and subtlety is to conclude that race is too fluid in early modern English literature to establish a structural power differential. Despite the fact that race operates so differently in each of the texts I read in this dissertation, the different visions of race in all these texts still serve to articulate and build a cultural architecture of white supremacy – to make differences, group people based on those differences (i.e. include and exclude), and then hierarchize some groups of people as better than others.

Thinking about race more as a process than a relationship or a category was my best effort at coming up with a way to accommodate the flexibility needed to locate race in early modern texts while also tying these variegated operations of race to a larger system of white supremacy. Race in early modern England, at least reflected in a small subset of its literature, is continuously being reformed, amended, and built. To look for something static, something stable and un-protean

[5] Kim F. Hall, *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), 261.

would mean missing something crucial about race in the period. Race shifts, morphs, and hides, much as it does today.

One salient example of race's protean qualities hits close to home in this moment. In an article for *The New York Times Magazine,* Cathy Park Hong writes first about her shock at the resurgence of the slur "chink" and provides a much-needed reminder about how xenophobia is a common response to pandemics and disease. Asian Americans (or to be more precise, East Asian Americans) have been experiencing what Hong calls "a different strain of anti-Asian racism" than we're used to: "Not the kind in which we are invisible or we're seen as efficient cyborgs. Racism never disappears but adapts to new circumstances when old strains rise from the dark vaults of American history. The recent rise carries the stench of late-19th-century xenophobia."[6] For the first time in a while, I saw that other people feared for their safety when they saw me walking nearby, and I also feared for my own. No one would sit next to me on a bus. I worried about my parents and my friends. I had a small taste of something akin to the emotions that other people of color in this country live with daily, though the circumstances and historical contexts were different. This is a hard thought, one that I'm still reckoning with upon time of writing. But for now, I strive to make this sympathy something that inspires humility, solidarity, and advocacy rather than a motivation to distance myself from other people of color.

I agree with Hong, especially her statement that racism never disappears

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[6] Cathy Park Hong, "The Slur I Never Expected to Hear in 2020," *The New York Times*, April 12, 2020, sec. Magazine, https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/12/magazine/asian-american-discrimination-coronavirus.html.

but adapts. But, I contend that the "dark vaults" go beyond the 19th-century and the United States. My dissertation has been a years-long examination of the ways in which racism fuels the articulation of core cultural concepts in a way that elides its own participation. Racial ideologies informed chastity in *The Faerie* Queene, borders in "Hero and Leander," and universality in *Paradise Lost*. The architecture of white supremacy encompasses more than the history of the United States, making it that much more resilient and durable. My hope is that this project is eventually one of many that examines and illumines the ways race reformed itself and operated in the early modern period. So much of our cultural understanding is inherited from this period (Shakespeare and Satan as two obvious examples). To ignore race in this period, then, is to also let white supremacy, stitched into the language and literature of this period, to proliferate unchecked.

INTRODUCTION

Race Texts and Racial Fictions

Where is race in early modern English literature? There are a few obvious works to turn to, ones with characters of color such as *Othello* or *Titus Andronicus* or *Oroonoko*. Much important work on race is also finally being done on Shakespeare's sonnets and Marlowe's plays. Nonetheless, the search for race in early modern English literature has until recently only focused on finding bodies of color, but race isn't just about the body. Race is tied to religion, to citizenship, to culture, and to language. With this more capacious understanding of race in mind, what I wish to demonstrate is not that race is a central concern of certain early modern texts, but that race is a crucial concern in many (if not all) early modern texts. Ultimately, my dissertation, *Racial Fictions in Early Modern England*, explores how race, co-constituted with gender and sexuality, animates early modern English texts.

For example, I turn to Andrew Marvell's poem "the Mower Against Gardens."[1] The speaker describes a man who creates a garden in which plants are changed from their natural state. Flowers grow pinker, gain new fragrances and colors, and change in size. Most notably, though, the gardener collects "rarities" such as tropical flower called the four-o'clock, the "marvel of Peru" (18). The speaker goes on to say that the collection of rarities might be allowed if "Had he not dealt between the bark and tree, / Forbidden mixtures there to see" (21-22). Grafting one plant to another

[1]Poem cited from Stephen Greenblatt, ed., *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, vol. B: The Sixteenth Century / The Early Seventeenth Century (New York: W.W. Norton, 2006).

is forbidden because “No plant now knew the stock from which it came; / He grafts upon the wild the tame” (23-24). The mixing of “wild” and “tame” plants confound attempts to trace lineage and also location. Given the garden’s geographical variety, one can presumably not tell which plant came from where now considering the plants are “mixed” through grafting. The fruit is “uncertain” and “adult’rate” in taste – presumably, we can’t taste where the fruit comes from either (25). The link between human and plant reproduction becomes explicit when the speaker describes the garden as a “green seraglio,” mentions the garden has “its eunuchs too,” and compares the gardener to a tyrant: “Let any tyrant him outdo” (27-28). The gardener, in confounding lineages of plants, behaves like a “tyrant,” invoking all the stereotypes of the feckless and sexually promiscuous Eastern rulers considering the proximity to “seraglio” and “eunuchs.”

Like the gardener who finds it impossible to disentangle and order his garden, it is difficult to articulate the mingle-mangle of racial references in this poem. But, the poem seems to caution against what happens when racial order is not maintained. The plants grow without control in ways that make them difficult to identify and sort. The garden becomes a miscegenated mess, which is contrasted with “plain and pure” nature with an orderly and “wild and fragrant innocence” (4; 34). This racial mixing and miscegenation are then contrasted against nature. The Renaissance obsession over the relationship between art and nature, which has become tired and overfamiliar in scholarship, becomes also, in this poem, an expression of racial anxiety. In this case, race is an integral part of this art-nature dichotomy, a central concern of early modern writers. The cautionary tale about maintaining racial separation and order in this poem

also entail cautions about maintaining "proper" sexual relations. Uncontrolled and unbridled breeding and grafting is what turned the garden into a mess of forbidden mixtures (the reference to the seraglio, eunuchs, and asexual reproduction) also suggest the transgression of gender and sexual norms. Race in this poem is enacted with gender and sexuality – to lose control of one is to lose control of the others.

One could read the poem as discouraging England's imperial aims. Empire increases the chances of miscegenation because of contact between the colonizer and the colonized, especially if like the gardener does with plants, England brings people over from its colonies. Or, one could read the poem as encouraging the imperial aim provided that miscegenation is prevented through strict control of sexual behavior. Or, given how coy Marvell can be, is the poem actually arguing that there is a value to miscegenation? Cherries procreate unnaturally but still provide nourishment and gustatory pleasure. The miscegenated garden takes up the bulk of the poem as opposed to the orderly sweet fields of nature, and Marvell's sprawling lines (the poem makes a more liberal use of enjambment when discussing the garden as opposed to the fields) present a garden that is disorderly but still, arguably, beautiful. Once one becomes aware that Marvell's poem could be about miscegenation, it is difficult to dismiss it as a relevant concern, especially considering the imperial backdrop to the poem. Like in this poem, I argue that race is crucial relevant concern for early modern English texts, and that race as an analytical category is a core aspect of how early modern English culture forges identity and manages difference.

All Texts are Race Texts

I take as a point of embarkation Henry Louis Gates, Jr.'s influential assertion that "Race is a text (an array of discursive practices), not an essence. It must be read with painstaking care and suspicion, not imbibed."[2] With some notable exceptions, early modern literary scholars have not yet begun the process of even reading *for* race, for identifying the myriad of moments in which race appears in a text, let alone the process of reading race itself, of producing an interpretation of what early modern race might be. Because of the previous resistance in scholarship to examine early modern race, it is only relatively recently that early modern scholars have been picking up on race in their texts. Much of this scholarly effort has identified clear "race texts," texts that seem to explicitly touch up on racial matters, usually with characters of color. Some obvious examples for the period would be William Shakespeare's *Othello* and *Titus Andronicus*. But, to read for only the most obvious instances of race, the "race texts," as it were, would be to take early modern race too much at face value. It would assume that we could glean everything about race from the surface. It would deny race the "painstaking care and suspicion" that we afford to other scholarly endeavors. For this reason, in my study of early modern race, I start with a race text (Shakespeare's *the Tempest*), but I also intentionally examine texts that have previously been read as "race-less."

These texts are often seen as "race-less" because they do not focus on characters of color or are not written by writers of color. AnaLouise Keating challenges scholars to "look at 'white' literary traditions" when thinking about race in

[2] Henry Louis Gates Jr., *Loose Canons: Notes on the Culture Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 79.

literature.[3] She discusses how when teaching, "when I suggested that "white" – like 'Native American' or 'African American'—is a racialized identity, continually reinforced and reinvented in literature, students were startled."[4] Part of what caused this startled reaction was the underlying assumption that whiteness was a given: "In short, 'whiteness' has functioned as a pseudo- universal category that hides its specific values, epistemology, and other attributes under the guise of a nonracialized, supposedly colorless, 'human nature.'"[5] Whiteness studies has burgeoned as a field in the years after Keating wrote this article in 1995, but there is still much work left to be done in early modern scholarship. If we take the idea that white identity is also constructed and privileged, then there is much work to be done in examining how early modern texts (even ones that do not contain *any* references to people of color) construct whiteness. Even works that the field does not normally associate with race (*the Faerie Queene,* "Hero and Leander," and *Paradise Lost)* are also racial fictions. Much of the work of this dissertation, then, is to show how race operates in early modern texts in ways that aren't as obvious but also aren't minor. The latter three chapters of my dissertation will demonstrate that race is actually a crucial feature of key concepts that undergird the texts I've noted above. Consequently, part of the work of this dissertation is to suggest that all early modern texts are race texts because of the ways in which they participate in the consolidation of white identity and white supremacy during the period

[3] AnnLouise Keating, "Interrogating 'Whiteness,' (De)Constructing 'Race,'" *College English* 57, no. 8 (December 1995): 903.
[4] Keating, 904.
[5] Keating, 904.

Race as Process

The work of this project, though, does not lie only in justifying that race exists as a core issue in early modern texts. To refer back to Gates, I am also interested in "reading" race in early modern English texts and articulating how race is working in early modern texts. Part of the difficulty of "reading" race at all is that race is notoriously difficult to define. Race is a slippery concept, not just in early modern texts, but also in our own time. At least in early modern scholarly circles, race has been criticized as being too fluid of a concept to be an object of study, but this fluidity for me is key for understanding early modern race. I argue that early modern race should be viewed less as a category or relationship, but more as a process.

My argument for race as process is firmly indebted to three articulations of race put forward by scholars in different fields, and it is through their work that I come to my own theory of race in early modern English literature. I open with Roderick Ferguson's articulation of race:

> Race is more than a way of identifying and organizing political coalitions against forms of state repression and capitalist exploitation; it is also a category that sets the terms of belonging and exclusion within modern institutions... race both accounts for the logics by which institutions differentiate and classify, include and exclude, and names the processes by which people internalize those logics.[6]

I am specifically drawn to Ferguson's idea that race is a category that thinks specifically about inclusion and exclusion within modern institutions. Ferguson's articulation, however, is frustratingly imprecise. Which institutions is Ferguson

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[6] Roderick A. Ferguson, "Race," in *Keywords for American Cultural Studies*, ed. Bruce Burgett and Glenn Hendler, 2nd ed. (New York: New York University Press, 2014), 208.

referencing? Aren't other identity categories (e.g. gender) also structured around inclusions and exclusions? I will address other identity categories later, but for now, what I appreciate about Ferguson's definition is precisely its slipperiness. Because it is slippery, it is also flexible. Ferguson's race encompasses the myriad ways in which institutions serve to classify, include, and exclude groups of people, and thus, set up power dynamics and hierarchies. Most importantly, Ferguson's articulation of race, with its refusal to signal a stable referent for race (such as skin color, culture, language, etc.), allows for race to exist in periods "before" modernity.

Geraldine Heng, a medievalist, picks up this potential energy in these more recent formulations of race to open up space for race to "exist" in premodern scholarship. Heng affirms the use of race as a term and an analytical concept in medieval studies by arguing "the refusal of race de-stigmatizes the impacts and consequences of certain laws, acts, practices, and institutions in the medieval period, so that we cannot name them for what they are, nor can we bear adequate witness to the full meaning of the manifestations and phenomena they install."[7] What I find especially compelling about Heng's point here and more broadly in her study of medieval race is her conviction that to ignore premodern race occludes both our understanding of premodern time periods and our understanding of race itself. Heng also provides an explanation for why there has been so much confusion as to whether or not something "is" race in earlier historical times. Taking into account her study of medieval texts and histories, Heng articulates that "race is a structural relationship for

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[7] Geraldine Heng, *The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 4.

the articulation and management of human differences, rather than a substantive content."[8] Heng argues that this management of human difference strategically selects certain aspects of human difference to essentialize into something absolute and fundamental. This selective essentialization, in turn, creates power hierarchies. The differences that are strategically selected to categorize people are dependent on the historical occasion, but Heng's main point is that across these historical occasions, the move of taking something contingent and making it something absolute is in common.

The third articulation of race I invoke is that of Kim Hall. Hall, in her study of whiteness in Shakespeare's *Sonnets* explicitly mentions how the period is consolidating both a white identity and white supremacy.

> Critical practice has also tended to make early modern whiteness even more impervious to critique because most of the earliest terms employed to avoid the anachronism (or the politics) of the term 'race' all tend to refer to people of color (a phrase that also normalizes white people). The 'exotic,' the 'outsider,' the 'other' and 'the stranger' all shift attention away from the center that uses these strategies and categories to establish… More importantly, they provide no conceptual clues for thinking about whiteness as a developing identity with potentially racialized meanings.[9]

Of the three definitions I am triangulating from, Hall's is the least direct in articulating what race is but also provides a key facet of what race does. Race is not only about inclusion and exclusion of people and the essentializing of contingent differences, but also the active erasure of its own power dynamics. What Hall points to in the early modern period is that early modern race tries to hide itself (and as I will argue later in Chapter 1, one of the ways it does so is hide itself in language). The way that race

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[8] Heng, 19.

[9] Kim F. Hall, "'These Bastard Signs of Fair': Literary Whiteness in Shakespeare's Sonnets," in *Post-Colonial Shakespeares*, by Ania Loomba and Martin Orkin (Abingdon, UK: Taylor & Francis, 1998), 66.

hides itself in the early modern (and arguably at other moments) is to make the dominant group (in this case, whites) the norm. Race norms the dominant group and occludes the ways in which the dominant group (i.e. white people) has deployed the mechanisms to come to power. To make the obvious pun, race, in some ways, is erasure.

I end with Hall's thoughts on race because she sees race less as a thing that is but as a thing that does. Hall's race seems a more active formulation of race in that she doesn't designate race as a "category" like Ferguson or a "relationship" like Heng. I'm not saying it is wrong to call race a category or a relationship. Because race is such a multifaceted thing, it has led to a proliferation of definitions, ones that often help best explain whichever phenomena scholars are looking to elucidate. There are moments in this project where I will lean on these conceptions of race as categories and relationships. However, my work in this dissertation is concerned more with how race is operating and articulating itself in early modern texts. For this reason, I argue race, in addition to being a category or relationship, is also a process, something that not only forms and reforms itself, but forms and is formed by the institutions and ideas that it touches.

This idea that race is something continually in formation is not a new one. Michael Omi and Howard Winant's influential theory of racial formation is one formulation of race as process:

> We need to think about how race itself is defined, what meanings are attached to it, and how it is deployed to create reproduce, or challenge racist structures. The process of race making, and its reverberations throughout the social order, is what we call racial formation. We define racial formation as *the sociohistorical process by which racial identities are created, lived out,*

transformed, and destroyed.[10]

For Omi and Winant, race and racial categories are constantly being developed by socio-historical contingencies and events. These categories in turn develop and redevelop social structures and hierarchies. Because race and racial categories are so context-dependent (both geographically and historically), their meanings are in flux and changing. If I am interested in studying how race is formed in early modern English texts, some may be curious why I am making this a dissertation about race in the early modern period instead of one about racial formation in the early modern period. My biggest concern with making this a dissertation about racial formation instead of race is that the early modern texts I study seem to resist such a firm distinction between race and racial formation. To say that the texts participate in a racial formation process that ends up articulating and defining a stable category, relationship, or concept of race would reduce the complexity of what the texts are doing. In their articulation of the term "racialization," Daniel HoSang and Oneka LaBennett also cite Omi and Winant, but glean perhaps what I find most compelling about racial formation theory in their work on the term racialization: "In contrast to static understandings of race as a universal category of analysis, racialization names a process that produces race within particular social and political conjunctures .. [and] constructs or represents race by fixing the significance of a 'relationship, practice or group' within a broader interpretive framework."[11] I am drawn to their use of contrast.

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[10] Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States*, Third edition. (New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 2015), 108–9.

[11] Daniel HoSang and Oneka LaBennett, "Racialization," in *Keywords for American Cultural Studies*, ed. Glenn Hendler, 2nd ed. (New York: New York University Press, 2014), 212.

While one could read this statement as arguing race is static while racialization is a process, HoSang's and LaBennett's syntax suggests that there is a more complex relationship between the term. The contrast set up is not just between race and racialization but between racialization" and "static understandings of race." This contrast implies then that "racialization," the process by which racial meanings are made and unmade, is itself an understanding of race that differs from thinking about race as a stable category or concept.

Based upon my readings of early modern English texts, I articulate race as the developing process of categorizing, including, excluding, and hierarchizing people based upon historically contingent features that become essentialized through the acts of categorizing and hierarchizing. In other words, I find the distinction between racialization as the making of a thing and race as the thing itself too clean a divide. The texts I study resist a definition of race that is in any way fixed, which may explain why it has been difficult for scholars to locate it before. By reading with an understanding that race is something that is always changing based on the sociohistorical contingencies it encounters, I argue that we are better equipped to track and explain how race is working and not working in an early modern text. This more capacious (though admittedly less secure) understanding of race also allows for different texts to put forth very different understandings of race. Race works differently in each of the works I study, and a more static articulation of race would flatten those nuances. Furthermore, to argue that race is a process rather than a category or relationship doesn't meant that it doesn't matter. In fact, I argue that thinking about race as a continually influential process urges us to examine it even

more closely in early modern studies than before, to track the different racial moves a text makes in the way it represents peoples, institutions, and ideas. Thinking about race as a process also then makes us more attuned to the various ways in which white supremacy is being enacted and consolidated in these texts. It is less a question of whether white supremacy exists in a period or not. The important question then becomes how white supremacy is being articulated and enforced in these texts.

This is not to say that all scholars should adopt my articulation of race. All the scholars I've cited argue for how context-dependent race is, and based on different contexts (subject matter, scholarly discipline, etc.), my articulation of race may not work or be as effective. Some readers may have noticed by now that I'm also shying away from asserting what I call a "definition" of race. Carol Warrior notes how the act of definition is a colonial act because by it renders what is being defined as domitable.[12] While I will touch upon Warrior's argument about definition more in-depth later in the dissertation, for now, I will say that my refusal to "define" race allows for me to better acknowledge all the ways in which I do not understand it and to leave myself open to the texts and experiences that challenge the articulations of race I have set forth so far and will continue to set forth in subsequent sections of the dissertation.

How to Read Race: Some Feminist & Queer Notes on Methodology

I've so far discussed the necessity of reading race, and what I argue race is.

[12] Carol Edelman Warrior, "Indigenous Collectives: A Meditation on Fixity and Flexibility," *American Indian Quarterly* 41, no. 4 (2017): 386.

But, how does one go about actually reading it? Scholars have debated numerous methodologies for how one can "read" race in any given text. In *very* broad strokes, this debate has mainly centered into two camps: one consisting of postcolonial scholars and another consisting of ethnic studies scholars and critical race scholars. In the same article, he also argues for what ethnic studies does that postcolonial studies does not:

> While postcolonialism's heterogeneity and fluidity can illuminate power and its effects—for example, showing its contingent and malleable nature—it can also, however, deny the realities of social structures and human experience, and absolve global citizens from local responsibility and action. Further, postcolonialism's universalism and disregard of borders resonate with the rise of global capitalism—and the global university—and its paralyzing indeterminacy.[13]

What I take from both of Okihiro's articulations is that postcolonial studies may be more effective in illuminating power and its effects on a larger scale, which in turn shows how "contingent" and "malleable" racial power dynamics are. Nonetheless, its more global scope means that it's less capable of demonstrating oppressive power dynamics within a more local context. This favoring of the global over the local, in turn, means it's more difficult to frame postcolonial scholarship in a way that calls for action in correcting (or mitigating) the oppressive power dynamics that exist in any specific location.

Postcolonial scholars, however, have also critiqued ethnic studies precisely because of its more local specificity (i.e. its tie specifically to the United States). Gayatri Spivak writes:

> I do not believe that US Ethnic Studies need go quite so far as to turn its

[13] Gary Y. Okihiro, "The Future of Ethnic Studies," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, July 4, 2010, https://www.chronicle.com/article/The-Future-of-Ethnic-Studies/66092.

> metropolitan home into an other space. But it can construct an intellectual critique of unexamined academic/diasporic culturalism that works to support US manifest destiny as the last best hope of cultural rights for the world. It is certainly good to say – for citizens of diverse national origins – in the US we are united in Ethnic Studies, although at home we are at war. But that passive peace has no intellectual purchase.[14]

While there are many claims Spivak is making in such a short passage, I focus primarily on what I see as the two main critiques of ethnic studies. First, it is grounded in the experience of living in the metropole as opposed to the colony, which in some ways, reinforces the main power dynamic created by empire that postcolonial studies seeks to articulate and critique. It focuses on those living in the metropole over those living in the colony (though recent trends in ethnic studies scholarship suggest that this is currently changing). Second, Spivak argues that Ethnic Studies is too local and even if it achieves its vision of racial justice in the United States, Spivak argues it does little to speak to the violence that occurs outside the United States. In other words, Ethnic Studies is too local for Spivak.

My main goal for the simplified explanation of the debate between the two scholarly camps was to provide one salient example on the complexity of studying race and the stakes of one's methodology, especially for scholars in my own field. Because my own study is concerned with reading race in places where it's previously been remarked invisible and to make apparent the places in which white supremacy is forming and hiding itself in texts, I mix methodologies often. I cite scholars from a variety of fields dedicated to the study of race because tracking a protean race and white supremacy throughout my texts forces me to shift with the text. For example,

[14] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Other Asias* (Malden, MA: BLackwell Pub., 2008), 217.

my chapter on Marlowe's "Hero and Leander" engages robustly with both scholars from border studies (indebted especially to Latinx Studies scholars) and scholars profoundly influenced by Edward Said's formulations of orientalism. To analyze Milton's astounding reference to the banyan tree, an Asian Indian farmer, and an Indigenous American, I read alongside both a postcolonial literary critic and an Indigenous American Studies literary critic.

This is not to say, though, that I am egalitarian towards different methodologies for studying race. I lean more towards the U.S.-based fields (Indigenous American Studies, Black Studies, Latinx Studies, Asian American Studies, and Critical Race Studies) over postcolonial studies for one important reason (besides my more robust training in the former). Gary Okihiro articulates what I find so compelling about these U.S. based fields:

> Today ethnic studies looks in a much more disciplined way at power and how it articulates around the axes of race and ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, and nation. That insight was the contribution of the Combahee River Collective, a black feminist-activist group, which, in 1977, saw that "the major systems of oppression are interlocking." For a new generation of ethnic-studies scholars, the focus is not just—or even foremost—on the relations between white and nonwhite people but on relations among peoples of color and the multiple dimensions of race, gender, sexuality, class, and nation.[15]

Much of my reading of early modern texts has proven to me that race cannot be thought of in isolation from other facets of identity. Because I am so interested in race as something in formation, it makes sense that my readings are attuned especially to the ways in which it is being formed in relation to something else. I refer to this phenomenon as co-constitution, and will frequently reference how race, gender, and

[15] Okihiro, "The Future of Ethnic Studies."

sexuality are molding and interacting with each other.

I want to spend some time on why I lean on gender and sexuality as co-constituents of race rather than the myriad other facets of identity available. For example, religion is notably lacking in my analysis of race as is class. Again, part of this is due to my own training as a literary scholar. Because I have more exposure and practice with feminist and queer methodologies, I am more attuned to picking up power dynamics involving gender and sexuality. I admit that I am not as trained to read for class and disability. Part of this is due to needing some sort of limit for the scope of this project. Scholars such as Bernadette Andrea[16], Abdulhamit Arvas[17], and Jyotsna Singh[18] are already doing much work on race and religion, so it seemed prudent to shift my focus elsewhere. Admittedly, there is much work on race and gender in the period (such as foundational works by Kim Hall[19], Sujata Iyengar[20], and Joyce MacDonald[21] as well as a collection of essays edited by Margo Hendricks and Patricia Parker[22]), and much of this work also touches upon sexuality (though less so on queer sexualities). Nonetheless, prominent scholars on race, gender, and sexuality have called on a need for the field to consider all three in concert with each other. In

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[16] Bernadette Diane Andrea, *Lives of Girls and Women from the Islamic World in Early Modern British Literature and Culture* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017).
[17] Abdulhamit Arvas, "From the Pervert, Back to the Beloved: Homosexuality and Ottoman Literary History, 1453–1923," in *The Cambridge History of Gay and Lesbian Literature*, ed. E. L. McCallum and Mikko Tuhkanen, 1st ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2014), 145–63.
[18] Jyotsna G. Singh, *Shakespeare and Postcolonial Theory* (London: The Arden Shakespeare, 2019).
[19] Hall, *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England*.
[20] Sujata Iyengar, *Shades of Difference: Mythologies of Skin Color in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005).
[21] Joyce Green MacDonald, *Women and Race in Early Modern Texts* (Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
[22] Margo Hendricks and Patricia A. Parker, eds., *Women, "Race," and Writing in the Early Modern Period* (London: Routledge, 1994).

their volume of collected essays recently published on the state of feminist early modern English literary studies, Ania Loomba and Melissa Sanchez noted:

> [the] analytic categories [of race gender and sexuality]… must be thought together not because they seamlessly intersect or merge, nor because they are mutually supportive or analogous. Rather, it is precisely because analytics of race, gender, and sexuality resist the ideals of universality and coherence celebrated by multiculturalism that they must not be studied in isolation from one another nor marginalized as special interest topics relevant only to limited constituencies.[23]

In a similar vein, Jeffrey Masten remarks that:

> we should not imagine that we can somehow calibrate the discourses of sexuality without also confronting the intersecting rhetorics of race and related racist discourses of power-related positioning and animality.[24]

My project attempts to take up the call from these prominent feminist and queer early modern scholars to think of gender and sexuality in conjunction with race. More importantly, I attempt an intersectional analysis that prioritizes race but also explores deeply the formations of gender and sexuality within the period. In much of this thinking, I am, of course, indebted to groundbreaking work by Kimberlé Crenshaw.[25] Rather than occluding race-based oppression by focusing on gender and sexuality and vice versa, I hope to hold space for these nuanced and complex intersectional dynamics to truly play out in my readings, and in doing so, point to the ways in which gender, sexuality, and race were all co-constituted in early modern literary texts. My move to think about race as a process also allows me to accommodate and explore

[23] Ania Loomba and Melissa E. Sanchez, "Feminism and the Burdens of History," in *Rethinking Feminism in Early Modern Studies: Gender, Race, and Sexuality*, ed. Ania Loomba and Melissa E. Sanchez (New York: Routledge, 2016), 20.
[24] Jeffrey Masten, *Queer Philologies: Sex, Language, and Affect in Shakespeare's Time* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 219.
[25] Kimberle Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1989, no. 1 (1989).

more deeply the ways in which it forms and is formed by other identity categories, such as gender and sexuality. Acknowledging that race is always in flux, adapting to the sociohistorical circumstances of any given situation, opens up more opportunities to think about the ways in which it is interacting with gender and sexuality. Assuming that race is always malleable means that we are looking more for the ways in which race is impacting and impacted by gender and sexuality rather than only noticing these intersections when a salient phenomenon comes to our attention. What struck me so remarkably when I was reading the early modern texts that were potential subjects for this dissertation was how race was co-constituted with gender and sexuality. The same ideas, structures, and sentiments that reinforce one structure of identity-based oppression (e.g. white supremacy) are also reinforcing another (e.g. the heteropatriarchy). Geraldine Heng goes as far to say that race even operates in tandem with other identities:

> The ability of racial logic to stalk and merge with other hierarchical systems – such as class, gender, or sexuality – also means that race can function as class (so that whiteness is the color of medieval nobility), as 'ethnicity' and religion (Tutsis and Hutus in Rwanda, 'ethnic cleansing' in Bosnia), or as sexuality (seen in the suggestion raised at the height of AIDS hysteria in the 1980s that gay people should be rounded up, and cordoned off, in the style of Japanese American internment camps in World War II).[26]

Consequently, I read the identity categories (and their respective structures of oppression) not as wholly distinct subjects that come into contact with each other occasionally in certain moments in a text but as processes that undergird the literary text. Race, gender, and sexuality are always in formation through any given literary

[26] Heng, *The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages*, 20.

text. They are not distinct and stable lenses that can be applied to a text without being affected in return. Consequently, reading a literary text (through the lens of gender, sexuality, or race studies) also necessitates a reading of the race, gender, and sexuality themselves.

For this reason, all of my chapters invoke significant engagement with feminist and queer scholarship. Unraveling and articulating the loaded question of race in the early modern period has also led me to articulate gender and sexuality in the period as well. Of course, the idea that gender and sexuality are in formation is not new. Judith Butler's work on gender performativity articulated the ways in which gender is constantly being revised. In a collection of essays in which she revisits many of her own theoretical contributions, Butler says that "terms of gender designation are thus never settled once and for all but are constantly in the process of being remade."[27] Similarly, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick advocates for a "resistance to treating homo/heterosexual categorization – still so very volatile an act – as a done deal" and thinking in a way in which "the impoverished abstractions that claim to define sexuality can be treated as not authoritative."[28] Sedgwick also cautions against thinking about homosexuality as "a coherent definitional field rather than a space of overlapping, contradictory, and conflictual defintional forces."[29] Though Sedgwick is not explicitly stating that sexuality is in a process of continuous remaking, what I glean here is that it is also not static, one that is "volatile" and thus susceptible to

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[27] Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 20.
[28] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*, Updated with a new preface. (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2008), xvi.
[29] Sedgwick, 45.

change if not always changing.

Chapter Outline

My dissertation is more concerned with "reading" race and its co-constitutions with gender and sexuality rather than developing a coherent narrative about how race came to be in the early modern period. To write a developmental narrative suggests that race becomes more robust as time passes in the early modern period, and in some ways, the articulations of race in the sixteenth century are more pronounced than in later texts. For example, the closest articulation of racial genocide in the texts occurs in Edmund Spenser's work rather than authors who were writing later. For this reason, I choose not to proceed chronologically in the order of my chapters. This disruption of chronological time helps resist the temptation to develop a coherent, narrative arc, a "story" of early modern race and emphasizes more the surprising new interpretations that can arise when race becomes a crucial part of scholarly reading practice for early modern English texts.

I begin with William Shakespeare's *the Tempest* because it provides the clearest articulation of any of my texts on the co-constitution of race, gender, and sexuality in my texts. It is the only text in this project that is thought of as an early modern "race text," and for this reason, it provides a logical starting place to demonstrate the dynamics among race, gender, and sexuality I explore in subsequent chapters. It also serves as a starting place to discuss the key idea that race in the early modern hides in language because it provides the clearest articulation of the interrelatedness of race, gender, and sexuality among all the texts covered in this

dissertation. Race needs to be traced and uncovered by working through poetic and rhetorical devices, such as metonymy. The chapter opens with an articulation of how the patriarchal anxieties regarding a seemingly throwaway conversation about Claribel early in the play in fact introduces how patriarchal anxieties about the control of female sexuality also reflect racial anxieties about miscegenation. Next, I demonstrate how this twining of female sexuality with the threat of miscegenation pervades the play, particularly through the specter of Sycorax, another woman who is absent from the events of the play itself. I close by tackling the characters of Miranda and Caliban, whose interactions have generated much uneasiness in the critical conversation. I argue that to do justice to either category requires an intersectional analysis that sits with the discomfort that some of the play's most racist moments are also its most feminist and some of the plays most anti-racist moments are also its most misogynist. I close by turning the attention to Prospero, who as a white man, stands most to gain from these interlocking systems of patriarchy and white supremacy that are articulated in *the Tempest*.

With the co-constitutions and dynamics among race, gender, and sexuality more firmly articulated in Chapter 1, the subsequent three chapters each focus on how race, gender, and sexuality are intertwined in three other texts that are very much canonical but often thought of as "raceless." Furthermore, I argue that race is not an ancillary concern in any of the texts but key in working through the main concerns of these canonical texts. My strategy for making this argument is to reveal how race shapes a key concept that undergirds the entirety of each text. For Chapter 2, I focus on the concept of chastity in Edmund Spenser's *the Faerie Queene*. I work through

episodes of the Britomart saga (Books Three, Four and Five). I argue that the Britomart episodes dramatize the emergence of chastity as a means of creating a British identity that is free from foreignness. This British identity that Spenser valorizes, however, is not merely a national identity. By taking an interlude to *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, I discuss the connections between Britishness and Spenser's vision of race and show how Spenser's concept of Britishness is resembling what we know today as whiteness. While the most common ideas about chastity involve the regulation of heterosexual sex, I focus instead more on chastity and female homoerotic desire, often left out of scholarly conversations on early modern sexuality. Though female-female (or as Valerie Traub terms it "lesbian") sex has no risk of producing miscegenated offspring out of wedlock, it does not serve the continuation of a white lineage within clearly delineated family structures. Consequently, I explore the antagonistic relationship between female homoerotic desire and an interlocking system of white supremacy and patriarchy, and in doing so, show an accruing logic of association between female homoerotic (or lesbian) desire and a non-white racial identity.

My third chapter on Christopher Marlowe's "Hero and Leander" picks up on this association between queer sexuality and a non-white racial identity. The key concept for this chapter is the border because of the prominence of the poem's setting, the Hellespont. Using Gloria Anzaldúa's concept of the borderlands, I argue that Marlowe's Hellespont is a place in which race, gender, and sexuality are fluid and dynamic. I demonstrate this primarily through the character of Leander – I argue he is a surprisingly indeterminate character, one whose gender, sexuality, and race fluctuate

as we move through the poem. In some places in the poem, Leander is more masculine. In other places, more feminine. He is also more white in certain lines and more Asian in others. This focus on Leander's interactions in the poem also necessitates thinking about the relationship between race and male homoeroticism, which complements my focus in the previous chapter. I move through the poem's various depictions of Leander sequentially without necessarily arguing that he is persuasively locked into any identity by the end of the poem. That is precisely the point of the poem – in and on the border between Europe and Asia, genders, races, and sexualities remain mobile and crossed. Marlowe's Hellespont and his depictions of Leander both show how arbitrary categories for race, gender, and sexuality are, but the end of the poem moves towards closing off this possibility for fluidity and mobility. This closing off is an example of how white supremacy has to eradicate the potential for this unfixity and must articulate a firm boundary between whiteness and Asianness to assert white dominance.

My final chapter turns to John Milton's *Paradise Lost* and its overarching concern with purity. I track how the epic wrestles with its associations of both racial and gender differences with fallenness. Though Milton tries to imagine a universal, pure, and prelapsarian state, his vision of this prelapsarian purity is both gendered male and racialized white. For example, Eden resembles an English countryside and Adam and Eve (who is not conceived through sex but rather from a part of Adam). In contrast, the character most associated with fallenness (i.e. Satan) is often marked as racially different, especially with his associations with Islamic Empire. The yearning quality in Milton's epic, one that wishes to return to a world without the Fall, then is a

racialized yearning. The world without the Fall, in Milton's vision, is white and strangely without sexual reproduction (though with gender difference). I then move to discussing the Fall itself and note how Milton's Fall is associated both with racial mixing (Adam and Eve become darker after the Fall) and with penetrative reproductive sex (which opens the possibility of miscegenation and is contrasted not just with prelapsarian sex but with angel sex, with all of its homoerotic undertones). Milton's concern is not just with racial or sexual difference but with differences that can mix. Given this aversion to racial impurity (which has heterosexual sex as a necessary precondition), I close with Milton's survey of the fallen kingdoms as a kind of imperial project, one in which the non-white races associated with fallenness are noted but then elided into a Christian eschatological vision that returns humanity to a state of purity and rightness with God, one envisioned by Milton earlier in the epic as a white world without the threat of proliferating racial differences.

Intervention

The intervention of this dissertation is twofold. First, it will help establish race as a viable subject of analysis in early modern literary studies. Though the racial taxonomy we are familiar with today did not exist in the early modern period, my project will make the case for using race as a useful and productive analytical category for not just specific texts but early modern English texts more broadly. It also demonstrates how future work in feminist and queer early modern studies must also engage (even only to acknowledge) the ways in which gender and sexuality are imbricated with and co-constituted by race. What my chapters in succession

demonstrate is that Evelynn Hammonds groundbreaking assertion that "racial difference was linked to sexual difference in order to maintain white male supremacy during the period of slavery" also applies to the early modern period.[30] All four of my chapters show that anxieties about sexuality (queer, straight, female, or male) revolve around hidden racial agenda to protect the purity of European whiteness and maintain white supremacy.

Second, it posits a conception of race in which it is less a stable relationship or category but a more fluid and dynamic process. Race is how peoples are included and excluded, how contingent features of people are made essential, how power dynamics are shifting with different contexts. The fluidity of race, though, does not make it any less substantial or real and any less worth studying. This conception of race, while perhaps less useful in other contexts, allows for more flexibility when tracking race in contexts in which it is not as easily apparent, such as the early modern period when systems of white supremacy are not as coalesced into a set of identifiable oppressive strategies and institutions. What will become evident in this dissertation's chapters is how the texts are articulating European whiteness as a shared racial identity in ways that haven't been fully recognized by the field. Part of what made this whiteness so difficult to pinpoint was that it was hiding in plain sight. Central concepts to early modern texts like chastity, borders, and universality were undergirded by conceptions of whiteness that were being consolidated during the period. Though early modern articulations of these concepts may not have been as explicit about race as they were

[30] Evelynn M. Hammonds, "Toward a Genealogy of Black Female Sexuality: The Problematic of Silence," in *Feminist Theory and the Body: A Reader*, ed. Janet Price and Margrit Shildrick (New York: Routledge, 1999), 95.

in later time periods, they are nonetheless informed by the formation of a white European identity. Whiteness brings together the English and the Italians (which is striking because of the divide between Protestants and Catholics) in *the Tempest*, which in turn rewrites the Mediterranean as a boundary between Europe and Africa. It provides the basis for determining what sexual behavior is “chaste” and “unchaste” in *The Faerie Queene*. It attempts to foreclose (though I argue unsuccessfully) the rich and profoundly queer border space between Asia and Europe in “Hero and Leander,” and it stands in for both the universal and the prelapsarian in *Paradise Lost*. Whiteness is both consolidating itself and other core cultural institutions during the early modern period, and it is doing so through rhetorical association. It creates metonymic chains that then subsequently disguise themselves to be devoid of race. With the consolidation of whiteness also comes a consolidation of racial hierarchy. Whiteness is formed not just as one of a variety of races, but the ideal one. With this consolidation of whiteness and the hierarchization of whiteness as better than its counterparts, we can see white supremacy in action in early modern English texts.

Ultimately, I do not see this emphasis on race’s dynamism as detracting from its power or its place in the contemporary imaginary. Nor do I think that studying the early modern period is distracting from other work that needs to be done in the broader field of literary studies. In fact, I contend that both serve to emphasize how necessary it is to think about race and identity historically and how nuanced any vision or effort for racial equity must be.

CHAPTER 1

The Case for Co-Constitution: William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*

Introduction

It is no surprise that *the Tempest* is a crucial text for thinking about race in early modern England. European historians, such as Marcus Rediker and Peter Linebaugh, reference *The Tempest* in the introduction to their work on the multiethnic undercommons, *the Many-Headed Hydra*.[1] Caliban features in almost any edited collection of essays on postcolonial early modern studies. *The Tempest* has also been a lightning rod for how Black diaspora studies and early modern studies might intersect, such as in Rebecca Kumar's essay in the recently published *Early Modern Black Diaspora Studies: A Critical Anthology*.[2] Likewise, *the Tempest* also has received a remarkable amount of critical attention from feminist scholars considering only one woman, Miranda, actually appears on stage. And yet, the absent figures of Claribel and Sycorax have been compelling enough to engender many feminist takes on their characters (some of which are cited later in the chapter). Furthermore, the interactions between Miranda and Caliban have generated an uneasiness in the critical conversation. Miranda is a survivor of attempted rape speaking out against her attacker but also a spokesperson for white supremacist and colonial ideologies. Caliban represents the many people of color who are oppressed by European imperial and

[1] Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000).
[2] Rebecca Kumar, "'Do You Love Me, Master?': The Erotic Politics of Servitude in The Tempest and Its Postcolonial Afterlife," in *Early Modern Black Diaspora Studies: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Cassander L Smith, Nicholas R Jones, and Miles Grier (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 175–96.

colonial ambitions but also seems to show no contrition about trying to rape Miranda.

This uncomfortable conflict between racial and gendered identities has often pushed critics to focus their analyses on the oppression of one character while deemphasizing that of the other character. Feminist critics have often supported Miranda, and postcolonial critics Caliban. But, I argue that focusing too much on Miranda over Caliban (or vice versa) in their interactions oversimplifies the power dynamics between them. Both Miranda and Caliban occupy positions of power and positions of subjection. What this uncomfortable interpretive crux reveals, though, is that race and gender (and more specifically, female sexuality) are intricately connected in *The Tempest.* Its "raced" are also about the control of female sexuality. Racial and patriarchal anxieties often dovetail in this play; the regulation of female sexuality is crucial for the consolidation of a European whiteness in *The Tempest.*

In this chapter, I will examine the play's three most prominent characters of color (or rather, those who are racialized as *not* white European): Claribel, Sycorax, and Caliban. Because Claribel and Sycorax do not appear in the play at all, I am primarily interested in how other characters talk about them. The discourse surrounding these absent women demonstrates that to think about race in *the Tempest*, we must also think about female sexuality. In these conversations about Claribel and Sycorax, patriarchy and white supremacy[3] are working in tandem. To regulate female

[3] Because my chapter is about the ways in which certain terms and peoples become associated with each other in ways that indicate race, I append the terms in the theoretical discourse with the term that is most prominently operating in *The Tempest* (e.g. "white European"). For those who question the use of language of whiteness and Blackness as racial terms for early modern studies, see Kim Hall, *Things of Darkness.* I also provide some discussion of the usability of these terms in my discussions of *Othello* and "the Rape of Lucrece" later in the chapter.

sexuality is to maintain the boundary between European whiteness and the African "other." Furthermore, because these absent women do not come on stage at all, this work of regulating gendered and racialized identities all happens in language, and I argue that language, especially through the trope of metonymy, both reinforces racial and gendered hierarchies while simultaneously making them less pronounced. It is in these two examples that I demonstrate how race, gender, and sexuality are co-constituting each other through language. I will close with my reading of Caliban and Miranda, in which race and gender are almost working at cross-purposes. To look solely through the lens of race casts Miranda as the more powerful figure while looking through the lens of gender casts Caliban in that position. Pulling from my earlier readings of Claribel and Sycorax, I argue that to better see the complex power dynamics in this situation and in *The Tempest* more broadly, it is crucial to take into account how race, gender, and sexuality are co-constituting each other. It is only through this intersectional lens that *The Tempest*'s consolidation of both European whiteness and white supremacy becomes most apparent.

Claribel

While many literary critics would start thinking about race in *The Tempest* through the character of Caliban, I instead want to focus first on the marriage of Claribel. Interracial marriages are a particularly fraught form of contact because they conjure fears of miscegenation, demonstrating that the regulation of female sexuality is also a regulation of race. I argue that the Claribel episode in *The Tempest* demonstrates the need for thinking about how the regulation of female sexuality is

crucial to the development of race in the play, which opens up broader questions about how the concept of race is in formation during the early modern period.

In Act 2 Scene 1, we learn that Alonso's ship is capsized as he and his party are returning from the wedding of his daughter, Claribel, and the king of Tunis. The play is quick to emphasize that this wedding was not a happy occasion. Adrian and Gonzalo's exchange belabors the comparison between Tunis and Carthage as well as the link between Claribel and Dido.

> *Adr.* Tunis was never graced before with such a paragon to
> their queen.
> *Gonz.* Not since widow Dido's time.
> *Ant.* Widow! a pox o' that! How came that "widow" in?
> Widow Dido!
> *Seb.* What if he had said "widower Aeneas" too? Good
> Lord, how you take it!
> *Adr.* "Widow Dido" said you? You make me study of that.
> She was of Carthage, not of Tunis.
> *Gonz.* This Tunis, sir, was Carthage.
> *Adr.* Carthage?
> *Gonz.* I assure you, Carthage. (2.1.71-82).[4]

Paradoxically, by protesting against Gonzalo's term "widow" for Dido, Antonio brings closer attention to Dido's plight. Dido and Aeneas were never "officially" married, but Gonzalo suggests that Dido experienced as much pain as a widow might have when Aeneas leaves her. Furthermore, Sebastian's offhanded remark about the ridiculousness of Gonzalo's interpretation actually ends up demonstrating Gonzalo's superiority as a reader. Aeneas is a widower (though not because of Dido) — his first wife, Creusa, gets left behind in Troy.

The term "widow" brings attention especially to female sexuality, as the plot in

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[4] William Shakespeare, *The Tempest* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2004). All references to the text are cited from this edition.

Book 4 of *the Aeneid* revolves around Dido's and Aeneas's relationship. While Aeneas asserts that he and Dido were never wed at the end of Book 4, the text of *The Aeneid* seems more befuddled about the relationship than Aeneas himself. For example, in Book 4 line 266, Mercury uses the adjective "uxorius" to describe Aeneas. While it is unclear whether Mercury is mocking Aeneas for behaving like a married man or accusing him of being one, the ambiguity itself demonstrates how muddled the relationship is. Translators, too, have chosen to reflect this ambiguity. In her translation of *The Aeneid*, Sarah Ruden renders Mercury's scolding as follows: "Your wife must like you placing the foundations / For lofty Carthage, such a splendid city — / Forgetting your own kingdom that awaits you."[5]

Mercury's scolding also emphasizes that the Dido episode in *The Aeneid* is not just about the proper control of sexuality but also about colonization. There is much to unravel here, especially considering how Aeneas and Dido are comparable colonizers whose sexual involvement threatens to undermine them for different reasons. First, the scolding holds a gender dynamic. Aeneas is doing work for Dido and building her city. He is Dido's helpmeet, with the implication that this job is beneath his station. Nonetheless, he is ignoring his own colonial venture, the establishment of the Roman empire. Falling under the sway of female sexuality then becomes a threat for proper colonization. While we can certainly read this scene as a way in which an African queen is distracting a future European colonizer, it becomes more complicated because Dido herself is also a colonizer. She flees Tyre to set up shop in Carthage, neighboring indigenous Libyans. While she is certainly more associated with Africa

[5] Virgil, *The Aeneid*, trans. Sarah Ruden (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 4.265-267.

than Aeneas, Dido too is not native to Africa. The racial dynamics between Aeneas and Dido then become more occluded, but what is clearer is the link between female sexuality and successful colonization. Aeneas's colonizing venture almost fails because he falls under sway of Dido. She is the temptation and distraction from his colonial project that he must resist in order to conquer successfully. Dido's colonizing venture actually does fail, earning the ire of her neighboring Libyans whose suitors she all rejected, because of her desire for Aeneas. The text takes specific care to moralize this desire. It declares, "coniugium vocat; hoc praetexit nomine culpam," which Ruden translates as "She called it marriage; to conceal her shame."[6]

I argue that *The Tempest* is developing a key feature of *The Aeneid*, the inextricable link between the control of female sexuality and colonization. Nonetheless, it is not just reiterating the linkage between the two. The play plays with the linkage, by creating and then complicating parallels between characters in the play and the epic. Donna Hamilton has already argued that *The Tempest* is an *imitatio* of *The Aeneid*, which involves borrowing but also dismantling, reversing, and rewriting it.[7] Hamilton explains that *imitatio* happens not just on the level of theme and structure but also in smaller details of vocabulary and syntax. I follow Hamilton's lead by isolating evidence of a thematic remix in the Claribel episode. Claribel is Dido but is also not Dido. The parallels and the complications together push *The Tempest* one step further than *The Aeneid*. The control of female sexuality does not just relate to colonization. It is intertwined with a nascent conception of racial hierarchy churning

[6] Virgil, 4.172.
[7] Donna B Hamilton, *Virgil and the Tempest: The Politics of Imitation* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1990), 4.

within the play. The Claribel episode, then, provides a model through which to read race and gender in the play.

After Aeneas leaves Dido, she then proclaims unending hate between Carthaginians and the descendants of Troy (Romans and then Italians). The reminder that Tunis was Carthage serves to solidify the links between Claribel and Dido, which does not bode well for Claribel, both because of Dido's own history and her proclamation of strife between Carthage and Troy. The foreshadowing through allusion then suggests that the Italian men in this scene believe not only that Claribel's marriage will end in ruin but also that Claribel's marriage is not as authentic as it could be. Aeneas is in a marriage-*like* relationship with Dido, but gets officially married to an Italian, Lavinia. Consequently, because Claribel's marriage to the king of Tunis is compared to the relationship between Dido and Aeneas, the white European men also suggest that there is something inauthentic about the marriage, especially given how some of the characters scoff at calling Dido a widow or Aeneas a widower.

What further complicates this moment are the ethnic positions of Claribel and the king of Tunis; those positions are swapped from those of Dido and Aeneas. Claribel is like Aeneas, descended from Troy. The king of Tunis hails from Carthage, like Dido (though as I have noted before, Dido is not indigenous to Carthage). By paying close attention to the source material of *The Aeneid*, we can see that Aeneas' and Dido's ethnic positions are much closer to each other than one might initially think. Dido came from Tyre, which is in present-day Lebanon, and Aeneas came from Troy, which is in present-day Turkey. Carthage was set up to be different from the

Libyan nations around it. As Jerry Brotton points out, "it should be remembered that Dido kills herself rather than marry an *African* king; yet Claribel has herself married just such 'an African'.[8] Though I think Brotton limns the racial undercurrents for Dido's suicide and Claribel's marriage, I would like to complicate his point about Dido. He focuses his attention on "African" (as the italics indicate), but I also want to draw attention to "king." A female colonizing monarch in the early modern period is in a complicated situation when it comes to marriage. For Dido, marrying any man would be relinquishing some of her power as ruler. To marry an African man then would be, in some way, to place the conquered over the conqueror, a concern that does not exist for Claribel. Though it is likely that parts of Dido's decision are racially motivated, it is important not to ignore her position as a colonizing conqueror who is a woman. Second, to complicate Brotton's point on Claribel, Troy and Tyre certainly were not the same, but they reveal that Claribel and the king of Tunis both likely claim ancestry from Asia Minor and the Middle East, similarly to Aeneas and Dido. The play seems to reinforce this claim by conflating Carthage and Tunis. Given the amount of trade and contact that was happening within the Mediterranean world, one could make the argument that at least ethnically, Dido, Aeneas, the king of Tunis, and Claribel are all more closely related than both *The Aeneid* and *The Tempest* seem to concede. This interrelatedness then begins to highlight how arbitrary the racial boundaries being drawn in *the Tempest* are.

For example, in Book 4 of *the Aeneid,* Aeneas is mandated to separate himself

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[8] Jerry Brotton, "'This Tunis, Sir, Was Carthage': Contesting Colonialism in The Tempest," in *Post-Colonial Shakespeares*, ed. Ania. Loomba and Martin. Orkin (London: Routledge, 1998), 32–33.

from Carthage, Africa, and Troy for the creation of a new Italian, white European identity. Though he and Dido are not that different ethnically, Aeneas casts Carthage as a yet-to-be-foreign location, a kingdom different from his own. This fiction of separation is sustained in Sebastian's description of Claribel's marriage to the King of Tunis. It is not a Mediterranean marriage, but a marriage of people from continents completely distinct from one another. This fictional distinction between Claribel and the King of Tunis then allows for Sebastian's claim that Claribel is "lost" to Africa. Sebastian's speech deemphasizes a sense of shared Mediterranean heritage for one that casts white Europeans and Africans as completely different groups, even though Italy and Tunis are located in the liminal space of Europe and Africa, connected by the Mediterranean. For Claribel to be lost in this sense, she must marry an "African" king and be something distinct from "African."

> *Seb.* Sir, you may thank yourself for this great loss,
> That would not bless our Europe with your daughter,
> But rather lose her to an African;
> Where she at least is banish'd from your eye,
> Who hath cause to wet the grief on't. (2.1.119-123)

The idea of Claribel being "lost" to Africa does not just reveal assumptions of fictive racial separation, but it also imbricates this racial fiction with the trope of corrupt female sexuality. "Lose" can indicate a sense of incurring privation or parting through negligence, which is in line with Sebastian's reprimand of Alonso. His decision to give his daughter to the king of Tunis comes across as a reprehensible, or at least negligent, act. But, "lose" and "loss" carry a sense of moral ruin or perdition as well.[9] To be lost

[9] "lose, v.1". OED Online. December 2018. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/110385?rskey=t4cXRk&result=3&isAdvanced=false (accessed December 08, 2018).

is to be ruined, and if Claribel is the loss, "this great loss" could also refer to Claribel's moral ruin. Given that they are discussing a marriage and invoking *The Aeneid*, in which Dido's sexual relationship with Aeneas leads to her death, the loss can refer to Claribel's loss of virginity through the consummation of her marriage. The homophony between "lose" and "loose," a common qualifier for sexually promiscuous women, further reinforces the sexual overtones of this "loss." What is notable here, then, is that for women, any sexual expression is considered a "loss," even when that sexual expression is sanctioned under the covenant of marriage. The "loss" of the father, who gives his daughter away to another man, is also a moral "loss" for the daughter.

The loss here, however, is not just sexed and gendered. It is also racialized. There is a metonymic relationship between “Europe” and its men (and notably, given the marriage context, not its women). Blessing “Europe” with Claribel would mean marrying her off to a white European man. The continent stands in for the men that Claribel should rightfully be given to. Sebastian’s scornful tone towards Alonso indicates that not giving Claribel to a white European man was a moral failing on Alonso’s part. The metonymy also works in the other direction. The king of Tunis is, to no surprise, “African.” Referring to the king of Tunis referred as “an African” indicates that the individuality of the king of Tunis does not matter in this case. African men here are interchangeable — to have married Claribel off to any one of them would be a loss. What is most prominent about the king of Tunis is that he is lumped together with other people who live on the continent. Africa then becomes

associated with people who white Europeans should not marry.[10] Admittedly, this metonymic association is a vague one, but vagueness is a key characteristic of early modern metonymy. In her study on the relationship between early modern rhetoric and sexuality, Madhavi Menon identifies some key features of early modern metonymy, a trope that inspires confusion and dissent into rhetorical tracts: "Metonymy depends on an *affinity* between two things rather than an *innate* link between two terms… What ties metonymy to itself is a vaguely-defined affinity, rather than a physically determinable resemblance."[11] While in our present day, we would be compelled to say that the link between Black people and Africa is more than "vaguely defined," I argue that *the Tempest* is a play in which "vaguely-defined" is moving towards something more "determinable." The linkages between Europe and white people and Africa and Black people are being produced by the play. For this reason, I refer to "Europe" standing in for its men as metonymy rather than something more definitive like metaphor or synecdoche.

Menon also points out the "arbitrariness" of metonymy: "the difficulty of distinguishing it clearly from either metaphor or synecdoche or catachresis, or metalepsis, since it parties in the transference of the first, the telescoping of the second, the misnaming of the third, and the casual confusion of the fourth. Metonymy

[10] For those who want a firmer connection between Europe and its men or Africa and its men, metonymy is also a figure of speech that works off of continuity or touching. European men are born on, standing on, or living in the continent of Europe, and ditto for African men and Africa. Consequently, *The Tempest* also is a way to show the durability of these racial metonymies. The Island is a place without strong continental associations, so it shows how the racial metonymies are working even when the European men are not touching Europe at all. The maintenance of this racial metonymy then becomes crucial for colonizers – they must maintain that they are still "touching" Europe when they are on different soil.

[11] Madhavi Menon, *Wanton Words: Rhetoric and Sexuality in English Renaissance Drama* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 41–42.

is both arbitrary and tropologically indistinguishable, which makes it at once the most fitting rhetorical figure for sexuality, and the least identifiable."[12] What I read here is that metonymy is a kind of necessary (but not sufficient) precondition for many other rhetorical tropes. One must surpass "vaguely-defined affinity" to get to transference, a part of something has at least (if not more) than a "vaguely-defined affinity" with the whole, and some level of "affinity" is necessary for nominal and causal confusion (otherwise, what would draw us into the confusion in the first place?). Though this overlapping may exist with any set of rhetorical terms, what I draw from Menon's discussion of metonymy is that its vagueness also makes it slippery, so it's especially well-suited for establishing conceptual relationships while also hiding them. Because a "vaguely-defined affinity" is not difficult to create (like the one between people who happen to reside in Europe and a continental white European identity), setting up that metonymy enables it to be mobilized in different directions. Menon points out that metonymy is perhaps the most fitting rhetorical figure for sexuality. Race, like sexuality, hides in language in the early modern, so metonymy is also a fitting rhetorical trope for it. It is less about the establishment of a causal logic (e.g. to be white is to be good) but rather the assembly of these "vague" associations.

It is then fitting that the racial metonymy reveals a circular logic in which the need to control female sexuality and a nascent racism reinforce each other. The fictive separation of Italy/Europe and Tunis/Africa creates the terms for the metonymy in the first place and heightens the sense of corruption in Claribel's marriage. Not only is she being wed (and presumably, having sex) with a man, but with a foreign, African man.

[12] Menon, 42.

She is lost to morality and Europe simultaneously. But, Claribel's moral "loss" then becomes further fuel to maintain this fictive separation between white Europeans and Africans. Because Claribel is corrupted by the King of Tunis and Sebastian would rather have had her wed to a white European, the two groups are articulated as completely and totally distinct. Thus, the Claribel episode bifurcates the Mediterranean into two distinct groups of people that are sorted into a shaky yet cohering hierarchy. The white Europeans are represented as "better" primarily because characters insist that it would have been more ideal for Claribel, a white European woman, to be wed to a white European man. The Africans are represented as "worse" because of the threat they pose to white European women in heightening their "lostness." This circular logic explains also why Claribel specifically and women more broadly are excluded from the metonymy between Europe and its men. The specter of corrupt female sexuality is necessary to enable and sustain this metonymy in the first place, which necessitates downplaying their subjectivity in contrast to the subjectivity of men. The irony of the situation also is that a group of men, who are actually lost, are pontificating about a woman's "lostness" without acknowledging that they, too, are in a sense, lost. This irony underscores the artificiality of the metonymy – certain associations are being stressed while other associations are not. Certain mobilities (such as those motivated by promiscuous female desire) must be controlled to let other mobilities (such as those motivated by a colonial desire to conquer) run.

I argue that this metonymic vocabulary of white European and African indicates a nascent articulation of race in the play. "European" is a term that transcends nationality and ethnicity in a way that "African" does also. "European"

draws together most prominently the Italians (since the characters in the play are Italian) and the English (given that the playwright and the actors would presumably be English). It also draws together other burgeoning nation-states (like the French) that would be considered "European." While it is certainly up for debate which nations would have been considered "European" in Shakespeare's England, what I find to be important is that different ethnicities (at the very least, English and Italian) are being drawn together to create a grouping that is bigger. Given that language and religion are often the markers of ethnic groupings, the joining of English and Italian is significant — their languages are different, but so are their religions (England being Protestant while Italy is Catholic).

I acknowledge, of course, that the English are not solely seeing the Italians as kin, members of the same racial grouping. Lara Bovilsky details the ways in which English writers both aligned themselves with and distinguished themselves from Italians when thinking through national identities and racial quandaries. She concludes that Italy is useful for the English to "project, claim, and experiment with formulations of their own national identity."[13] Robin Kirkpatrick details the ways *The Tempest* both asserts how Italy is foundational to English thinking but also foreign to it.[14] But what is significant is that through this process of formulation in *The Tempest*, the English and the Italians are, at least momentarily, brought together under the banner of "European." Because English men are performing this play written in English mainly

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[13] Lara Bovilsky, *Barbarous Play: Race on the Renaissance Stage* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 133.
[14] Robin Kirkpatrick, "The Italy of the Tempest," in *"The Tempest" and Its Travels* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 78.

about Italians for a largely English audience. The invocation of Europe, which I discussed earlier, also signals to the English audience that the characters they should racially identify with are the Italians.

Likewise, with "African," Tunis is being brought together with other African ethnicities to create a larger grouping of people referred to as "Africans." Thinking more broadly, "African" brings together the Islamic empires of Mediterranean Northern Africa with sub-Saharan Africa. Tunis is a liminal space. It was both a port in which English ships docked and also a boundary-marker for the Ottoman Empire in North Africa. It is both foreign and familiar, much like England's relationship with the Ottoman Empire during the early modern period, which I discuss more in-depth in Chapter 3. England was alternately (and sometimes simultaneously) allies and enemies with the Ottoman Empire. Nonetheless, this liminal city, Tunis, becomes the stand-in for the entire continent of Africa. Even though it is on the border to Renaissance Europe, it is cast as quintessentially other, reinforcing the separation of Europe and Africa as fictive work in the play. It is important to note that I am not arguing that the term "African" itself is turning into a racialized term in the Renaissance. David Barthelemy has argued that "*African* never acquired any meaning beyond that of Negro or of or pertaining to Africa."[15] Rather, he points to the term *Moor* as "the common name for a large group of diverse peoples who inhabited the African continent."[16] My point here is that in *The Tempest,* the characters do the cognitive and intellectual work of lumping together a diverse group of people under one conceptual

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[15] Anthony Gerard Barthelemy, *Black Face, Maligned Race: The Representation of Blacks in English Drama from Shakespeare to Southern* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987), 14–15.
[16] Barthelemy, 13.

group tied to their continent of origin. Whether the word used is "Moor" or "African," *The Tempest* seems to be in line with an early modern trend of collapsing the diversity of the African continent into a monolith, which in turn becomes a race of people.

Critics have already pointed out that *The Tempest* contributes to a coherent Renaissance white European identity against a vague "Africa." Andrew C. Hess mentions how "during the early modern period the most familiar barrier separating Christians from Muslims was marriage. Early on in the play, the fate of Claribel begins Shakespeare's discussion of the appropriate Renaissance structure for marriage with negative reference to Africa."[17] Hess goes on to argue that because a political marriage between Italy and Tunis would have been extremely unrealistic in the current European political landscape, the function of Claribel's marriage was to serve as a foil to that of Miranda. The sheer unfeasibility both politically and religiously (since the marriage would shatter the expectation that Christians would not marry Muslims) emphasizes how inappropriate Claribel's marriage was. Not only is a marriage between a white European woman and an African man inappropriate, but it also contains a hierarchical suggestion. Africa is not just "negative," but worse than Europe. The coherence of Renaissance Europe in the play doesn't just happen against an African other. The assertion of coherence is also an assertion of superiority. The marriage of Ferdinand and Miranda, which is a "proper" wedding of white European to white European, is celebrated. Marjorie Raley goes as far to argue that it is the norm that demonstrates how dangerous Claribel's marriage is — while the marriage of

[17] Andrew C. Hess, "The Mediterranean and Shakespeare's Geopolitical Imagination," in *"The Tempest" and Its Travels* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 128.

Miranda keeps white European power in Europe, the marriage of Claribel "compromises the European center, even dislocates it, as long as Claribel remains in Africa."[18] This subversive possibility in Claribel's marriage thus necessitates a conversation among the white European men on how it is inappropriate, which helps reestablish the necessary racial divisions that the marriage itself potentially disrupts. The men go even as far to mourn the marriage because of its inappropriateness. It is not difficult to see how this moral discourse of *the Tempest* also is a racializing one. Certain arrangements of bodies are appropriate while others are not. I am not arguing that this moment in *the Tempest* marks the start of early modern English racial thinking or even sets forth a racial taxonomy that becomes commonplace. Claribel's marriage provides an opportunity for the white European men in the play to assert a hierarchy between Europe and Africa, and this assertion is race in formation.

I acknowledge that this discussion of race is missing what many consider an important, perhaps even indispensable, component of it. In the Claribel passage, there is no mention of skin color, only continent of origin (which, as my discussion of *The Aeneid* demonstrates, is not merely a geographical term). Much of critical race theory has moved beyond thinking about race as something that solely exists in the skin of the body. Rod Ferguson's recent articulation of "race" in *Keywords for American Cultural Studies* defines it as less about the body and more about inclusion and exclusion. Race is "category that sets the terms of belonging and exclusion within modern institutions. Race both accounts for the logics by which institutions

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[18] Marjorie Raley, "Claribel's Husband," in *Race, Ethnicity, and Power in the Renaissance*, ed. Joyce Green. MacDonald (Madison, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1997), 106.

differentiate and classify, include and exclude, and names the processes by which internalize those logics."[19] Ferguson later points out that an intersectional understanding of race is paramount, especially since "the infrastructure [of racial discourse] was produced within a genealogy of morality."[20] Ferguson brings up a specific example in which this moral discourse, the precursor to our current racial taxonomy, is intertwined with gendered and sexual propriety. Certain bodies (I.e., Bodies of color) were "unevenly constructed as outside the parameters of gender and sexual propriety."[21]

Not only does *The Tempest* not touch upon skin color, but it also curiously sidesteps the matter of religion. Raley points out that in *the Tempest*, the conventional "markers of alienation" such as religious difference and skin color do not lead to the King of Tunis's rejection.[22] The play, by refusing to engage in typical overt Islamophobic sentiments, suggests a complexity that prevents us from collapsing race and religion into each other. The curious absence of overt religious prejudice also makes *the Tempest* an unusual counterexample to claims from historians, such as Colin Kidd, who have said that "race is not central organising concept of intellectual life or political culture during the early modern era" and that it is important insofar as the presence of other races threatened Christian worldviews.[23] In *The Tempest*, race does not seem to focalize as much around religion or skin color as much as one would

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[19] Roderick A. Ferguson, "Race," in *Keywords for American Cultural Studies*, ed. Bruce Burgett and Glenn Hendler, 2nd ed. (New York: New York University Press, 2014), 208.
[20] Ferguson, 208.
[21] Ferguson, 209.
[22] Raley, "Claribel's Husband," 106.
[23] Colin Kidd, *The Forging of Races: Race and Scripture in the Protestant Atlantic World, 1600-2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 54–57.

expect. Nonetheless, I recognize that just because these topics are not as focal to *The Tempest* does not mean they are unimportant for the play. Scholars such as Bernadette Andrea and Kim Hall have demonstrated that hierarchies of religion and skin color are undergirding so much of early modern literature.[24] What *the Tempest* does seem to be articulating, though, is another vision for thinking about race as co-constructed with early modern attitudes toward female sexuality. The very concept of race in *The Tempest* always seem to appear in tandem with prominent discussions of proper female sexuality.

The discussion of Claribel's marriage reveals that race in the play seems to work differently for women than for men, especially since the regulation of female sexuality is key to *the Tempest*'s articulations on race. While race for men seems permanent and seemingly tied down to continent of origin, Claribel's race is different. Because she is wed to someone African, she is "lost." Claribel is treated as a thing that is taken from Europe and lost to Africa. Claribel's move to Africa confirms what Patricia Parker argues is a patriarchal fear characteristic of early modern England: "A woman must stay within a private place – the home – because her body contains a private place, a place or 'enclosure' that adultery would break into, and make a 'common' rather than a particular property."[25] In moving to Africa for marriage, Claribel has broken out not only of her home but of Europe itself. The "particular property" of her body has been removed from Europe; she is no longer as "European"

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[24] See Kim Hall, *Things of Darkness* for skin color and the language of fairness and darkness. Bernadette Andrea's forthcoming work specifically looks at the way that Claribel and Caliban are also marked as Islamic though not in immediately obvious ways.
[25] Patricia A. Parker, *Literary Fat Ladies: Rhetoric, Gender, Property* (London: Methuen, 1987), 105.

as she was before. Because Claribel in this passage has no agency, her race then is determined by the actions of her father and her husband (the men in her life). Alonso and the king of Tunis broker the marriage. The shift in race as a "loss" and Sebastian's argument that this "loss" is worth tears also point to the anxiety of white European men that "their" white European women will be lost to them or, even worse, leave them. The specter of miscegenation also appears here. Claribel and the king of Tunis cannot produce white European children — they will always be less than white European. While it is unclear how these mixed-race children will fit into the racial taxonomy from this passage alone, the passage already sets white European up as the ideal race, establishes how fragile that racial purity is, and how it is the responsibility of white European men to maintain racial purity by managing and controlling white European women.[26]

Moreover, the play gives very little, if any, indication what Claribel's reaction to this shift in her racial status is. The men are determining how the audience should think about Claribel, and there is no indication of what Claribel is actually feeling or thinking. I turn briefly to the case of Desdemona to better work out the mechanics of race for women in Shakespeare's works. Lara Bovilsky tracks Desdemona's race throughout *Othello*. Bovilsky points out that the word "black" refers both to darker skin color and to transgressions of female chastity (though the latter is a more metaphorical blackness), but the intermingling of these "black" discourses are "particularly dramatized by marriage plots, in which attention to sexual difference,

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[26] The play is curiously unconcerned with returning to a lost racial purity but creating a new racial purity through its hypothetical children. This is a markedly different sentiment from what I find in *Paradise Lost*, which I will discuss in Chapter 4.

concern over the boundary between exogamy and endogamy, and application of the color logics associated with female sexuality intersect with and amplify one another."[27] Desdemona's "blackening" starts because the male characters see her as someone who flouts sexual mores. Bovilsky argues that the play asserts a logic of attraction that Desdemona defies. Women like Desdemona (fair and European) should become afraid when looking upon an African man. This conviction is so strong that Brabantio believes that Othello must have drugged Desdemona. Intoxication is the only possibility for Desdemona to violate this law of attraction.[28]

Bovilsky argues that Iago's joking couplet encapsulates this entanglement between race and gender in the play:

> *Iag.* If she be black, and thereto have a wit,
> She'll find a white that shall her blackness fit. (2.1.132-33).

Bovilsky notes the pun between white and wight, implying that blackness here is both sexual and racial.[29] To argue that "blackness" only refers to female sexual promiscuity, not race, is a far stretch given that *Othello* is a play with an interracial marriage. Iago's couplet reverses the racial dynamic between Othello and Desdemona (most memorably rendered with the black ram tupping the white ewe), but the couplet still suggests a peculiar link between female promiscuity and miscegenation. Unregulated female sexuality, therefore, challenges not just gender norms but racial norms. I read *Othello* consequently suggesting that the blackness of women is not just about regulating gender but also about regulating race. To call a woman "dark" then is to not

[27] Bovilsky, *Barbarous Play: Race on the Renaissance Stage*, 39.
[28] Bovilsky, 54.
[29] Bovilsky, 37.

only indicate her fall from ideal femininity but also from ideal European whiteness since her actions endanger not just patriarchy but white supremacy.

Nonetheless, Desdemona does not become dark "enough" to be assimilated into Othello's race. Bovilsky argues that Othello eventually doubts and kills Desdemona because he does not believe that she could be satisfied with a husband so different from herself.[30] This logic is similar to that of Brabantio earlier — Othello too believes that Desdemona could not be satisfied with a man so different from her and thus is led into thinking she is adulterous. Desdemona becomes trapped then in a liminal space between whiteness and blackness because of patriarchal and racial logics. Most poignantly, the men in the play refuse to see beyond this reasoning, which results in Desdemona's murder. They ultimately are the cause of Desdemona's death.

There are, of course, key differences between Claribel and Desdemona. For one, Desdemona is given more agency than Claribel. Desdemona "revolts" from her father while Claribel is given from her father to her husband. Desdemona's "darkening" happens not just through her marriage to Othello but also through her associations with female sexuality (the most we get of Claribel's sexuality is likening her to Dido, who exercised it freely and out of wedlock with Aeneas). And yet, both Desdemona and Claribel are still described as inextricably lost. "Lost" now carries much weight. It bears connotations of "loose" women and indicates that even married women are "looser" than virginal women because they are having sex, as sanctioned as it might be by religious and civil law. A "loose" woman, however, is also a "dark" one. Both "loose" and "dark" are terms that suggest sexual impropriety. The case of

[30] Bovilsky, 61.

Desdemona reveals that women who marry outside of their race belong neither with white Europeans nor with Africans. What the passage suggests, then, is that Claribel's "loss" not only has racial and sexual dimensions, but that in *The Tempest*, race and female sexuality are intertwined. Anxieties of racial impurity are inextricable from anxieties regarding "loose" female sexuality. Patriarchal conceptions of female sexuality cast these women as wanting to belong everywhere, which then leads to them being shunned by all. It seems then that Claribel does have sufficient cause to weep, but not just because she is lost to Europe. Even without agency, she is set up to belong neither with Europe nor with Africa, much like Desdemona and Dido, who loses the trust of Carthage because of her dalliances with Aeneas.

This need for racially "stable" men to manage racially "unstable" women exists beyond interactions between white European women and African men. It appears again in Shakespeare's Lucrece. As Tarquin stalks into Lucrece's bedchamber to rape her, Lucrece's whiteness is emphasized over and over. For example, the speaker mentions: "Without the bed her other fair hand was, / On the green coverlet, whose perfect white / Showed like an April daisy in the grass" (393-395). This description, taken together with ones about her blonde hair and fair eyes, not only emphasizes Lucrece's white European body but also solidifies the idea that a blonde, white, fair body is the ideal of beauty. Lucrece's breasts, however, are later described as the following: "Her breasts, like ivory globes circled with blue, / A pair of maiden worlds unconquered" (408-409).[31] This is an astonishing pair of lines. Lucrece's

[31] William Shakespeare, *The Complete Sonnets and Poems*, ed. Colin Burrow (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

breasts mark her as white (through ivory) and (obviously) mark her as feminine. But, she is also racialized by being compared to colonized worlds. The word "unconquered" makes clear the link between colonization and rape. Lucrece's body is the ideal of European beauty through its extreme whiteness but is also a stand-in for colonized and subjugated land. This process of colonizing land also meant subjugating people. Lucrece's body consequently becomes uneasily associated with the bodies of the Indigenous Americans (among other groups subjugated by the British empire) who were brutally colonized and raped. What the example of Lucrece reveals is that in Shakespeare's works, the race of women is often depicted as less stable than that of men. She, like Claribel and Desdemona, is depicted as racially mutable. It makes sense that women's racial status is less "stable" than men's given that strict regulation of female sexuality is what helps constitute racial attitudes in *The Tempest*. Women are needed to constitute an illusion of racial purity by giving birth to white "European" children. This necessity also indicates that they carry the potential of miscegenation out of wedlock, which flies in the face of white supremacist and patriarchal regulations upon their sexual behavior. This point is perhaps best demonstrated by turning to another significant female character in the play, Sycorax.

Sycorax

While Claribel's marriage establishes a divide between African and white European in addition to hinting at the dangers of an interracial marriage, Sycorax provides a different example of racial mingling. Sycorax herself is racially indeterminate. Prospero introduces Sycorax by retelling to Ariel a story that,

presumably, Ariel first told to Prospero:

> *Pro.* This damned witch Sycorax,
> For mischiefs manifold, and sorceries terrible
> To enter human hearing, from Algiers,
> Thou know'st, was banished. For one thing she did
> They would not take her life…
> This blue-eyed hag was hither brought with child
> And here was left by th'sailors. (1.2.263-270).

In this description alone, Prospero gives two immediately notable characteristics commonly associated with race. First, he mentions that Sycorax was born in Algiers, which would be located in Africa. Second, he mentions that Sycorax is "blue-eyed." Algiers is a liminal space in between Europe and Africa, but "blue-eyed" does not necessarily invoke the same connotations in the early modern period. "Blue-eyed" isn't as yoked to whiteness or ideal European beauty. Leah Marcus, in tracing the various meanings of "blue-eyed" during the early modern period, concludes that it encompasses many meanings. "Blue-eyed" could mean blue-eyed, grey-eyed, pregnant, and exotic.[32] Marcus concludes that the vexed phrase "blue-eyed hag" shouldn't invite scholars to argue and pinpoint the definitive color of Sycorax's eyes. Rather, Marcus argues that the phrase points to the complex flux during a period in which racial and cultural difference are brought to the forefront, necessitating a difficult reckoning about what distinguishes the self from the other.[33] Taking the cue from the Claribel example, Sycorax's status as "banished" also sets her up as a racially indeterminate figure. Her body is both inscrutable and unlocatable, unfixed to any geographical location besides one that is already a liminal space.

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[32] Leah Marcus, "The Blue-Eyed Witch," in *The Tempest*, by William Shakespeare, ed. Peter Hulme and William H. Sherman (New York: Norton, 2004), 297–98.
[33] Marcus, 298.

Taking Marcus's cue, I will refrain from arguing whether Sycorax should fall into the category of "European" or "African," but rather think about how Sycorax further demonstrates how race in *the Tempest* is so intertwined with gender. While the discussion of Claribel shows how the regulation of female sexuality through marriage is wrapped up with an anxiety for racial purity, the discussion of Sycorax shows that fear taken to its worst conclusion. Sycorax, a racially ambiguous character herself, comes to the island with child. While miscegenation is not explicitly invoked in the Claribel example, Sycorax, the racially indeterminate pregnant woman, brings the specter of miscegenation to bear on Claribel and the King of Tunis as well. After all, the reference to Sycorax arriving on the island while pregnant appears before the mention of Claribel and the King of Tunis in the play.

Indeed, the child Sycorax gives birth to is as racially indeterminate as she is. Prospero refers to Caliban as "A freckled whelp, hag-born" (1.2.282-283). "Whelp" is already a word that questions Caliban's humanity — whelps are usually unwanted puppies and used also in a derogatory sense for ill-conditioned men.[34] Caliban's freckles also make him racially indeterminate like his mother —variegated dots or spots indicate an inscrutable skin, one that cannot be traced, especially since freckles could mean a smattering of spots on the face but also spots all over the body.[35] I will return to Caliban later in the chapter, but for now, I want to focus on Sycorax. She is

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[34] "whelp, n.1". OED Online. December 2018. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/228186?rskey=fG3fmn&result=1&isAdvanced=false (accessed January 21, 2019).

[35] "freckle, n.". OED Online. December 2018. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/74363?rskey=PP8Hgy&result=1&isAdvanced=false (accessed January 21, 2019).

obviously a figure that invokes fear in the other characters. “Hag” is a word that invokes nightmares, Furies, demons, ghosts, fairies, Harpies, and Satan.[36] Though Sycorax is no longer alive, she still seems to elicit both fear and malice from the other characters. Barring her imprisoning of Ariel, the only act of hers that is referenced and lives on in the play itself is her birthing of Caliban. What sorceries of Sycorax warrant such distaste and such fear?

I argue that Sycorax’s fearsomeness comes from her status as a racially indeterminate mother. Not only does Sycorax give birth to a child who is racially indeterminate, but she has the power to do so without a man. As Kim Hall has noted before, early modern attitudes toward race suggest that “blackness is immutable.”[37] Nothing can turn a black or racially indeterminate person into a white person. This immutability of racial otherness means that a racially indeterminate woman can give birth to a racially indeterminate child no matter who the father is. Because the passage of traits from parent to child is already a vexed question in the early modern period, this threat posed by Sycorax is an extremely concrete expression of the threat posed by mothers in general; they can form the child in a way that is against the will of the father. In the case of Sycorax, the racial identity of the father doesn’t even matter, as there is no reference to Caliban’s father throughout the entire play. Sycorax has the power to propagate her racial indeterminacy — no reproductive or sexual intervention

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[36] "hag, n.1". OED Online. December 2018. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/83196?rskey=rmIw73&result=1&isAdvanced=false (accessed January 21, 2019).
[37] Kim F. Hall, “‘Troubling Doubles’: Apes, Africans, and Blackface in Mr. Moore’s Revels,” in *Race, Ethnicity, and Power in the Renaissance*, ed. Joyce Green. MacDonald (Madison, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1997), 136.

from a man will be able to prevent that. Furthermore, there is no indication whether or not Sycorax is married. Perhaps this also indicates how the proposed mechanisms to regulate female sexuality prove useless once a racially indeterminate woman starts to exist. It does not matter if Sycorax is married or not. It does not matter what the racial identity of the father is. The social and sexual interventions of men will not work. Any child of Sycorax's will muddy racial distinctions.[38] Sycorax and Caliban, then, become the motivation to draw racial lines and construct racial fictions. Claribel being "lost" to Europe opens up the possibility of creating more people who are racially "lost," indeterminate. Sycorax then also shows that the anxieties about "the dangerous mutability of whiteness" Hall finds in *Mr. Moore's Revels* are also present in *the Tempest.*[39] As an unmarried, racially indeterminate mother, Sycorax (and those like her) are looming threats to both patriarchal control over women and whiteness.

Before moving on to analyze Caliban's race in more detail, it is worth nothing that so much of the play's material on race revolves around absent women. Claribel never appears in the play, and yet her wedding is what sets off *the Tempest*. Sycorax has given birth to the character who most represents the Island in the play, and yet she never appears either. Both are only mentioned in description (primarily by men), and both are described in ways that stress their distance from the events in the play. Claribel is far away and lost. Sycorax is dead and, ideally in Prospero's imagination, powerless in death. Prospero notes how he found Ariel trapped in a cloven pine by

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[38] Given that sexual licentiousness in general is seen as "dark", any "illegitimate" children could be seen as racially impure, especially if the identity of both parents cannot be established. This provides another example in which racial purity and patrilineage are working to reinforce each other.
[39] Hall, "'Troubling Doubles': Apes, Africans, and Blackface in Mr. Moore's Revels," 136.

Sycorax: "It was a torment / To lay upon the damned, which Sycorax / Could not again undo" (1.2.289-291). He goes on to insist that "It was mine art, / When I arrived and heard thee, that made gape / The pine, and let thee out" (1.2.291-293). The play leaves ambiguous whether or not Sycorax actually attempted to free Ariel after trapping them in the pine, but Prospero insists that Sycorax was unable to do so, establishing his superiority. The meter demonstrates this as well: "mine art" is a spondee, drawing emphasis to Prospero's power. Prospero is arguing he can undo anything that Sycorax has done. Nonetheless, these absent female bodies seem so present, especially when looking through the lens of race. More concretely, Sycorax still seems to have power through Caliban, the most racially vexed figure in the play.

In *the Tempest*, talking about race necessitates a discussion of the female body, even if the bodies are not (or are never) present on stage. Caliban must be thought of in conjunction with Sycorax (and to be discussed later, Miranda), and to draw a distinction between European and African people, one must use the sexuality of a female body to illustrate that. This link between nascent early modern racial hierarchies and the regulation of sexuality is not one that just exists in *the Tempest*. Jennifer Morgan traces the relationship between racial Otherness and deviant female sexuality from *the Travels of Sir John Mandeville* to Richard Eden's 1553 translation of Sebastian Munster's *A Treatyse of the Newe India* to other travel narratives to demonstrate "early modern English readers' sometimes ambivalent encounters with narratives that utilized women's behavior and physiognomy to mark European national identities and inscribe racial hierarchy."[40] Specifically, Morgan details how

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[40] Jennifer L Morgan, "Male Travelers, Female Bodies, and the Gendering of Racial Ideology, 1500–

racial Otherness and racial savagery were conveyed by portraying Indigenous American and African women as sexually deviant and promiscuous. Given that racial Otherness is represented through “loose” women, it becomes especially important that white European women do not become “lost” like Claribel or racially untethered like Sycorax. If the non-European woman is characterized by her looseness, the white European woman’s sexuality must be regulated strictly in ways that guarantee patriarchal lineage and racial purity.

For *the Tempest*, then, any discussion or analysis of race then requires thinking in conjunction with gender and sexuality, specifically the regulation of female sexuality. Even an absent female body (whether that of Claribel or Sycorax) must be invoked to discuss race more broadly or even think about the race of a male body, for example, that of Caliban.

Caliban & Miranda

Caliban's first appearance in the play expresses the tie between race and female sexuality. Miranda's presence on stage is crucial to Caliban's racialization in the scene. Before Caliban first comes on stage, Prospero refers to him as “Caliban, my slave, who never / Yields us kind answer” (1.2.308-309). Arguably, “slave” is not a word that specifically indexes a certain race of people as it does in U.S.-American discourse today, though scholars have recently been complicating this easy assertion.[41] Given

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1700,” in *Bodies in Contact: Rethinking Colonial Encounters in World History*, ed. Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton (Duke University Press, 2005), 58.

[41] Urvashi Chakravarty, “Serving Like a Free Man: Labor, Liberty, and Consent in Early Modern English Drama” (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania, 2010).

the history of slavery in the British Empire, it wasn't so strongly associated with Black Africans.[42] Nonetheless, Prospero's reference to Caliban here brings together a cluster of words that indicate that Caliban is being racialized, even before he comes on stage. As many scholars have already noted, the connection between "Caliban" and "cannibal" is a likely one, and cannibals would have been figures associated with travel narratives.[43] In other words, cannibals were a distinctly non-European phenomenon. The word "slave" is also acquiring a non-European valence with the rise of Atlantic chattel slavery in the seventeenth century. One could make the argument that "slave" at the beginning of the early modern period did not necessarily index a certain kind of body. This argument holds more soundly with regards to the beginning of the period. But, by the late seventeenth century, Atlantic historians Linebaugh and Rediker note that the word "slave" is poised to be racialized because of the suppression of English revolutionary splinter groups by Cromwellian and Restoration governments.[44]

Finally, Caliban never yields "kind answer." Kind can mean benevolent or considerate, but it can also refer to having a claim on property and being of the same country or region.[45] Both are significant in that Prospero and Caliban contend

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[42] Mary Nyquist works through the multiple associations with slavery active in early modern England, including the relationship between slavery and servitude, slavery and the slav, serfdom, etc. in Mary Nyquist, *Arbitrary Rule: Slavery, Tyranny, and the Power of Life and Death* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 123–37.
[43] The argument of "Caliban" as an anagram of "cannibal" and "Caribbean" is made on Alden T. Vaughan, *Shakespeare's Caliban: A Cultural History* (Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 28.
[44] Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000), 101.Linebaugh and Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic*, 101.
[45] "kind, adj. and adv.". OED Online. December 2018. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/103445?rskey=tdiTEN&result=2&isAdvanced=false (accessed

throughout the play about who has legitimate right to the island. Property itself has a racialized genealogy that resonates with the dispute between Caliban and Prospero. In her article "Whiteness as Property," Cheryl I. Harris notes how "rights in property are contingent on, intertwined with, and conflated with race."[46] Specifically in the early modern period, Harris mentions how the treatment of Blacks as property themselves and the conquest and removal of Indigenous Americans from their lands were justified by and reinforced a notion that only white claims to property were legitimate. Harris concludes that "only white possession and occupation of land was validated and therefore privileged as a basis for property rights. These distinct forms of exploitation each contributed in varying ways to the construction of whiteness as property."[47] One caveat I do want to make is that this is a period in which the concept of property is in flux, especially with the abolishment of feudal tenures and the creation of excise taxes. P. S. Atiyah argues that the modern concept of property as ownership (rather than tenancy) is born in the early modern period.[48]

Consequently, it is not just that whiteness becomes a crucial prerequisite for owning property but that the concepts of property and whiteness are being constituted together. We see very similar dynamics happening in *the Tempest*: Caliban is seen more as property than property-owner, and Caliban's claim to the island is delegitimized in favor of Prospero's through speech, significant considering how

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February 14, 2019).

[46] Cheryl I. Harris, “Whiteness as Property,” *Harvard Law Review* 106, no. 8 (June 1993): 1714, https://doi.org/10.2307/1341787.

[47] Harris, 1716.

[48] P. S Atiyah, *The Rise and Fall of Freedom of Contract* (Oxford [Oxfordshire]: Clarendon Press, 1985), 14.

Patricia Parker points out how rhetoric is crucial for enacting property.[49] Caliban is not kind; he has no claim to this property, and if the ability to own property is later established as a characteristic of whiteness, Caliban's "unkind" status can be read as a precursor to the codification of whiteness as property that can only be inherited by men in later laws. Note also that the main property conflict is between two men – Prospero and Caliban. Likewise, given how geographical terms are the primary vector through which racialization occurs for both Claribel and Sycorax, Caliban's characterization as being not kind and not kin takes on a more racialized meaning in this play. Terms of geography, country, and region are not simple referents to places but signal a kind of separation between those who belong and those who do not. That separation, in turn, is setting up a power dynamic. The three terms of "Caliban/cannibal," "slave," and "not kind" together establish Caliban not only as a racialized outsider but one who is marked as inferior to Prospero or Miranda.

Prospero's characterization of Caliban as "poisonous" a few lines later reveals a need to establish and maintain a boundary that keeps Caliban separate from Prospero and Miranda. To be affected by poison, one must come into contact with it. It is made clear later in the scene what one of the reasons for this separation was. Prospero "lodged [Caliban] in mine own cell, till thou dost seek to violate / The honor of my child" (1.2.346-348). Caliban's attempted rape of Miranda prompted Prospero to cast him out of their home and to treat him as a slave. Caliban replies, unsettlingly, with "O ho, O ho! Woud't had been done! Thou didst prevent me; I had people else / This isle with Calibans" (1.2.348-350). This reply then launches Miranda into a flurry of

[49] Parker, *Literary Fat Ladies: Rhetoric, Gender, Property*, 126–27.

vituperations: “Abhorred slave, / Which any print of goodness wilt not take, / Being capable of all ill!” (1.2.350-352). Feminist readings of this passage, like that of Jessica Slights, show Miranda has become property – Caliban’s attempted rape of Miranda is less about the rape itself and more about how Caliban tried to “steal” Prospero’s daughter. Slights argues that the horrendous and psychic consequences of sexual assault receive little to no attention in the play text and in the literary criticism as well.[50] Though Slights does not go as far to read Caliban’s treatment as just, one in which a perpetrator of sexual assault receives their proper due, she reads Miranda's excoriation of Caliban as appropriate and apt rather than merely colonial propaganda. A postcolonial reading would emphasize the ways in which Caliban is represented in the play as the adversary to English colonial rule. As the most prominently racialized figure, the subaltern, the slave, Caliban is a threat to white European rule. In these readings, Miranda merely stands in as "an emblem of a colonialist ruling class," retaining no agency of her own.[51] The attempted rape of Miranda is also read as an attempt to take power back from Prospero, and Miranda's excoriation of Caliban as nascent white supremacy. This would be in line with readings, such as those by Stephen Greenblatt, who argues that Caliban's response and curse of Miranda's teaching him language has a "devastating justness" and should be viewed as "a momentary victory" despite how this “justness” and “victory” are complicated by Caliban’s attempted rape of Miranda.[52]

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[50] Jessica Slights, “Rape and the Romanticization of Shakespeare’s Miranda,” *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 41, no. 2 (2001): 372, https://doi.org/10.2307/1556193.
[51] Slights, 357.
[52] Stephen Greenblatt, *Learning to Curse: Essays in Early Modern Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 25–26.

I want to think more about how Caliban and Miranda are racializing each other and how attempted sexual violence heightens these mutual racializations. Miranda demonstrates behavior that is appropriate for a paradigmatic white European woman when she discusses Caliban: "'Tis a villain, sir, / I do not love to look on" (1.2.309-310). I attribute much of Miranda's antipathy upon seeing Caliban as coming from looking upon someone who has attempted to rape her. In expressing this revulsion though, Miranda is behaving in a way that Desdemona should have with Othello by feeling the natural inclination to look away from men that are different from her (i.e. darker). This line then sets up Miranda as the ideal white European woman, one who only looks upon men who are appropriate for her (such as Ferdinand).

What the attempted rape scene reveals, though, is that even an ideally behaving white European woman is always under the threat of becoming a vehicle for miscegenation. Miranda is the means through which Caliban would people the isle with copies of himself. This point is significant. What defines both Miranda's whiteness and her femininity is behaving appropriately in the face of the threat of rape, a condition of constant vulnerability for her on the isle with Caliban. To be a white European woman is to feel threatened by men of color from outside of Europe. Desdemona and Claribel, by not visibly feeling this threat, are darkened, while Miranda, behaving aptly in response to this danger, is further exemplified as the ideal white, European woman. I note here that the oppressive constructs of the virtuous, sexually chaste white woman and the sexually voracious man of color are mutually constructive of each other. The interaction between Miranda and Caliban heighten and reinforce stereotypical narratives based on their characters' races and genders.

The exchange that follows Miranda's excoriation of Caliban can then serve as a justification for Miranda's fear of him:

> I pitied thee,
> Took pains to make thee speak, taught thee each hour
> One thing or other: when thou didst not, savage,
> Know thine own meaning, but wouldst gabble like
> A thing most brutish, I endow'd thy purposes
> With words that made them known. But thy vile race,
> Though thou didst learn, had that in't which good natures
> Could not abide to be with; therefore wast thou
> Deservedly confined into this rock,
> Who hadst deserved more than a prison. (1.2.352-361).

While a cursory read of the passage would indicate that Miranda argues why she had to distance herself from Caliban and consider him a race other from her own, a closer examination of the passage indicates that Miranda has already presupposed a distance between herself and Caliban. The word "pity" is the closest English translation to the Greek "ἔλεος," one of the key emotions a tragedy is meant to inspire in its audience according to Aristotle's *Poetics*.[53] I turn to Aristotle's more technical definition of eleos because *the Tempest* is a dramatic work (though admittedly not wholly tragedy) and because of the resonance pity would have had with Aristotelian dramatic theory during the early modern period. For Aristotle, pity requires distance to function, and Aristotle's description of pity in *Rhetoric* underscores this: "The people we pity are: those whom we know, if only they are not very closely related to us -- in that case we feel about them as if we were in danger ourselves."[54] Being too close to another person

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[53] Aristotle, *Aristotle's Poetics: The James Hutton Translation: Ancient Contexts, Interpretations*, ed. James Hutton, Michelle Zerba, and David Gorman, First edition. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2018), 1449b.
[54] Aristotle, *The Works of Aristotle Translated into English under the Editorship of W. D. Ross.*, vol. 11. Rhetorica; De rhetorica ad Alexandrum; De poetica (Oxford: Clarendon, 1908), 1386a.

means risking that one bypasses pity entirely to feeling another's suffering. Pity then requires one to not be "too closely connected." The word used for "closely connected" in this case is "ἐγγὺς," which translates to "near." If pity then requires distance, Miranda must see herself as distant from Caliban.

Miranda then goes on to discuss how she taught Caliban to speak. "Taught thee each hour / One thing or other" indicates that there was much for Miranda to teach Caliban, establishing a power dynamic in which Miranda possesses knowledge that Caliban does not. This articulation of a knowledge differential is also a process of racialization in the early modern period. For example, the historian Michael Adas notes how early modern Europeans held "low regard for African technological abilities," were unimpressed with their material culture, and thus began writing disparaging travel narratives about African savagery.[55] Miranda echoes these sentiments when discussing Caliban's language. She asserts that she taught Caliban how to make his meaning known and calls him a "savage" for initially being unable to do so. His own language is referred to as "gabble" which makes him "a thing most brutish." A clear characteristic during the early modern period that separated humans from lower animals was the power to speak, and by denying Caliban any power of communication, he is made to be lower than Miranda, Prospero, and other white Europeans. He is "brutish," making the connection to non-human animals more concrete and "savage," again invoking non-human animals but also the Indigenous Americans of the New World, Muslims, Africans, Asians, etc. Those two terms alone

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[55] Michael Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men: Science, Technology, and Ideologies of Western Dominance* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 38–39.

turn Caliban into a stand-in for the non-European people that white Europeans were defining themselves against. Caliban's language, like the language of many other colonized peoples, is denied the status of language, possibly to justify a colonial project undergirded by consolidating racism.

Both Jenny Mann and Ian Smith discuss the anxieties of the English in valorizing their language and mitigating its "barbarous" origins. Mann discusses how much of this work was anglicizing classical rhetorical tropes, borrowing the prestige of the classical languages and demonstrating a linguistic genealogy: "sixteenth-century [English] writers increasingly came to believe that England needed an equally distinguished vernacular language to serve its burgeoning national community."[56] Mann also shows that these efforts to make classical rhetorical devices "speak English" were not in any way simple or easy and that the difficulties and impossibilities of this task resulted in stories and figures (such as outlaws) that toed the boundaries of both political and linguistic rule. Smith discusses the other half of this linguistic project.[57] Because comparing English to Latin or Greek will always prove English the more barbarous tongue, English needed a more barbarous contrast to distinguish itself as civilized. Smith argues that this foil became the languages of Africa: "The African's language is radically different, a foreign babble that is grating to the ear and devoid of reason in a cultural scenario where aural aesthetics institutes its laws of euphony as the paradigm of the harmonious insular society."[58] Indeed,

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[56] Jenny C Mann, *Outlaw Rhetoric: Figuring Vernacular Eloquence in Shakespeare's England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012), 2.
[57] Mann, 25.
[58] Ian Smith, *Race and Rhetoric in the Renaissance: Barbarian Errors* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 13.

Miranda, by calling Caliban's language "gabble" is in turn elevating her own language and further reifying a hierarchy that is affirmed by these perceived linguistic differences.

Miranda ends by exclaiming that no amount of learning could alter the natures of Caliban's "vile race." "Vile race" indicates that Miranda is not just talking about Caliban specifically – she is abstracting from Caliban onto all people who resemble him, even though she has not met anyone else like Caliban. And, she is marking this race of people as "base" and "deserving to be regarded with abhorrence and disgust."[59] This articulation then is the closest thing in the play we get to the idea that belonging to a certain race justifies prejudicial conduct. While race could potentially reference people who belong to a certain family or ethnic group, these definitions don't make sense in the context of *the Tempest*. Caliban's only family is Sycorax, who is dead, and as argued, Caliban's ethnic group is uncertain. What makes him so dangerous is that his ethnic group is actually untraceable. All we know of Sycorax and Caliban is that they are not considered white European. So, who consists of the "vile race" Miranda is referring to? If we proceed solely by what we know from the play, then it could refer as broadly to anyone who is not European or as narrowly as people from Algiers.

Peter Hulme argues that Caliban is actually unlocatable because he is like the island of *the Tempest*, a figure that is located between Mediterranean and Atlantic discourses circulating in England during the time. Hulme argues that "the island is the meeting the place of the play's topographical dualism, Mediterranean and Atlantic,

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[59] "vile, adj., adv., and n.". OED Online. December 2019. Oxford University Press. https://oed.com/view/Entry/223381?rskey=h9ngRe&result=1&isAdvanced=false (accessed February 21, 2020).

ground of mutually incompatible reference systems whose co-presence serves to frustrate any attempt to locate the island on a map. Caliban is similarly the ground of these two discourses."[60] Hulme goes on to note how Caliban is distinctly Mediterranean because he was birthed by Sycorax, but that he is also a New World figure because of his name's connection to "cannibal." While the island, however, becomes unlocatable, Caliban becomes "overburdened" with meaning.[61] He is the racialized non-European in both Mediterranean and Atlantic contexts, he is both cannibal and slave, the contrasting foil from which an idea of European whiteness can be rhetorically established. This bundle of meanings connects him to North Africans, Sub-Saharan Africans, African slaves, Indigenous Americans, and even Indians from Asia. While Hulme goes to argue that such a person, an amalgamation of so many different races, "can exist only discourse," I argue that this multiracial and racially ambiguous figure is precisely what white Europeans fear most.[62]

Caliban's racial "unlocatability" (given the play's reliance on geographic terms to create racial differences) is what makes him, like Sycorax, so threatening to white Europeans, especially the white European women he could impregnate. Race in *the Tempest* relies upon the ability to place people firmly in an imagined geography (e.g. in "Europe" or "Africa"), and female sexuality has the dangerous potential to muddy the clear demarcation of those differences. For that reason, securing female sexuality is securing those racial differences. What European contact with other continents has

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[60] Peter Hulme, *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492-1797* (London: Methuen, 1986), 108.
[61] Hulme, 108.
[62] Hulme, 108.

demonstrated is that the racially ambiguous and overburdened person no longer exists just within discourse, but is part (and arguably has always been part of) a lived reality. White Europeans encountered this kind of multiraciality not just through multiracial bodies but also through multiracial body politics. What the colonial English in Virginia arguably feared most was the existence of a "multiethnic maroon state" consisting of the Tuscarora Empire, African Americans, and white English.[63] Given Caliban's (and Shakespeare's) linkages to the Virginian colony, Caliban arguably represents both the multiracial person but also the multiracial state. The fears of one are linked to the fears of the other, and an island of Calibans would likely resemble this "maroon state," always threatening the colony of Virginia at its periphery. This reading is in line with Kim Hall's analysis of Caliban as embodiment of both the "miscegenative threat" against white aristocracy and the "border space" that contests a seamless narrative of imperial vision.[64] I agree with Hall that Caliban's multiraciality makes him the prime representative of border spaces in the play, spaces that frustrate and contradict narratives of easy imperial conquest, which I will discuss further in Chapter 3. These border spaces give rise to threats against established colonial rule, an anxiety exemplified by the miscegenative threat against white supremacy and patriarchy. Border spaces open up the possibilities of maroon states in direct rebellion to the established power of white, male aristocracy and empire.

Caliban's multiraciality and his racial unlocatability make him a lightning rod

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[63] Linebaugh and Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic*, 138–39.
[64] Kim F. Hall, *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), 151–54.

for many different colonized groups to see him as the proto-insurgent against European colonization. But, it also reveals that at least in *the Tempest*, the white Europeans do not really have a rigid and detailed system of race like we have today. Nonetheless, the racism still seems to be there. Caliban's character is being projected onto a whole swath of people without clear referent. And, they are being portrayed as beyond the saving graces of education because of a vile inner nature. Miranda remarks that the only possible course of action given these "facts" is that Caliban (and his vile race, which has so many potential referents) should be confined and imprisoned, a "solution" that is eerily prescient of many atrocities committed in the centuries after, especially current-day racial segregation through zoning laws and the U.S.-American carceral prison state. And, in casting Caliban and his race as one that deserves to be locked up, *The Tempest* is also portraying Miranda's and Prospero's race not only as the one that deserves to be free but also the one that makes the decisions to lock certain races up. Whiteness and white supremacy are being constructed simultaneously.

While Miranda's lines are perhaps the most explicit articulation of racism in the play, I want to dwell a bit more on the implications that Miranda, the play's paragon of white European femininity, utters them. Miranda is actually given voice in a way that lends her authority. She is portrayed as a capable teacher of the English language. Given Patricia Parker's previous work that demonstrated the link between female language and female promiscuity, the fact that Miranda can retain both her language and her chastity is significant. Patricia Parker has noted the link between "female speech" and "unbridled sexuality" extensively. The open use of one orifice

implied an open use of the other.[65] Consequently, though words were gendered female and actions male, the proper *users* of words (especially in the public) were frequently gendered male. Indeed, it is true that Miranda's ability is certainly less celebrated than that of Prospero, and as Kim Hall points out, she is aligned with the more feminized and thus less esteemed oral functions of language.[66] Nonetheless, for Miranda to be able to retain both language and chastity but also to redress publicly her sexual assault (although she does it somewhat obliquely by referencing Caliban's immutable incorrigibility instead), is significant given the ideas circulating around female speech in the early modern period.

Caliban's response to Miranda demonstrates how the very thing that gives Miranda agency is the thing that Caliban denounces as a vehicle of oppression: "You taught me language, and my profit on't / Is, I know how to curse. The red plague rid you / For learning me your language!" (1.2.362-364). Syntactically, Caliban is always the object when it comes to acquiring language. In the first line, this is not noteworthy as it is a common construction: "You taught me language". The last line, though, has a more unfamiliar construction to 21st-century ears: "For learning me your language". Normally, we would expect the person doing the learning to be the subject of the verb. The OED confirms that this is a fairly commonplace construction during the early modern period, so this construction on its own does not seem too noteworthy.[67] But, Caliban is objectified twice in relation to language. It implies that the benevolent

[65] Patricia A. Parker, *Literary Fat Ladies: Rhetoric, Gender, Property*, 26–27.
[66] Hall, *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England*, 145.
[67] "learn, v.". OED Online. December 2018. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/106716?redirectedFrom=learn (accessed February 14, 2019).

picture Miranda painted, one in which she teaches an ignorant Caliban to speak, is not wholly accurate. Language, then, has become a way in which Caliban is made object, likely oppressed, even though Miranda's control over language lends her authority normally not given to women.

What does it mean for *the Tempest*, then, that one of its most important feminist moments is also one of its most racist? And how do we disentangle the ways in which the play has bound up racism and sexual assault? The play seems to offer an oblique answer to this. After Caliban remarks on how language has only taught him to curse and curses Miranda, Prospero chimes in: "Hag-seed, hence! / Fetch us in fuel; and be quick, thou'rt best, / To answer other business" (1.2.362-364). Rather than giving Miranda and Caliban more time to speak, Prospero interrupts by commanding Caliban to fetch firewood and to respond quickly to any other tasks. It is almost as if the attempted sexual assault and the exchange between Caliban and Miranda justifies Caliban's slavery, which means the "logical" response would be to treat Caliban like a slave. It provides an opportunity for Prospero, the white patriarch, to silence both Miranda and Caliban, taking control of the discourse of the play. Indeed, the vexed relationship between female sexuality and race in the previous moment benefits one party the most: Prospero. Caliban's representation as a threat to Miranda justifies both Prospero's enslavement of Caliban as well as his rigid control (some would say extreme helicopter parenting) of Miranda – he not only orchestrates her marriage but manipulates her into falling in love with Ferdinand (however genuine that love may be). This marriage then reestablishes his authority in Naples. Indeed, this is in line with much previous criticism that has identified Prospero as the author, the stand-in

for Shakespeare, and the representation of political, social, or even divine authority. Peter Hulme notes that much criticism of *the Tempest* identifies Prospero as "the authorial consciousness behind the work" as well as "a condensation of the three terms of God, Shakespeare, and Prospero."[68] If Prospero can be read as the architect of the play, could he then also be the architect of the intertwining of marginalizations, which brings Miranda and Caliban under control by pitting them against each other? How much is Prospero aware of?

Conclusion

When Prospero acknowledges Caliban at the end of the play, the construction is curious: "This thing of darkness I / Acknowledge mine" (5.1.275-276). "Thing," of course, dehumanizes Caliban, but is a less specific referent than Caliban by name. "Thing of darkness" opens up the possibility that what Prospero is acknowledging extends beyond Caliban's person – it can encompass his overburdened meanings but also a nascent racial formation itself. Prospero doesn't stop at just acknowledging this thing of darkness. He acknowledges it as his own. Again, the claim of ownership over Caliban marks him as property and a slave, but if "thing" can have a more capacious meaning, Prospero's acknowledgment could indicate self-awareness that he is implicated in his oppression of Caliban. He has created and owned not just Caliban but the racial and sexual meanings that have impressed and inscripted themselves upon Caliban's character.

It would be giving Prospero too much credit to say that he himself orchestrated

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[68] Hulme, *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492-1797*, 105.

the racial and sexual dynamics of the play entirely by intertwining female sexuality and race to his benefit. As evidenced with Claribel and Sycorax, these gendered and racial dynamics are already present in scenes where Prospero does not appear and in scenes that occur before the timeline of the play. But, the play does show that white European men stand to benefit the most from this vexed relationship between female sexuality and race – controlling the sexuality of women by pitting them against men of color is a tactic that may feel familiar to us today, so it's worthwhile to note its appearance in a text as influential and as early as *The Tempest*. Moreover, the play not only shows this dynamic happening but shows who stands to benefit when the construction of race is so intricately tied to the control of female sexuality. Moreover, it also shows who stands to lose the most if this construction unravels: white European men.

CHAPTER 2

Chastity: Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*

Introduction

While my reading of *the Tempest* has demonstrated the ways in which race is co-constituted with gender and female sexuality, it is perhaps one of the most obvious texts to turn to when discussing race in early modern literary studies. As I mentioned earlier, it is a "race text," one that has garnered much attention from literary critics who study race in the early modern period and out of it. Using my analysis of *The Tempest* as a point of embarkation that has established that these co-constitutions are active in early modern England, I now turn to texts in which race has not been as central of a concern thus far. I start with the work of Edmund Spenser. While much has been written on race regarding Spenser's views on Ireland, there has been less attention to how race manifests in Spenser's poetry. Part of the reason may be that Spenser's work does not contain charismatic characters of color like Caliban in *The Tempest*, the title character in *Othello*, and the dark lady of *The Sonnets*. But, as I argued both in my introduction and in my first chapter, race doesn't exist only when characters of color are on stage. Much of my chapter on *The Tempest* was about the development of whiteness as a race and the consolidation of white supremacy as a racial hierarchy. Given Spenser's investment in the buttressing of English nationhood and his imperial imagination in his poetry, I suspect that race must not just be extant in Spenser's poetry but is central to its concerns.

To gesture towards this larger claim, I turn specifically to Books III, IV, and V (sometimes known as the Britomart saga) of *The Faerie Queene*. I argue that race is a

central concern of the Britomart saga because chastity is an artificial concept, a fiction, that reinforces not heteropatriarchy but also white supremacy. This reinforcement happens mainly, again, through the regulation of female sexuality, which as I noted in my previous chapter, is tied to anxieties not just about patrilineage but also racial purity. Chastity, commonly understood, is a virtue that is concerned with the proper relationship between men and women, the production of biological offspring, and the preservation of social order within family structures. My chapter on *The Tempest* worked through some of the anxieties about female sexuality's potential to disrupt all of the items listed above.

Chaste Thinking, Queer Thinking

To say that chastity is a value suggests that it is something static, something that one holds rather than something that shapes interpretation. For this reason, I rely on Stephanie Jed's work on chastity as a way of thinking:

> I intend the expression "chaste thinking" as a figure of thought constituted at the join of two conflicting lexical families of terms, one representing the impulse to touch and the other, the impulse to be cut off from contact. These lexical families include, on the one hand, words related to touching or the absence of touching—tangible, contaminate, contact, integrity, intact, etc., and, on the other hand, words related to cutting—chastity, castigate, caste, and Latin carere ("to be cut off from, to lack").[1]

Chastity is concerned both with touching, contact, contamination, and purity and also incorporates the mechanisms for enforcing regulations about proper and improper (sexual) touching or regulations to prevent (sexual) contamination. In other words,

[1] Stephanie H Jed, *Chaste Thinking: The Rape of Lucretia and the Birth of Humanism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 8.

chastity as a concept presupposes the need for its own enforcement since it acknowledges both the desire to touch and the need to not touch. Andrew Campana notes another dimension of chastity that is important to consider: "Chastity was not only a battle for the autonomy of the will but also, with respect to women, a social phenomenon of substantial force."[2] Buttressed by the work of Theodora Jankowski and Philipa Berry, he notes that chastity, for a woman, did not just regulate a woman's sexuality but gave her the prerogative to resist masculine will – it gave a rationale for women to refuse men's sexual desire. It is up for debate how much *The Faerie Queene* is a feminist text and how much Spenser provides space for the women in his poetry to use the "substantial force" of chastity to their benefit, especially considering in Spenser's text, "female sexuality remains intertwined with images of danger, actual or potential."[3] But, in refusing men, can women choose instead to dally with other women? I argue likely no, at least in *The Faerie Queene*. Chastity is constructed in a way that prioritizes sex that results in a legitimate, racially pure patrilineage. Women retain the right to refuse any sex that would endanger this goal, but little else, and as I will show later, chastity then must condemn female homoerotic desire. Finally, to my point about the relationship between chastity and whiteness, I argue that in this text chastity is mechanism for propagating whiteness. While I will show more robustly how chastity is undergirded by white supremacy, I will start by pointing out the relationship between chaste and caste. Jed already argues for the link between the two

[2] Joseph Campana, *The Pain of Reformation: Spenser, Vulnerability, and the Ethics of Masculinity* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012), 185.
[3] Sheila T Cavanagh, *Wanton Eyes and Chaste Desires: Female Sexuality in The Faerie Queene* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 1.

terms, and it is commonly known that a regulation of sexual behavior was crucial to the maintenance of the *casta* system for managing racial boundaries in Spain's colonial empire in the 1500s and 1600s. Chastity is then etymologically tied to race as well as sex.

Unlike *The Tempest* which foregrounded heterosexual relationships and sex, *The Faerie Queene* provides an opportunity to consider how female homoerotic desire plays into the co-constitution of race, gender, and sexuality. Looking at homoerotic desire (and queerness more broadly) in Spenser's work is crucial because of "the ethical project of [Spenser's] poem is tied to its political project."[4] Queer studies has provided tools for thinking about how state ideologies are reflected in intimate relationships.[5] I focus on female homoerotic desire for much of the chapter for three reasons. First, in early modern literary scholarship, female homoeroticism, like race, has suffered similar dismissals by scholars. Valerie Traub recounts this history of scholarship in her recent work on early modern English lesbianism. She remarks that "to many responsible, even groundbreaking scholars, female homoeroticism prior to the Enlightenment has seemed silent and invisible. Impossible."[6] Consequently, much of early modern queer scholarship focused primarily on male-male desire. Traub's work actually argues that the 16th and 17th centuries produced a proliferation of representations of female homoerotic desire: "Beginning in the mid-sixteenth century,

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[4] Jonathan Goldberg, *The Seeds of Things: Theorizing Sexuality and Materiality in Renaissance Representations* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2009), 71.
[5] One notable scholar who does this kind of work is Lauren Berlant, who explored the relationship between family, sex, and citizenship in Lauren Gail Berlant, *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City: Essays on Sex and Citizenship* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997).
[6] Valerie Traub, "The Renaissance of Lesbianism in Early Modern England," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 7, no. 2 (2001): 247.

widespread social, intellectual, and economic changes fostered the production and dissemination of a variety of discourses alluding to the physical and emotional investments of women in one another."[7] Many of these representations of female homoerotic desire were hiding in plain sight, such as in the passionate descriptions of friendship between women. Traub's work gathers all these previously unnoticed representations together, similarly to what Kim Hall does in much of her work on blackness in early modern England. Given the proliferation, or renaissance, of these representations, Traub opens the question about what female homoerotic desire means in the early modern period: "Within the context of a pervasive belief in women's erotic intemperance—the insatiable lust that was woman's inheritance from Eve—these varied cultural developments generated an extensive array of detail about what it means for women to love passionately, and have sex with, other women."[8]

Second, female homoerotic desire has been secondary interest in much of queer studies as well. Traub, in a later work on the term "lesbian," notes that in "the universalizing category of queer… includes women but rarely attends to their specificity" and that "lesbianism… has all but disappeared in the stories that queer theory tells about itself."[9] Traub notes that there exists a countercurrent to queer theory rising from the work of feminist queer theorists, especially lesbians of color such as Audre Lorde and Gloria Anzaldúa, whose work I use extensively in my next chapter. Traub bring these points up not to argue for essentializing a lesbian identity but that

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[7] Traub, 247.
[8] Traub, 247.
[9] Valerie Traub, *Thinking Sex with the Early Moderns* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 267–68.

lesbianism is poised to ask questions to queer studies about the relationship between history and theory since it has not been as overdetermined or overrepresented as its gay male counterpart. To think about sex and sexuality in the early modern period, Traub decides to "untether sex from identity as the main historical question."[10] Traub goes on to say that "setting aside the issue of identity has enabled me to set aside the issue of sexual nomenclatures."[11] In other words, she can sidestep in some ways the debates on which term is most appropriate for a given phenomenon and critiques of anachronism for using certain terms for certain time periods. For Traub, letting go of sexual identity allows her better to examine early modern sex acts and desires. I am sympathetic to much of Traub's intellectual motivations here. Though my project is very identitarian in some ways, I am less interested in developing a series of essentialized racial identities for the early modern period rather than seeing how race works and moves through a text. To track how race moves through a text, I also need to let go of rigid racial categories as the firm conviction that a certain character belongs to a certain racial category occludes the ways in which race is mutable, malleable, and in flux. Consequently, my focus on female homoerotic desire is indebted to Traub's efforts to push queer studies to think more critically about sex between women in historical periods.

Considering these points, it is worth clarifying what I mean by using certain terms related to sex and sexuality in this chapter. In following Traub's desire for as much specificity to sex acts and desires as possible, I will shy away from terms like

[10] Traub, 12.
[11] Traub, 12.

"queer sex" because it is still an open question as to what an early modern conception of "queer" was *and* what early moderns thought "sex" was. As Will Stockton and James M. Bromley note that sex was not a term used to denote sex acts in the early modern period in their efforts to determine "what counts as sex in the early modern past."[12] Instead, I will try to be as specific with sex acts and desire as possible (e.g. referring to something as "female homoerotic desire" rather than "queer desire"). When I specifically use queer, I refer to what Siobhan B. Somerville notes as the second meaning of queer in her study on the word. While the first meaning of queer is an umbrella term that encompasses a range of "not-straight" sexual identities, the second meaning of queer is a verb rather than an adjective:

> "To queer" becomes a way to denaturalize categories such as "lesbian" and "gay" (not to mention "straight" and "heterosexual"), revealing them as socially and historically constructed identities that have often worked to establish and police the line between the "normal" and the "abnormal."[13]

When I say a figure or character is coded or marked as "queer" in this chapter, I am pointing to the social construction of a line between normal and abnormal, when a sexual act, desire, or behavior is being represented by the text as out of line. Consequently, I use queer when I argue that the text is making a normative statement rather than a descriptor to index something not-straight. Much of this chapter aims to the kind of thinking that Masha Raskolnikov identifies as a crucial question for queer medieval studies: "At times, writing about sexualities in Chaucer calls for thinking

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[12] James M. Bromley and Will Stockton, "Introduction: Figuring Early Modern Sex," in *Sex Before Sex: Figuring the Act in Early Modern England*, ed. James M. Bromley and Will Stockton (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 11.
[13] Siobhan B. Somerville, "Queer," in *Keywords for American Cultural Studies*, ed. Bruce Burgett and Glenn Hendler, 2nd ed. (New York: New York University Press, 2014), 203.

through the meaning of the queer before homosexuality (or heterosexuality, for that matter) had an identity or a name."[14] One of my overarching concerns in this chapter is to trace how female homoerotic desire is "made" queer (i.e. presented a working against sexual norms) and racialized in *The Faerie Queene*.

Third and finally, female homoerotic desire poses an interesting problem that seemingly goes against the ways I discussed how patriarchy and white supremacy cooperated to regulate female sexuality. Much of that regulation came out of an anxiety about female sexuality as a promiscuous force that threatened both patrilineage and racial purity. Female desire could blur and even upend the cohering racial categories in *The Tempest*. But, female homoerotic desire has no possibility for producing miscegenated offspring. In this way, it is not a threat to racial boundaries because it cannot produce children who through their very existence interrogate racial categories and gesture towards their arbitrariness. Nonetheless, female homoerotic desire has no interest in the production or maintenance of a pure, white lineage. How, then, would an intertwined structure of white supremacy and patriarchy in the early modern period treat female homoerotic desire? My answer to this question has to do with the efforts to consolidate an English identity and language throughout this period. English itself is a construction in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Paula Blank notes that "English itself was divided by internal contests of the same kind, that the very meaning of 'English' was subject to contemporary debate."[15] For Blank, she

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[14] Masha Raskolnikov, "Sexualities," in *A New Companion to Chaucer*, ed. Peter Brown, 1st ed. (Wiley, 2019), 410.
[15] Paula Blank, *Broken English: Dialects and the Politics of Language in Renaissance Writings* (London: Routledge, 1996), 1.

notes the different dialects, or versions, of the English language that existed in the sixteenth and seventeenth century and how the idea that the idea of a singular English language was a fiction. Catherine Nicholson also notes how the English language during the early modern period was oscillating between different connotations of provinciality and cosmopolitanism in "widespread debates about England's place in the world— historically marginal, newly insular, increasingly mobile, and uncertainly bounded."[16] Mary Floyd-Wilson also comments on how the English were grappling with a racial inferiority complex at the time: "to be white and British in the early modern period was not a badge of superiority but cast one instead on the margins as uncivil, slow-witted, and more bodily determined than those people living in more temperate zones."[17] This idea came from a broader theory of geohumoralism in which the climate affected one's humors, which in turn affected one's disposition. Floyd-Wilson then goes on to discuss how it was to the English people's benefit to create a new conception of race (and thus a new racial hierarchy) that cast themselves in a more favorable light. This rehabilitation of the English "race" is arguably what we see in Spenser's valorization of the Britons. Female homoerotic desire then flies in the face of this valorization project because Spenser's strategy for valorizing Britons is to encourage the reproduction of that race, and female homoerotic desire refuses to partake in biological reproduction. Consequently, female homoerotic desire is then at odds with Spenser's racial project in *The Faerie Queene*.

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[16] Catherine Nicholson, *Uncommon Tongues: Eloquence and Eccentricity in the English Renaissance* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 9.
[17] Mary Floyd-Wilson, *English Ethnicity and Race in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 5.

To help think through the seemingly antagonistic relationship between female homoerotic desire and the revision of the English race, I turn to Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, mainly through the character of Britomart. Joseph Campana remarks that despite Britomart's strong association with dynastic heterosexual reproduction, "[her] quest takes her through a landscape of complex and non-normative sexualities."[18] Furthermore, given publication dates, Spenser likely wrote his highly controversial *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, a philosophical dialogue serving as a justification for Irish genocide after Book III of *The Faerie Queene* but around the time he was writing Books IV and V. Consequently, much of what I will point out in Book III will be nascent, more protean views of race that cohere more strongly when looking at *A View* and Books IV and V. Starting with Book III, I will look at Britomart's genealogy, as a particularly strong example of how chastity enforces both patrilineage and white supremacy, and then move to the episode with Malecasta, which begins to articulate a racialization of both female homoerotic desire and subversion of traditional sexual gender roles. Turning next to *A View,* I will argue that the articulations of race in Book III are fomented into a virulent racial ideology. The Amoret episode in Book IV and the Radigund episode in Book V provide examples on how this more virulent racial ideology is reflected in *the Faerie Queene* and how chastity enforces this ideology by stigmatizing female homoerotic desire.

Britomart's Genealogy

[18] Joseph Campana, *The Pain of Reformation: Spenser, Vulnerability, and the Ethics of Masculinity* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012), 182.

What appears most strongly in Book III is an alignment of values. Heteronormative chastity is allied with a Briton nativism. To be chaste is to expunge both what is queer *and* what is foreign. This construction of chastity is perhaps most explicit in the genealogy in Canto iii. The genealogy itself is already a heteronormative construction of time, in which each generation guarantees the next one through a proper, heterosexual marriage and the birth of legitimate children. This genealogy, as much as it is presented as Merlin's prophecy, is also one that depends on Britomart's good sexual behavior:

> It was not, Britomart, thy wandring eye,
> Glauncing vnwares in charmed looking glas,
> But the streight course of heauenly destiny,
> Led with eternall prouidence, that has
> Guided thy glaunce, to bring his will to pas:
> Ne is thy fate, ne is thy fortune ill
> To loue the prowest knight, that euer was.
> Therefore submit thy wayes vnto his will,
> And do by all dew meanes thy destiny fulfill. (3.3.24)[19]

Britomart is already described by Merlin as suspect in terms of her sexuality with her "wandring eye," and it is only after the line break that Merlin qualifies that description as applying to when she looked in the looking glass that shows her desires. By the fifth line, the wandering eye is grammatically and semantically contained -- the eye's wandering becomes irrelevant because the "streight course of heauenly destiny" has guided Britomart's glance to view Arthegall in the mirror. This long and complex sentence, though, demonstrates the anxiety behind Britomart's "wandring eye," which I read as representative of female desire in a female body (the eye being synecdoche

[19] Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. A.C. Hamilton et al., 2nd ed. (Harlow: Longman, 2007). All citations from the text are taken from this edition.

for the body). The mere mentioning of "the wandring eye" opens a field of transgressive potential that must be neutralized, and it takes four lines and the invocation of "eternall prouidence" to neutralize it. This desire is also held within a complex syntactical construction, one that perhaps mirrors the complex patriarchal constructions that imprison and constrain women's bodies on a more societal level. Grammar then also becomes an instrument of patriarchy. The eye (and the female body it stands in for) must be negated, subordinated, and buried to be neutralized.

Nonetheless, all of this neutralization of female sexuality (embodied desire) is not wholly effective. While one can read the last four lines of the stanza as in line with Protestant affirmations of free will, I also read anxiety about Britomart's potentially transgressive sexuality. She must submit her "wayes vnto his will," and the imperative mood is a departure from the indicative. It is not a given that Britomart will submit, both to honor her free will but also because it is also not guaranteed that Britomart's will always overcome her desire. Furthermore, the "his will" indicates the different levels Britomart's desire threatens. "His" presumably refers to Arthegall, and it is the case that Britomart not submitting to Arthegall in proper, chaste marriage will of course threaten his position as husband, father, and man. But, the distance between "his" and its antecedent opens up many other readings. Britomart in submitting to Arthegall, for example, is also submitting to the Christian God. But, the ambiguity also means that "his" can stand in for man in the abstract: the heteropatriarchy that only maintains order through the control of female sexuality. Indeed, the genealogy that follows falls apart entirely if wives stray or behave sexually promiscuously. The responsibility to maintain the genealogy then, curiously, falls more on women. This is

Britomart's genealogy, not Arthegall's. Given that this genealogy depends on the proper control over sexual desire (i.e. chaste behavior), the burden of chastity seems to fall more on women then men.

So what is the purpose of controlling female sexualit. asking women to submit to men and behave chastely in this genealogy? The answer appears in the stanza before. Britomart's offspring "shall vpreare, and mightly defend / Against their forren foe, that commes from farre, / Till vniuersall peace compounded all ciuill iarre" (3.3.23). The genealogy is setting up a distinction between those who belong and those who do not, which hearkens back to Roderick Ferguson's formulation of race in the previous chapter. Furthermore, foreignness is constructed here as hostile and antithetical to peace. It is something to be eradicated, and a strict submission by women to the heteropatriarchal terms that allow dynasties to work will help extirpate foreignness. While Britomart's proper sexual behavior will not guarantee that the Britons will always remain in power, her doing her part will ultimately allow for Britons to take back the rule of England through the Tudor dynasty.

According to Elizabeth Spiller, genealogy was a model for understanding race in the early modern period, and Spenser's explicit inclusion of the genealogy in *the Faerie Queene* suggests that the poem's concerns with dynasty are also racialized. Elizabeth Spiller describes "race" in the early modern period as a term that links together "genealogical theories of race as ancestry" with "new proto-racialist models of race as a feature of physical appearance."[20] Race then becomes a term that links

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[20] Elizabeth Spiller, *Reading and the History of Race in the Renaissance* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 51.

physical appearance, ancestry, and power. One's ancestry is something that is visible through one's face and one's body, while one's ancestry then says something about the face or the body. And, the combination of genealogical and physical markers then signals the way one should be treated — which institutions one can take part in or not. Spiller goes on to detail the different histories of the genealogical and proto-racialist models and to discuss the ways in which they mutually reinforce and contradict one another, but the point that I want to dwell on is that both ancestry and physical appearance were ways in which early moderns understood race. The obsession with maintaining the purity of a dynastic line, then, is laden with racial anxiety, or at the very least, an obsession with keeping out "foreign" influence. What I also want to emphasize here is that for early moderns, the body here is something to be read. One's physical appearance can, upon careful "reading," reveal key facts about one's ancestry. This idea that the characteristics of the body "reveal" one's race is one that also appears in Spenser's work, and I'll touch upon this more when discussing *A View*.

This vehement exclusion of foreignness certainly exists in the genealogy in Book III of *the Faerie Queene* and resonates familiarly with racial dynamics that exist against other groups in the early modern period. The Britons' main foes are the Saxons (with scant mention also of the Norwegians, the Normans, and the Danes). William Bolton argues that the Saxons are not only an unfortunate interlude in history but embodiments of anti-temperance.[21] The Saxons are not just the historical but also the allegorical enemy. They are what stand in the way of the divine prophecy for the

[21] William E. Bolton, "Anglo-Saxons in Faerie Land?: A Note on Some Unlikely Characters in Spenser's Britain Moniments," *Spenser Studies: A Renaissance Poetry Annual* 23, no. 1 (2008): 296.

Britons to reclaim rule over Britain. Nonetheless, it is worth noting then that foreignness is being constructed not just as something that prevents peace but something that is antithetical to divine will and hostile to virtue. An important point I will flag for now, though, is that Spenser's genealogy suggest that race does not just involve linkages between ancestry and physical appearance but also culture and behavior as well. Anti-temperance and hostility to virtue become markers of foreignness just like physical appearance or ancestry. These characterizations of foreignness will carry over, especially in Book IV and Book V, which were published around the time Spenser's conception of race crystallized more clearly as evidence in *A View,* which I will discuss later. In that text, cultural markers such as language become especially important in theorizing early modern race. Given my earlier claims in the introduction about race as the process through which accidental or contingent characteristic become essentialized, we can see ultimately that the genealogy is enacting this process of race. Though the Britons and the Saxons likely share much in common due to their common northern European origins, they are demarcated as separate groups with different characteristics. Furthermore, this boundary between Saxon and Briton is enforced through the imperative of the genealogy – the Briton legacy must be propagated, preserved, and kept pure. Chastity then becomes a mechanism to prevent (or at least discourage) foreignness from invading upon the pure Briton bloodline, which is also a fiction being conjured by the genealogy itself.

There is one wrinkle that Bolton points out about the characterization of the Saxons in *the Faerie Queene*. Why would Britomart right after the genealogy take inspiration from the story of Angela, a *Saxon* warrior woman? Bolton rightly points

out that the likening between Britomart and Angela (the reason the Saxons also call themselves Angles) complicates the character.[22] If Britomart indeed is the character tasked with the responsibility of kickstarting a genealogy that ultimately leads to Briton rule in Britain, it would make more sense if she were emulating a Briton woman or even Camilla, the woman warrior from *the Aeneid*. Bolton points out that Angela appears from a "feminine source" of history. The prophetic genealogy comes from Merlin (who is citing male chroniclers), but Angela is mentioned by Britomart's nurse, Glauce:

> Ah read, (quoth *Britomart*) how is she hight?
> Faire *Angela* (quoth she) men do her call,
> No whit lesse faire, then terrible in fight:
> She hath the leading of a Martiall
> And mighty people, dreaded more then all
> The other *Saxons*, which do for her sake
> And loue, themselues of her name Angles call.
> Therefore faire Infant her ensample make
> Vnto thy selfe, and equall courage to thee take. (3.3.52)

One could read this moment as one in which a feminine history leads to transgression. Glauce's history is outside of the patriarchal genealogy, and this history leads Britomart to cross-dress and behave like a man, which means unlike a woman. Not only does Britomart behave like Angela, but she also puts on her armor. Consequently, Britomart cross-dresses not just as a man but as a Saxon. She is transgressing twice. The text, while usually so quick to denounce moral failing, here seems curiously quiet in terms of judgment.

To also make sense of this seeming laxness, I return to Britomart's "wandring

[22] Bolton, 299.

eye." The adjective "wandring" could refer not just to what the eye is currently doing at the moment but what the eye is wont to do. Certain wanderings of the eye (like Britomart's eye glancing at the mirror and seeing Arthegall) are actually part of a divine plan that ultimately affirms and supports an anti-foreigner heteropatriarchy. These wanderings then are neutralized in terms of threat because they align with the interests of those in power. Given that most of Britomart's adventures as a knight errant eventually affirm a system of heteropatriarchy and white supremacy, this momentary foray into dressing as a manly Saxon knight are forgiven because they ultimately serve heteropatriarchal and Briton/white supremacist interests. Still, this co-opting of transgression (like with the wandering eye) does not negate Britomart's transgressive potential completely. The rhyme at the end of Canto iii between "hart" and "Britomart" reminds the reader that at this moment, it is an open question how Britomart can and will behave in relation to her desires, and the syntax that puts the subject after the verb in the last line, "but forth rode Britomart," emphasizes this potential as well. The first word of the clause, "but," is already a transgressive word because it indicates some kind of contrary or conflict to what comes before it. Furthermore, the verb usually determines syntactically what the subject is doing by following it. Here, however, the entire Canto, one that is about what Britomart is supposed to do, closes with her name. We expect a verb after, but at this moment, there is none to constrain any of Britomart's transgressive potential.

Britomart & Malecasta

The Malecasta episode is the first that intertwines racial difference with queer

behavior. According to Lauren Silberman, Spenser borrows the Malecasta episode from the Fiordespina episode in *Orlando Furioso*. Fiordespina falls in love with Bradamante, unaware that Bradamante is a female knight. Bradamante, recognizing Fiordespina's attraction, reveals her gender to Fiordespina.[23] Though "Fiordespina dismisses her feelings because she is unaware of the possibility of love between women," she despairs because she still feels desire.[24] After, Bradamante "seeks to turn her from her vain desire, / To no avail; she cannot quench the fire," and the Ariostan episode ends with queer desire dismissed and unfulfilled.[25] Some might hesitate to read the Malecasta episode as queer at all, especially considering that Spenser's reworking of the Fiordespina episode "suppresses the undercurrent of lesbianism."[26] Malecasta, at least, is unaware that she is behaving queerly. Regardless of how much one argues that the "undercurrent of lesbianism" is suppressed, it is difficult to deny that there is something queer. Two women, one desiring the other, are in a bed together, and as Valerie Traub notes, the shared bed would be read "as an important site of female homoerotic attraction" since continental epics used that trope.[27] Though Spenser's reworking may downplay the homoeroticism in Ariosto's text, the "undercurrent of lesbianism" is still there, and the resonances of the Malecasta episode with the Fiordespina episode lend a sense of the inevitable thwarting of queer desire to the former.

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[23] Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso: Part Two*, trans. Barbara Reynolds (New York: Penguin Books, 1971), 25.26-48.
[24] Lauren Silberman, *Transforming Desire: Erotic Knowledge in Books III and IV of the Faerie Queene* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 30.
[25] Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso: Part Two*, 25.38.
[26] Silberman, *Transforming Desire: Erotic Knowledge in Books III and IV of the Faerie Queene*, 30.
[27] Valerie Traub, *The Renaissance of Lesbianism in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 59.

Moreover, the argument that Spenser is shying away from overt lesbianism does not detract from the queerness of Malecasta's desire. What makes Malecasta's desire queer is not just that it is (unknowingly) misdirected but that it is also mistimed and inappropriately strong:

> Her fickle hart conceiued hasty fyre,
> Like sparkes of fire, that fall in sclender flex,
> That shortly brent into extreme desyre,
> And ransackt all her veines with passion entyre" (3.1.47).

"Hasty" implies that this desire occurred too soon, and the simile of a few sparks igniting an "extreme" fire indicates that this desire is too powerful to be controlled. The verb "ransackt" goes further by suggesting the violence of Malecasta's desire, as "ransack" carries connotations of looting and pillaging a city.[28] Malecasta's desire is invading and damaging her veins. In other words, Malecasta's desire is queer because it is too quick, too strong, and unknowingly misdirected. It is unclear which aspects of Malecasta's desire the narrator condemns when he remarks, "such loue is hate, and such desire is shame," but it is clear that Malecasta has committed some sort of kind of moral transgression through her queer desire because of its association with shame (3.1.50). As the narrative continues, Malecasta's transgressions are addressed accordingly. Her advances are foiled, and she experiences "suddein feare and ghastly drerihedd" after discovering herself in such a shocking predicament (3.1.62).

Surprisingly, Britomart, too, is implicated in Malecasta's queer behavior. In describing Britomart's interactions with Malecasta, the narrator mentions that "The

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[28] "ransack, v.". OED Online. September 2015. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/158086?rskey=x3d28Z&result=2&isAdvanced=false (accessed October 15, 2015).

bird, that knowes not the false fowlers call, / Into his hidden nett full easely doth fall" (3.1.54). The Longman edition glosses these lines as "an unwary bird is easily caught by a fowler."[29] A bird can fall into a hidden net unknowingly because it is unaware such things like nets exist or because it is not paying close enough attention. Here, we cannot be sure that Britomart is likened to the wholly innocent bird in the former situation; she could just as well be read as the bird that is guilty of negligence in the latter. Silberman also picks up on this moral indeterminacy at the end of the canto: "There is a sense of moral ambiguity in Britomart's involvement with Malecasta absent from the Ariostan source. Mistaking Malecasta's intentions and being herself mistaken results in Britomart's being wounded by Gardante."[30] Furthermore, Britomart's wound to the side, as indicated by the Longman edition, is conspicuously sexual, which is significant given the queerness of the scene.[31] Unlike what we would expect for a guiltless character, Britomart does not leave this episode unscathed and unstained. She, too, is castigated for some error on her part in upholding chastity in her actions with Malecasta.

Some critics, such as James Broaddus would argue against Silberman's reading that Britomart's wound indicates some sort of moral transgression. He argues that, "if any deficiency is expressed by the wound, it would be the 'deficiency' of innocence, that attendant upon her characterization generally as a virtuous but unsophisticated, even awkward, young woman experiencing the difficulties of a newly awakened

[29] Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. A.C. Hamilton et al., 2nd ed. (Harlow: Longman, 2007), 299n.54.
[30] Silberman, *Transforming Desire: Erotic Knowledge in Books III and IV of the Faerie Queene*, 33.
[31] Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, 300n.65.

appetite and attendant passions."[32] The wound is then perhaps a warning against the potential transgressions that stem from desire, such as those of Malecasta. A closer reading of Britomart's interactions with Malecasta, however, reveals that Britomart's "innocence" is contentious because of her cross-dressing. Kathryn Schwarz draws our attention to the following lines:

> For thy she would not in discourtesie wise,
> Scorne the faire offer of good will profest;
> For great rebuke it is, loue to despise,
> Or rudely sdeigne a gentle harts request;
> But with faire countenaunce, as beseemed best,
> Her entertayned; (3.1.55).

She writes, "Rather than a misunderstanding, this is a deliberate syllogism based in the transitive property of desire: Britomart wants a man, and therefore allows Malecasta to want her as a man."[33] Britomart is aware that Malecasta is flirting with her, as she recognizes rejecting Malecasta's advances would be despising love and disdaining "a gentle harts request." Britomart even flirts back: "But with faire countenanuce, as beseeemed best, / Her entertayned." It is unclear what form this flirting takes. "Countenaunce" can refer to facial expressions or behavior. Nonetheless, Britomart "entertayned" Malecasta's desire, even though she knows Malecasta is desiring a woman dressed like a man. By dressing as a man, Britomart has put both herself and Malecasta in a queer situation, and Britomart does little to extricate herself from that out of sympathy for Malecasta. The opening of the stanza also indicates that Britomart is doing something risky in entertaining Malecasta. Scorning "the fair offer of good

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[32] James W Broaddus, *Spenser's Allegory of Love: Social Vision in Books III, IV, and V of the Faerie Queene* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1995), 34.
[33] Kathryn Schwarz, *Tough Love: Amazon Encounters in the English Renaissance* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 166.

will profest" is described as a "discourtesie" but also a "wise" one. The safer option here would be to rebuff Malecasta's advances. Instead, Britomart "[Malecasta's] flit fancy fedd," fanning the flames of Malecasta's queer desire rather than quelling them (3.1.56).

Campana also suggests that Britomart's responses to Malecasta's seduction extend farther than mere damage control for crossdressing. He notes a disparity between Malecasta's actual behavior when sneaking into Britomart's bed and Britomart's reaction in 3.1.62-63: "But Britomart's reaction to Malecasta's advances seems disproportionately defensive. It is hard not to see the 'auenging blade,' the 'flaming sword' of the lady knight as an odd combination of arousal and aggression."[34] Malecasta does sneak into Britomart's room and does lay next to her. That is, however, all she does. Malecasta, "of euery finest fingers touch affrayd" makes sure not to touch Britomart (3.1.61). Malecasta does not make a noise, speak, or make advances. She only "inly sigh'd." (3.1.61). Hence, Campana finds Britomart's reaction suspect, indicative of some semblance of queer desire on her part. Fittingly, Britomart is wounded by Gardante, who represents erotic looking; we cannot be sure to what extent Britomart flirted with Malecasta, but we can be sure that she at the very least entertained Malecasta with a "faire countenaunce." Britomart is looked at, and she looks in return.

If both Malecasta and Britomart are implicated to some degree in flirting with lesbianism in this episode, the racial dynamics in the passage curiously do not acknowledge the implication of both parties. Both Malecasta and Britomart are

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[34] Campana, *The Pain of Reformation: Spenser, Vulnerability, and the Ethics of Masculinity*, 187.

referred to as “faire,” which Kim Hall has shown to be loaded with connotations of whiteness and proper female sexual behavior. In her analysis of William Basse's *Urania*, Hall notes how "faire" expands beyond "an aesthetic or physically descriptive term; it has moral, sexual, and ethical implications that apply specifically to women.[35] To be "faire" is to abide by expectations set for female sexual behavior -- to be pure, virgin, innocent. To be "dark" is to defy those expectations, as demonstrated in the previous chapter with both Claribel and Desdemona. This language of fair and dark also touches upon English anxieties with regard to foreign difference. Hall again brings up how "darkness" and words like it become "focal points for concerns over the economic and literary enrichment of empire as well as over fears of the colonial/imperial encounters with the twin otherness of culture and gender.”[36] In other words, "darkness" represents the anxiety of encounter for the English -- indeed, encounters with non-Europeans brings about economic and linguistic enrichment, but with a price. Enriching the domestic with the foreign necessarily means the foreign will influence and shape the domestic into something it wasn't before contact with the foreign. For this reason, Hall argues that "whiteness" starts "function[ing] as a desire for a stable European linguistic order."[37] Consequently, whiteness represents the maintenance of a certain order. In line with Hall, I argue that the maintenance of an order is a maintenance of hierarchy since the domestic English (even with all its instabilities) is preferable to the foreign. Admittedly, the English somehow want to

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[35] Kim F. Hall, *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), 70.
[36] Hall, 71.
[37] Hall, 71.

take the riches of the foreign, but they don't want to do it in a way that makes England subject to foreign influences. "Fair" consequently describes both female sexual purity but also the maintenance of an English purity with the exclusion of foreign outsiders, intertwining the maintenance of both gendered and racial orders.

Fittingly, at the end of the episode, Britomart is clothed in a “snow-white smocke,” indicative of purity. Britomart’s white clothing matches her fair face and body. In contrast, Malecasta as described as “vnder the blacke vele of Night, / Her with a scarlott mantle couered, / That was with gold and Ermines faire enueloped” (3.1.59). As Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass have noted, clothing is not merely a set of objects that is the surface of a person that has no relationship to their inner character or depth: “It was investiture, the putting on of clothes, that quite literally constituted a person as a monarch or a freeman of a guild or a household servant. Investiture was, in other words, the means by which a person was given a form, a shape, a social function, a ‘depth.’”[38] They go on to say that “clothing is a worn world: a world of social relations put upon the wearer’s body.”[39] In other words, clothing established a person into a given network of social and power relations — it has its own agency to inscribe certain social meanings onto a subject, even without that subject’s knowledge. The colors of Malecasta’s wardrobe are striking: scarlet, gold, fair. The ermines and gold indicate wealth, and the scarlet indicates moral transgression or impurity. She also metaphorically wears the Night — night is

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[38] Ann Rosalind Jones, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 2.Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 2.
[39] Jones and Stallybrass, 3.

compared to a "blacke vele," one that Malecasta dons to break into Britomart's room surreptitiously. I am not saying that Malecasta literally or metaphorically is should be considered a black person in this passage, but she becomes less white. The prominent colors she puts on connote an opulence and sexuality that is unchaste, improper, gone awry. Because of the way "darkness" has become implicated in understanding of early modern social orders, Malecasta's colorful, bold clothing not only activates connotations of sexual impurity but also begins to suggest foreign and racial otherness. The clothing Malecasta wears mark her as less white than Britomart's "snow-white."

In the Britomart-Malecasta episode, clothing, then, affirms the instability of both race and gender. Jones and Stallybrass, in analyzing the boy actor cross-dressing as a woman, argue that the cross-dressing actor "embodies the fact that sexual fixations are not the product of any categorical fixity of gender."[40] There is no essential female or male, but instead a constant refashioning and revising: "Indeed, all attempts to fix gender are necessarily prosthetic: that is, they suggest the attempt to supply an imagined deficiency by the exchange of male clothes for female clothes or of female clothes for male clothes."[41] Gender is not something that merely is but something that is remade and reimagined over and over. Jones and Stallybrass go on to say that "gender itself is a fetish, the production of an identity through the fixation upon specific parts."[42] It follows, also, then that in the early modern, one's gender changes depending on which parts one is fixated on. If we are fixated upon Britomart's body, she reads female, but if we are fixated upon her clothing (which is

[40] Jones and Stallybrass, 217.
[41] Jones and Stallybrass, 217.
[42] Jones and Stallybrass, 217.

no less important to her identity), then she reads male. Race, too, seems implicated in this nonfixity as well. Malecasta reads white when we see her body, but she reads less white or dark when looking at her clothing and her sexual behavior.

I admit that these readings about Malecasta her sexual behavior and clothing alone do not carry the force to mark her as foreign – they at best mark her as less white. With these examples, I mainly wanted to show how the ties between racial otherness and queer sexual behavior were being drawn together. Malecasta's character allows being less white and being sexually improper to touch, setting up a basis for metonymic relationship between the two. Where this touching happens most forcefully though is in Malecasta's name, and given that Spenser's poem is a narrative allegory, we can place much interpretive weight on this name, perhaps more than in other genres of literary texts. Furthermore, Malecasta is a character who especially invites the need for allegorical because what covers her in darkness ("vele") is also a term that Spenser uses to describe his own allegory. Maureen Quilligan's reading of the Mutabilitie Cantos, for example, discusses how "the terms Spenser uses for this veil [in the Mutabilitie Cantos] are themselves indistinguishable from the terms he uses for his allegory."[43] Quilligan argues that reading Spenser's allegory properly is to note and work within how it seeks "to intend its interpretations – however multiple they might be… If allegory's intent is interpretation, it produces its own – but it also intends the reader's active engagement in further interpretation."[44] Malecasta, with her black vele and with her clearly allegorical name (akin to a lady being named "Poetry" rather than,

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[43] Maureen Quilligan, *Milton's Spenser: The Politics of Reading* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 158.
[44] Quilligan, 26–27.

say, “Rachel”) is especially asking to be interpreted in a certain manner, and her name signals the ways in which the text intends us to interpret her.

As noted earlier, one etymological reading of Malecasta is “badly chaste,” and one way the text intends us to read Malecasta is as an example of bad chastity. However, this is not the only obvious etymological origin for Malecasta’s name in sixteenth-century England. Given how Quilligan argues a text can intend for a multiple yet limited set of interpretations, another reading that I offer for Malecasta’s name is “bad caste.” Elizabeth Bearden’s study of Anglo-Spanish Exchange in the work of Sidney (and to a lesser extent, Edmund Spenser) highlights the ways in which Sidney and Spenser’s ideas about generic and ethnic mixing were in dialogue with Spanish sources.[45] Consequently, it is likely that Spenser was at the very least aware of the casta system in Spain. Leo J. Garofalo and Rachel Sarah O’Toole detail the history of scholarship on the casta system. They articulate that the casta system was first theorized as a way for Spain to regulate its colonies and systematically hierarchize people in Latin America.[46] The Spaniards were on top, followed by the Africans, and Indigenous Americans on the bottom. They also note that recent studies of the casta system have revealed it to be less rigid than previously thought. Bloodline and descent were not the only determinations of caste (though significant). For example, one’s clothing and presentation to society affected how one was read in the caste system. Nonetheless, the casta system, like chastity, also had a strong emphasis on the

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[45] Elizabeth B. Bearden, “Sidney’s ‘Mongrell Tragicomedy’ and Anglo-Spanish Exchange in the New Arcadia,” *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 10, no. 1 (2010): 29–51.
[46] Leo Garofalo and Rachel Sarah O’Toole, “Introduction: Constructing Difference in Colonial Latin America,” *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 7, no. 1 (May 1, 2006).

maintenance of a proper bloodline. Furthermore, "castas" could also refer to the children of interracial sex, and "the mixture of their 'blood' implied a stigmatization of illegitimacy that denied these lower-status people access to prestigious colonial offices and elite society."[47] "Malecasta" could not only be referring to the racial castes on the bottom of the hierarchy (Africans or Indigenous Americans) but also refer to mixed race people, who were stigmatized heavily in colonial Latin America. Malecasta, as a figure, then brings together being "badly chaste" and being of "bad caste." Though this drawing together of chastity and caste may be coincidental, I gesture towards the argument that the text is both reflecting and producing the deep relationship between the terms. Rayna Kalas argues that for Spenser, "allegory articulates the reality of language in time. Spenser's conspicuous archaisms draw attention to the fact that language undergoes historical change. And his language contains innovative coinages as well as archaisms."[48] Chastity is crucial for maintaining a caste system as the main disruptions to it are caused by "improper" sex and the birth of mixed-race children, and Spenser's character of Malecasta highlights this. In the sixteenth century, chastity is inseparable for the maintenance racial boundaries, and Spenser's uniting of both in the name "Malecasta" brings this inseparability to light.

Interlude: *A View of the Present State of Ireland*

The Malecasta episode suggests how race is intimated both through clothing

[47] Garofalo and O'Toole.
[48] Rayna Kalas, *Frame, Glass, Verse: The Technology of Poetic Invention in the English Renaissance* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), 104.

and language (in this case, the etymology of Malecasta's name). Considering Spenser's most explicit articulation of race, which can be found in *A View of the Present State of Island,* deals heavily with language, this connection between clothing and language is worth considering before jumping back into subsequent books of *the Faerie Queene*. Given the connection between clothing and language in early modern rhetorical tracts, it is unsurprising that Spenser's theory of race encompasses both clothing and language. Erasmus describes words as the clothing of ideas: "What clothing is to our body, diction is to the expression of our thoughts. For just as the fine appearance and dignity of the body are either set off to advantage or disfigured by dress or habit, just so thought is by words."[49] This comparison between words and clothing also appears in England. Thomas Wilson remarks, "For whereas invention helpeth to find matter and disposition serveth to place arguments, elocution getteth words to set forth invention and with such beauty commendeth the matter, that reason seemeth to be clad in purple, walking afore both bare and naked."[50] Words are as essential to a community of thoughts as clothing is essential to a community of English subjects. As clothing can indicate relationships between people, words can indicate not just what is being said but its relationship to other ideas and to audiences. As Puttenham remarks in *the Art of English Poesy*,

> And as we see in these great madams of honor, be they for personage or otherwise never so comely and beautiful, yet if they want their courtly habiliments, or at leastwise such other apparel as custom and civility have ordained to cover their naked bodies, would be half-ashamed or greatly out of countenance to be seen in that sort, and perchance do then think themselves

[49] Erasmus, *On Copia of Words and Ideas*, trans. Donald B. King (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1999), 8.
[50] Thomas Wilson, "The Art of Rhetoric," in *Renaissance Debates on Rhetoric*, ed. Wayne A. Rebhorn (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2000), 180.

> more amiable in every man's eye when they be in their richest attire, suppose of silks or tissues and costly embroideries, than when they go in cloth or in any other plan and simple apparel.[51]

Furthermore, Puttenham's example of figurative dress here is a courtly woman subject to "every man's eye." Clothing here could be read as a way to hide or regulate the presentation of the naked female body from men. Language, like clothing, then could be read as a way to control how women present and behave. Puttenham's passage suggests that both clothing and language then are mechanisms through which women are made to appear "proper" or "civil" to men.

For Spenser, clothing is one nexus in which the socio-cultural structures of racism begin to reveal themselves in his work. The other important one is language (often described as resembling or behaving like clothing), and it is through his discussions of language that we get Spenser's most articulated position on race. I turn to his dialogue *A View of the State of Ireland*. Similarly to Book III of *the Faerie Queene*, race in *A View* bridges together a genealogical model of race, one in which race is defined by ancestry, with one that defines race by distinct markers, such as bodily appearance, clothing, or in this case, language. Much of previous work done on Spenser's conception of race and the Irish has focused on humoral theories of race in the period. Jean Feerick argues that "as the effort at conquest in Ireland in the sixteenth century escalated, an emergent racialism became operational that drew from the then prevailing discourse of the body as a humoral entity at the same time as it pressure the boundaries of that model."[52] The Irish were thought of as "a humorally

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[51] George Puttenham, *The Art of English Poesy*, ed. Richard Puttenham et al., A critical ed. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), 221.
[52] Jean Feerick, "Spenser, Race, and Ire-land," *English Literary Renaissance* 32, no. 1 (January 2002):

imbalanced or distempered national group" while the English were "figured as civilized and tempered, serving as models of restraint for the 'incontinent' Irish to emulate."[53] These humoral explanations for the differences between English and Irish echo Floyd-Wilson's claim that the English are rewriting where they fit into a geo-humoral conception of race.

I seek to argue that race in Spenser's tract appears not just in geohumoral theories but also in articulations about custom and language. In the section in which they discuss customs, Eudoxus and Irenius attempt to create a genealogy of the Irish people and conclude that it is a motley nation with "the Scythians planted in the North part of Ireland; the Spaniards (for so we call them, whatever they were that came from Spaine) in the West; the Gaules in the South" and the Brittaines, Saxons, and English in the Eastern part.[54] The first to possess and inhabit Ireland, according to Irenius, are the Scythians, who have a reputation for savagery in the ancient world. Linking the Irish to the Scythians is significant because the Scythians have been associated with being both an extreme and completely distinct group of people. Benjamin Isaac, a classical historian, mentions that they were regarded as "separate and different from all other peoples."[55] The Irish, by lineage then, are not just different but extremely different, and this radical difference justifies Spenser's brutal propositions for managing the Irish elsewhere in the text.

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[53] Feerick, 93.

[54] Edmund Spenser, *A View of the State of Ireland: From the First Printed Edition (1633)*, ed. Andrew. Hadfield and Willy. Maley (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 1997), 52–53.

[55] Benjamin H Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004), 353.

Eudoxus also asks why the Irish seem to think of themselves as descended from the Spaniards. Irenius replies then it is impossible to determine what group of people came from Spain to possess the Western part of Ireland because of Spain's own tumultuous history, conquered by the Romans and the Carthaginians, "so that betwixt them both, to and fro, there was scarce a native Spaniard left.”[56] Spain, also subject to attack by the Goths, Huns, Vandals, and Scythians, has become a mixture. Irenius then ends by pointing out that "After all these the Moores and the Barbarians, breaking over out of Africa, did finally possese all Spaine, or the most part theroef, and did tread, under their heathenish feete, whatever little they found yet there standing.”[57] Though the Moors were expelled from Spain, Irenius asserts that the Spaniards "were not so clenased, but that through the marriages which they had made, and mixture with the people of the land, during their long continuance there, they had left no pure drop of Spanish blood, no more than of Roman or of Scythian.”[58] I find it curious that Irenius brings in the language of purity only after mentioning that African Moors were present in Spain. Because of Spain's history, there was no way that there could be such a thing as "pure" Spanish blood, one that is not mixed with the blood of other ethnic groups. It is only when Moorish African blood comes into the mixture that the language of "purity" and "cleansing" comes into play. It seems, then, that certain mixtures of blood are acceptable while other are not. Mixing blood among European ethnicities are better than mixing any European blood with African blood. Indeed, "pure" does not just have to mean unadulterated but can also mean "free from anything

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[56] Spenser, *A View of the State of Ireland: From the First Printed Edition (1633)*, 50.
[57] Spenser, 50.
[58] Spenser, 50.

not properly belonging to it."[59] In this case, African blood is that which does not belong, suggesting that there is a broader category of belonging and unbelonging than just ethnicity or ethnic origin. These broader categories, I argue, are incipient racial categories in Spenser's *View*.

Not only does Irenius attribute impurity to Spanish blood, but he also talks about its uncertainty: "So that of all nations under heaven (I suppose) the Spaniard is the most mingled, and most uncertaine; wherefore most follishly doe the Irish thinke to enoble themselves by wresting their auncientry from the Spaniard, who is unable to derive himselfe from any in certaine."[60] Again, the diction of uncertainty only comes into play after mentioning how Spanish blood is mingled with African blood. This language of uncertainty casts Spanish blood (and Spaniards) as racially ambiguous. Not only is it unclear which ethnic group Spaniards descend from and by how much, but it is also ambiguous if Spaniards can even be considered wholly European given the invasion from Moorish Africa. Consequently, the Irish become racialized not only because of their association with the Scythians but also because of their association with the Spanish: they cannot be considered wholly white European. Irenius goes on later to discuss how some Irish customs (such as practices for burial and horseback riding) have nebulous origin, possibly coming from Africa.[61] It is not enough to barbarize the Irish by casting them as not English and descended from Scythian. Irenius goes as far to associate the Irish with Black Africans, suggesting, again, that

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[59] "pure, adj., adv., and n.". OED Online. December 2018. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/154843?rskey=NBrt5H&result=1&isAdvanced=false (accessed March 04, 2019).
[60] Spenser, *A View of the State of Ireland: From the First Printed Edition (1633)*, 50.
[61] Spenser, 61; 65.

racial categories, ones that are larger that ethnic ones, are undergirding the barbarization of the Irish in this text.

It is possibly because of this African influence in Ireland that Eudoxus and Irenius are especially concerned with marriage between the English and the Irish. Irenius discusses how certain Englishmen who settled in Ireland "have quite shaken off their English names, and put on Irish that they might bee altogether Irish."[62] Later, Irenius states that "fostering and marrying with the Irish" are especially dangerous because "for first the childe that sucketh the milke of the nurse, must of necessity learne his first speach of her, the which being the first inured ot his tongue, is ever after most pleasing unto him."[63] Irenius goes on to argue that as with language, "manners and conditions" of English children can also be infected by drinking the milk of an Irish woman. The idea that English children would grow up to speak Irish or mix the languages together would be anathema. What is striking here, then, is that one does not have to be born Irish or have Irish blood to be Irish. One can "turn" Irish by shedding one's English name and renouncing (or bastardizing) the English language.

Spenser's idea of race, then, is not just genealogical or biological. Blood alone is not the sole determinant of race in Spenser's *View.* Because the text is ultimately a justification for Irish genocide, the stakes for determining what race is in the text are significant. *A View* shows how the justifications for racially based genocide had to be manifold to support such an extreme position. Other scholars, such as Katarzyna

[62] Spenser, 68.
[63] Spenser, 71.

Lecky (who refers to *A View* as "an abscess on the body of the author's canon") have done work on the implications of Spenser's policy of Irish genocide, which echoes other justifications for colonization and genocide written across Europe.[64] And like these other justifications, *A View* affirms a view of race that is not solely determined on one axis, like skin color. Instead, the text argues that language, manner, and custom are just as potent vectors for racial marking. This more cultural dimension to determining race is what allows race to intertwine so closely with gender and sexuality. The scaffolding of white supremacy reinforces the scaffolding of patriarchy and vice versa.

Britomart & Amoret

The co-constitution of race, gender, and sexuality in *the Faerie Queene* manifests not just in clear-cut situations of racist, misogynist, or homophobic moments in the text. The co-constitution of the three also becomes apparent in one of the most confusing and ambiguous points in the text with regard to all three: the interaction between Britomart and Amoret in Book IV. After rescuing Amoret, Britomart leaves Amoret in the dark about her sex, and the poem's use of male pronouns to refer to Britomart in the beginning of Canto IV emphasizes both Amoret's confusion and her fear of acting unchaste. Amoret is "right fearefull" and responds circumspectly to Britomart: "Yet dread of shame, and doubt of fowle dishonor / Made her not yeeld so much" (4.1.4; 8). Consequently, Britomart's chivalric actions only

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[64] Katarzyna Lecky, "Irish Nonhumanness and English Inhumanity in A Vewe of the Present State of Ireland," *Spenser Studies* 30 (January 1, 2015): 134, https://doi.org/10.7756/spst.030.009.133-50.

bring more anxiety upon Amroet: “Yet *Britomart* attended duly on her, / As well became a knight, and did to her all honor” (4.1.8). Amoret is unsure what Britomart (who presents as a man at this moment) and is unsure how much desire is motivating Britomart’s chivalric actions. Because the world of *the Faerie Queene* is one in which “attractive, virgin women are always at risk,” Amoret has right to be suspicious of someone who presents as a man who may desire her without necessarily showing signs of actually desiring.[65] Amoret is guarding her chastity.

Yet, the world of *the Faerie Queene* is also one in which desire is manifold, strange, and dangerous. Despite being in Book IV, the revelation of Britomart’s gender is not enough to indicate that we have entered the desire-free realm of amity, which as Shannon discusses, is the proper relationship between same-sex individuals.[66] After all, if we return to the idea of gender as a set of fetishized fixations, fixating on Britomart's attire and behavior codes her as male while fixating on her body (at least in the text) codes her as female. Consequently, Britomart's gender is prominently in flux, which short-circuits the rules of appropriate desire. It is unclear what the "correct" object of Britomart's desire should be even though the text insists strongly that it is Arthegall. Furthermore, even though Britomart is read as a woman after she takes off her helmet, Amoret would still have right to be suspicious if she sensed actual desire in Britomart. Female homoerotic desire is not out of the question, as the Britomart-Malecasta episode has shown and as Dorothy Stephens notes: “If women’s

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[65] Sheila T Cavanagh, *Wanton Eyes and Chaste Desires: Female Sexuality in The Faerie Queene* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 140.
[66] Laurie Shannon, *Sovereign Amity: Figures of Friendship in Shakespearean Contexts* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), 2.

unavoidable inconstancy exposes them to lustful or otherwise demanding men, it also may expose them to women. This possibility often generates anxiety in Renaissance texts, bound up as it is with the suspicion that women's friendships may supply goods and services over and above those supplied by husbands or lovers."[67] Amoret, however, is not suspicious of Britomart at all. She is "freed from feare" and becomes open and affectionate with Britomart, even opting to share her bed (4.1.15).

Even the bed-sharing scene that follows only goes as far as being suggestive without indicating anything explicitly related to sexual desire. It is unclear whether the bed-sharing scene is emblematic of the friendship between Britomart and Amoret, the degree to which they long for the men they have fallen in love with, their possibly erotic desire for each other, or any combination of the above.

> Where all that night they of their loues did treat,
> And hard aduentures twixt themselues alone,
> That each the other gan with passion great,
> And griefull pittie priuately bemone. (4.1.16)

Stephens remarks that "it is wonderfully puzzling that the one happy bed scene in the whole poem appears here…While the text declares literally that each of the women longs to complete herself in her absent mate, the subtext at least momentarily believes in the self-sufficiency of their interactions with each other."[68] The pronouns, in particular, affirm this subtextual self-sufficiency. The poem treats the two women (since Amoret and Britomart are both reading each other as women at this moment) as a unit, a "they," and as noted earlier, the shared bed alone would have indicated

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[67] Dorothy Stephens, "Into Other Arms: Amoret's Evasion," in *Queering the Renaissance*, ed. Goldberg, Jonathan (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), 200.
[68] Stephens, 202.

homoerotic undertones to readers. Given the hostility to women sharing a bed together in Book III with Britomart to Malecasta, the "happiness" of this bed scene becomes even more puzzling, since it is also arguably more suggestive and coy about what actually happens in the bed (as opposed to the situation with Malecasta and Britomart, an amorous adventure thwarted).

This contrast between literal text and subtext makes it difficult to ascertain whether or not Britomart and Amoret are transgressing here. Are they assuaging each other's heterosexual longings "priuately" through same-sex behavior, or is each woman "priuately" bemoaning the absence of her lover alone on her own side of the bed? It is unclear. It is even unclear whether or not Britomart and Amoret are punished for this bed-sharing, which prevents us from determining queerness retroactively (i.e. because it was punished, it must have been queer). Stephens does note that the poem suggests that Britomart's queerly-charged friendship with Amoret and her heterosexual love with Arthegall seem to be mutually exclusive: "If we move from the chronology of the plot to the order of the poem, we see that the more immediate reason for us to read stanza 36 about Amoret's straying is that in stanzas 20 through 33 Britomart and Artegall have seen each other without armor for the first time and have fallen in love."[69] Though Amoret goes astray before Britomart and Arthegall fall in love, we learn that she has left Britomart only after we learn of this love because the poem's narrative deviates from strict chronology. Britomart does lose Amoret, and Amoret does wind up in the cave of lust, but there is a lack of explicit indication that these misfortunes are a direct consequence of queerness as in the previously discussed

[69] Stephens, 206.

episodes.

This uncertainty has equally vexing effects on the racial dynamics in the relationship as well, especially because of the co-constitution of race, gender, and sexuality in Spenser's work. If indeed queer desire between women is racialized, then it is curious why the moral components of racialization (I.e. Fair is good, and dark is bad) are absent in the Britomart-Amoret episode. One could make the argument that Spenser is attempting to inoculate both Britomart and Amoret from the racializing effects of potential queer desire. Amoret is referred to as "fayre" and "fairest" consistently in the first 16 stanzas of Book IV Canto i, and Britomart, when she unveils herself to be a woman, the first thing that the poem notes about her body is "her golden lockes" (4.1.13). Britomart and Amoret, arguably, are aggressively white. However, relying solely on this reading would ignore what Valerie Traub has noted about female friendship in the period. According to Traub, the early modern period is one in which "chase feminine love" is beginning to be "imbued with associations of tribadism."[70] The tribade is perhaps the most prominent figure of female homoerotic desire in the period, and though the earliest recorded instance of the word "tribade" in an English text is dated 1601, "it is probable that the word had currency earlier than these usages indicate, if not in English printed texts, then almost certainly in speech and private writing among educated men" as evidenced in private letters.[71] She is often depicted as having a large clitoris with which she can sexually penetrate other women.

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[70] Traub, *The Renaissance of Lesbianism in Early Modern England*, 278. Traub, *The Renaissance of Lesbianism in Early Modern England*, 2002, 278.
[71] Harriette Andreadis, *Sappho in Early Modern England: Female Same-Sex Literary Erotics, 1550-1714* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 46.

In other words, friendship between women during the period is accruing connotations of lesbianism in early modern England. This accrual is significant because the figure of the tribade has a racialized history. As Traub notes, "The rhetoric of the tribade, in contrast, focuses initially on the racialized bodies of women outside of Europe and only gradually incorporates this exoticized figure into a European social landscape, where she emblematizes gender relations gone awry."[72] Mario DiGangi locates the figure of the tribade as having racialized origins both in travel narratives in Nicholas de Nicolay's descriptions of women washing each other in Turkish bathhouses and Leo Africanus's crazed *Sahacat* or "witches" who uncontrollably lust after the bodies of beautiful young women.[73] Through this location of the tribade in travel narratives (notably, ones from the Muslim world and Africa), the tribade also becomes a foreign figure, one strongly associated with non-European women, or women of color. The racialized body of a woman of color thus becomes a rhetorical figure that polices proper sexuality and gender relations in the period, demonstrating a contiguity between queer female desire and racial others.

Traub, however, argues that the tribade's racialization becomes less explicit as the figure becomes more prevalent in European discourse: "The extent to which [the tribade] remains racialized even after this incorporation [into European discourse], however, is not a given. No essential link obtains between the tribade and Europe's racialized others."[74] I agree with Traub that something as strong as an "essential link"

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[72] Traub, *The Renaissance of Lesbianism in Early Modern England*, 20. Traub, *The Renaissance of Lesbianism in Early Modern England*, 2002, 20.
[73] Mario DiGangi, *Sexual Types: Embodiment, Agency, and Dramatic Character from Shakespeare to Shirley* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 68–75.
[74] Traub, *The Renaissance of Lesbianism in Early Modern England*, 21. Traub, *The Renaissance of*

between tribades and racialized others, but I also argue that it is equally difficult to argue that the figure of the tribade can be completely scrubbed of racial connotations. In my previous chapter, I posited the idea that metonymy is the trope most closely aligned not just to early modern sexuality but also to race. The power of metonymy is that it does not need essential or innate links to operate but rather just an affinity that can sometimes be frustratingly vague. The figure of the tribade thus becomes a metonymic figure, one which allows female homoerotic desire and racialized otherness to touch, and as argued before, metonymy's vague looseness allows it to be mobilized in numerous directions. In this case, same-sex female desire can be laced with racial otherness and vice versa. The flexibility of metonymy is what consequently allows racial discourse to become less explicit or hide behind the figure and language of tribadism.

This gradual coding of female friendship as tribadism in disguise perhaps explains why Malecasta's desire for a cross-dressed woman is worse than the potentially queer friendship between Britomart and Amoret. Malecasta's unbridled desire for Britomart flies in the face of patriarchal controls over female sexuality, which as demonstrated in the previous chapter, are intertwined with race. The fact that Britomart's body is coded female further underscores the dangerousness of Malecasta's desire. Even though Malecasta's desire evaporates once she recognizes Britomart's body is female, that desire still has consequences. Malecasta is humiliated. Britomart is wounded. The Britomart and Amoret example is also one in which queer desire is supposed to be "impossible," and because there is no explicit mention of desire

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Lesbianism in Early Modern England, 2002, 21.

between the two women, this love can presumably hover just above suspicion.[75] And yet, the charge of potential queer female homoerotic desire (and the twinging of racial otherness that comes with it) does not dissipate fully either in the bed-sharing between Britomart and Malecasta or the bed-sharing between Britomart and Amoret. The poem leaves us in the same position as it did to those who witnessed Britomart's unveiling in this chapter: "And euery one gan grow in secret dout / Of this and that, according to each wit" (4.1.14). While the Malecasta episode demonstrated that queer desire (whether because it's too powerful or "misdirected" to a member of the same-sex) starts accruing racial connotations, the Amoret episode demonstrates how difficult it sometimes can be to identify whether something is properly chaste or unchaste, especially considering this demarcation seems so clear in other moments in *The Faerie Queene.* This uncertainty, in turn, may help explain why the racial connotations in the Amoret episode do not seem to cohere into a sensible pattern either, even though they are metonymically lurking – the vague associations persist.

Britomart & Radigund

While it is arguably unclear whether or not Britomart and Amoret are behaving queerly, Radigund, Britomart's most prominent foil, is perhaps one of the queerest female characters in the text. While she does not desire women, she subverts gender roles more flagrantly than the other significant women in the text. This subversion becomes obvious first when Radigund does not obey the standard rules of wooing. As Broaddus notes, "Radigund is 'halfe like a man' (5.4.36) from the beginning, when

[75] Traub, 279.

she practiced masculine strategies of pursuit rather than feminine strategies of reception and wooed Bellodant, and wooed him, as one might expect, in order to win him to her will (5.4.30)."[76] After Bellodant's refusal of Radigund, "she turn'd her loue to hatred manifold, / And for his sake vow'd to doe all the ill / Which she could doe to Knights, which now she doth fulfill" (5.4.30). This hatred, transmuted from desire, motivates Radigund to force others to behave against gender roles. She strips the knights of the armor that marks them as knights and then forces them to wear women's clothing while performing domestic tasks to "earne their meat" (5.4.31). Within the logic of the poem, these subversions (both Radigund behaving as a man and her making the knights behave like women) is a grave offense. Arthegall, the knight represents the virtue of justice, decrees that "I will not rest, till I her might doe trie, / And venge the shame, that she to Knights doth show" (5.4.34). Radigund has disrupted a social order and a gender hierarchy, and Arthegall seeks to rectify her transgression.

At first glance, it may be difficult to see how Radigund's subversions of gender roles might seem queer, especially since her desire in this moment seems to be exclusively heterosexual. Though Radigund desires a man, she also invokes the figure of the tribade, even more strongly than Britomart and Amoret do in their bed-sharing scene. Mario DiGangi argues that "the tribade can be recognized in the substitutive logics of female characters who imitate, appropriate, or displace male sexual agency. Appropriately, the trope of metonymy, in which one thing is associated with or

[76] Broaddus, *Spenser's Allegory of Love: Social Vision in Books III, IV, and V of the Faerie Queene*, 137.

substitutes for another thing, can help to reveal how the type of the tribade functions in early modern drama."[77] Because of the metonymic relationship between women who act like men and the tribade, Radigund acquires queer valences through her behavior -- she becomes sexually suspect.

Radigund's identity as an Amazon further builds upon her metonymic association with the tribade. DiGangi goes on to explain that the Amazon, with her "unusually assertive expressions of gender/sexual agency," could also be read as a one of many "metonymic versions" of the tribade figure in early modern literature.[78] Traub echoes DiGangi's assertion that Amazons as "the prototype of female autonomy" in the early modern period, and she too suggests a connection between the Amazons and female homoerotic desire, though not as explicitly through the figure of the tribade.[79] According to Kathryn Schwarz, the Amazons in the early modern world were "the women of the new world, who appear simultaneously as masculine and feminine, black and white."[80] She notes that Amazons were both referred to as whiter than Europeans but also as black. In addition to being associated with the New World, Karma Lochrie notes that the Amazons are "located sometimes in southern Asia (and Scythia in particular), sometimes Africa or India, [and sometimes] northern Europe."[81] Spenser does not seem to use skin color or geography as a way to mark the Amazons as racial others, he perhaps subtly suggests it through Radigund's own name. It is

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[77] DiGangi, *Sexual Types: Embodiment, Agency, and Dramatic Character from Shakespeare to Shirley*, 61.
[78] DiGangi, 62.
[79] Traub, *The Renaissance of Lesbianism in Early Modern England*, 65–67. Traub, *The Renaissance of Lesbianism in Early Modern England*, 2002, 65–67.
[80] Schwarz, *Tough Love: Amazon Encounters in the English Renaissance*, 118.
[81] Karma Lochrie, *Heterosyncrasies: Female Sexuality When Normal Wasn't* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 103.

unclear whether it refers to a sixth-century French queen who refused to marry or to a Persian queen.[82] Nonetheless, the connection to an area outside of Europe is there. Both figures, however, subvert gendered expectations for women.

The strongest indication of the racialization of the Amazons in Spenser's text, though, does not have to do with skin color, especially because there is no consensus on what color Europeans thought the Amazons were. Radigund lives in "a goodly city and a mighty one, / The which of her owne name she called *Radegone*." (5.4.35). The Amazons living in a separate city is no coincidence. As Traub notes, "Amazons were often viewed as embodying a dangerous and unnatural political self-sufficiency."[83] By living in a separate area and imbued with a sense of threat, they are cast as outsiders of any European institution. If we take up Roderick Ferguson's call to think about race beyond the realm of just skin color but about how groups are included and excluded from institutions, then Amazons are certainly excluded and their threat to gender hierarchy is the excuse for justifying that exclusion. The Amazons then become another example of what Hall notes as "an organization of racial values rooted in the control of gender mandated by patriarchy."[84] My analysis of Spenser's text builds upon Hall's point by showing how this interlacing of gender and racial hierarchies can result in a racialization of queer desire and queer behavior. Radigund's behavior and her Amazon heritage marks her both as queer and a racial other. Given the threat that she

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[82] Hamilton notes in his edition of *The Faerie Queene* (cited in this dissertation) that Radigund could refer to a sixth-century French nun (Radegund) who refused to consummate a forced marriage or to a Persian queen (Rhodegune) who prayed to conquer men.

[83] Traub, *The Renaissance of Lesbianism in Early Modern England*, 65. Traub, *The Renaissance of Lesbianism in Early Modern England*, 2002, 65.

[84] Hall, *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England*, 136.

poses to political and social order, she must be punished.

At this point, the text opens up a nagging question: why is Radigund's adoption of male behavior described as so threatening while Britomart's adoption of male behavior is not? They are both women performing as masculine knights, arguably "completely suppress[ing] their femininity" when battling.[85] Sheila Cavanagh argues that "while Britomart's story does not contain unequivocally lesbian undercurrents, she often manifests behavior and responses to women which imply that her martial disguise muddles everyone's understanding of her gender and her heterosexuality, including her own."[86] Cavanagh asserts that Britomart is protected by her "sexual naiveté," which prevents her from demonstrating "lustful interest in the women around her" and compromising her chastity.[87] Yet, Schwarz questions Cavanagh's claim: "Cavanagh concludes that what she describes as Britomart's 'sexual naiveté' is prophylactic, ensuring that she neither desires women nor acts too much like them. But to read Britomart in terms of what she might think or want is to ignore what she looks like: dressed as a man, fighting other men to win possession of women."[88] If Radigund is marked as a threat for demonstrating the same kind of behavior, we must ask why Britomart is not similarly marked.

As suggested by my initial analysis of Britomart's cross-dressing, I argue that Britomart serves to maintain social order (i.e. gender and racial hierarchies) while Radigund actively threatens them (she is a foreigner; the male knights she subjugates

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[85] Broaddus, *Spenser's Allegory of Love: Social Vision in Books III, IV, and V of the Faerie Queene*, 140.
[86] Cavanagh, *Wanton Eyes and Chaste Desires: Female Sexuality in The Faerie Queene*, 142.
[87] Cavanagh, 142–43.
[88] Schwarz, *Tough Love: Amazon Encounters in the English Renaissance*, 161.

are not). Their roles as upholder and subverter of social order becomes most apparent in the battle scenes involving Radigund. Radigund does fall but not at the hands of Arthegall. He battles her, but she defeats him because he is distracted by the sight of her face. Arthegall is then subjected to the same emasculating, feminizing treatment as the other knights, and Britomart comes to save him. At the end of a gruesome battle between the two women, Britomart defeats Radigund when "[Britomart] with one stroke both head and helmet cleft" (5.7.34). Because "cleft" is reminiscent of the image of female genitalia, Britomart, a woman, decisively and fatally marks Radigund, someone who has been behaving as a man, as what she is, a woman. For the text, it is fitting that the knight of chastity, one charged with the start of a very white lineage, defeats the queer Amazon queen, and it is fitting that the only figure the knight of chastity kills in these six books is the queen of queerness. Yet, it is also puzzling that in this episode, chastity enacts justice, not justice himself. She "the liberty of women did repeale / Which they had long vsurpt; and them restoring / To mens subjection, did true Iustice deale" (5.7.42). If we remember that chastity can be thought of as the proper relationship between people of different genders, we can see why Britomart has much at stake in this gender-bending episode. Broaddus remarks that "[Britomart's] own womanliness – her internalization of accepted notions of gender differences – appears to heighten her sense of outrage at the feminization of Radigund's male prisoners."[89] We see this outrage and disgust of the gender hierarchy reversal when Britomart sees Arthegall after defeating Radigund. She is "abasht with

[89] Broaddus, *Spenser's Allegory of Love: Social Vision in Books III, IV, and V of the Faerie Queene*, 141.

secrete shame" at the "lothly vncouth sight" of Arthegall in women's clothing to the point where "she turnd her head aside" (5.7.37-38). Consequently, the poem indicates a strong connection between the virtue of chastity and the virtue of justice – justice must follow any violations of the social order, which includes gender norms.

This connection between chastity and justice makes sense, especially considering the Renaissance convention of aligning dichotomies with other dichotomies. Melissa Sanchez points out that "in sixteenth-century England, gender was embedded in an analogical web that aligned the feminine with the subordinate and inferior position in a venerable series of linked hierarchies: man/woman, husband/wife, head/body, king/subject, Christ/Church."[90] A disruption in the hierarchy of chastity (man over woman) by putting the woman on top or having one gender perform as another in same-sex behavior is potentially dangerous to the other established hierarchies in the Renaissance world view. For this reason, transgressions against the "natural" relationship between men and women (i.e. queerness) must be corrected swiftly. Hence, Britomart must not only destroy the queer head of state but "restore" Radigund's gender hierarchy: "And changing all that forme of common weale, / The liberty of women did repeale, / Which they had long vsurpt; and them restoring / to mens subiection, did true Iustice deale" (5.7.42). True justice is not just killing Radigund but undoing the gender role subversion that she enforced upon others. In doing so, they bring Radigund's city, previously cast as foreign, into the fold under a more recognizable, English (and European) law.

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[90] Melissa E Sanchez, *Erotic Subjects: The Sexuality of Politics in Early Modern English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 61.

This restoration, however, did not involve merely changing laws. Radigund was slain, but so was her group of Amazon warriors, in perhaps one of the most disturbing moments in Book V. Talus, Arthegall's groom, overtakes the retreating Amazon warriors and starts slaughtering them "with his yron flale." Britomart arrives on the scene, and even she is horrified: "Yet when she saw the heapes, which he did make, / Of slaughtered carkasses, her heart did quake" (5.7.36). The meter of the lines demonstrates how awful the sight of the slaughtered Amazon warriors was -- like Britomart's heart, the meter also quakes at "carkasses." This slaughter is reminiscent of the genocide that Spenser advocates for against the Irish in *A View* as well as the slaughter of colonized Indigenous American people at the hands of Europeans. Given how the Irish, Indigenous Americans, and the Amazons are racialized groups, one can suspect that the slaughter of the Amazons is racially motivated. The subversion of gendered and sexual order, after all, becomes racialized in *the Faerie Queene*, especially because Radigund invokes the tribade, both a queer and a racialized figure. Consequently, the restoration of a gendered, sexual order involves a massacre (if not genocide) with likely racial motivations. Radigund consequently is another figure that brings together a rampant female sexuality that invokes the tribade and certainly goes outside the bounds of chastity *and* connotations of racial otherness. Again, chastity and race metonymically touch in the figure of Radigund, and Britomart's slaying of Radigund could be read as a violent enforcement of chastity, which perpetuates proper gender, sexual, and racial order. Heteropatriarchy and white supremacy are restored.

Conclusion

Ultimately, *The Faerie Queene* has two prominent examples of female sexuality run rampant touching racial otherness. The figures of Malecasta and Radigund allow these concepts to metonymically touch each other in the Britomart saga. Furthermore, both Malecasta and Radigund are associated with female homoerotic desire, which means racial otherness becomes associated not just with rampant female sexuality but lesbianism. These two figures then reinforce the relationship between chastity and race (perhaps most evident in chastity's relationship to the caste system). Enforcing certain bounds for sexual behavior reinforces not just a system in which women are subservient to men that only allows certain kinds of heterosexual sex but also a system in which people of different races are kept from intermingling. I include the Amoret example, though, also to emphasize that distinctions in this text are not always clear. Malecasta and Radigund are clearly figures that are not chaste and therefore "bad." It is less clear whether or not Britomart and Amoret are being chaste or unchaste. The language and the text leave us in a curious state of suspension. Spenser's allegory doesn't intend us to one interpretation or another. Consequently, *The Faerie Queene*, while showing how race is a central concern for chastity, also provides an example in which racial meanings don't necessarily manifest substantially. They stay in the realm of possibility and don't necessarily accrue into something certain. I turn next to Christopher Marlowe's poem "Hero and Leander" to further think about racial meanings that don't necessarily cohere and to further explore the relationship between race and homoeroticism in early modern English texts.

CHAPTER 3

Border: Christopher Marlowe's "Hero and Leander"

Introduction

Given my previous chapters' concerns with how race is co-constituted with gender and sexuality, I want to continue that line of inquiry by looking at the work of a different early modern author, Christopher Marlowe. Though to a lesser degree than in the work of Shakespeare, Marlowe's work figures prominently in early modern literary scholars' work on race. For example, a discussion of Marlowe sneaks its way into some of the essays in the collection *Shakespeare and Immigration* edited by Ruben Espinosa and David Ruiter – Eric Griffin specifically examines how Marlowe's plays (along with Shakespeare's) reveal complex attitudes towards "stranger communities" and the "hardening attitudes towards ethnicity, race, and religion that were emerging in this troubled historical moment."[1] Most of the attention on race in Marlowe, however, has been devoted to his plays, such as *Tamburlaine* and *the Jew of Malta*. These plays, along with some by Shakespeare such as *Titus Andronicus, Othello,* and *the Tempest*, have earned the moniker "race plays" in scholarly circles because they have characters who are not white and not European. This focus on the "race plays" has produced important scholarship but has also occluded the racial dynamics in works not thought of as race plays. This point has been championed by David Sterling Brown, who advocates for uncovering and teaching how race is working in plays where there are ostensibly no characters of color such as *Hamlet* or

[1] Eric Grffin, "Shakespeare, Marlowe, and the Stranger Crisis of the Early 1590s," in *Shakespeare and Immigration*, ed. Ruben Espinosa and David Ruiter (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2014), 14.

Macbeth.[2]

I began this dissertation with perhaps the most famous of "race plays" and then moved to Spenser, whose work has also been remarked upon for its virulent justifications of racial genocide. I move now to thinking about works in which race has caught even less scholarly attention, partially because there are no characters of color. To this idea, that there is no race where there are no people of color, I respond by turning briefly to gender. It is now accepted (thankfully) that gender happens in a work of literature or culture that only has cisgender men in it, and I argue that racial logics are developed and created in works only with white people, though the way race may manifest is unexpected and not immediately on the surface. For this reason, I decided to work not with a play (much of the work on race is also on drama) but a poem by Christopher Marlowe to suggest that race and racialization are extant in more early modern works of literature than we might initially think and to work through racial dynamics that have also gotten relatively little attention. Because of its reliance on mythology and the (seeming) whiteness of its main characters, "Hero and Leander" has not attracted as much attention on race as it has on gender and sexuality. "Hero and Leander", already so well known for convoluting understandings of gender and sexuality in the period, also has powerful racial dynamics working across it as well.

Race and racialization in "Hero and Leander" manifests most clearly when we shift our focus from characters to the setting, the body of water that separates Europe from Asia. Border studies scholars have remarked on how borders serve as a

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[2] David Sterling Brown, "(Early) Modern Literature: Crossing the Color-Line," *Radical Teacher* 105 (July 7, 2016): 73–74.

mechanism to control and even eradicate identities that don't necessarily fit into a clean taxonomy. Consequently, the border itself becomes a space that reveals the fluidity of identity itself – people don't always fit into the categorizations demanded by the border. By taking cues from border studies scholars, I read the Hellespont as a site rife with this same potential to cross and problematize identity taxonomies. As the border between Europe and Asia, the Hellespont has great geographic significance in the early modern world, and I argue that this border is also crucial for race in the period. Focusing mostly on the character of Leander, I will explore the various ways in which identity becomes fraught on the border between Europe and Asia. Leander's identifications shift across the poem, between feminine and masculine, active and passive, white and Asian. For most of the poem, these identifications do not seem to add up to anything coherent. Through these shifts, Marlowe's poem mobilizes its setting on the border to demonstrate how gender, sexuality, and race are arbitrary and co-constituted. What the poem does demonstrate so compellingly is that just because it is difficult to categorize characters in this poem does not mean racial, gendered, and sexual dynamics are not present. Especially within the border space, these identities remain mobile and crossed. Nonetheless, by the end of the poem in the consummation scene with Hero, this mobility recedes. Leander's identities, so mobile before, settle. Consequently, the poem suggests that a dominant structure of white supremacy necessitates eradicating this potential for mobile and crossed identities, both on the border and more broadly. Furthermore, white supremacy needs to eliminate not just the potential for mobility in racial identification but also in gender and sexual identification.

Hellespont as Borderland

To articulate the complex dynamics of race, gender, and sexuality that are occurring on the Hellespont, I turn first to scholars in border studies. While some may argue that Anzaldúa's theorizations of the border are too historically and geographically specific to apply to a different hemisphere and a different century, both the Hellespont and the Rio Grande are borders formed by (relatively) narrow bodies of water. Moreover, Anzaldúa herself also seems to think of her border theory as expanding beyond the border between Mexico and the United States:

> The actual physical borderland that I'm dealing with... Is the Texas-U.S. Southwest/Mexican border. The psychological borderlands, the sexual borderlands and the spiritual borderlands are not particular to the Southwest. In fact, the Borderlands are physically present wherever two or more cultures edge each other, where people of different races occupy the same territory, where under, lower, middle, and upper classes touch, where the space between two individuals shrinks with intimacy.[3]

The Hellespont area (encompassing both the river and the cities on either side of it) contains people of different races and different classes occupying the same space. Two cultures (a white European one and an Asian Muslim one) are edging each other. "Edge" here is an especially peculiar verb since it implies both that the two cultures are bordering each other but that they are making imperceptible movements into each other. Two cultures that are next to each other can never just co-exist without interaction. Based on Anzaldúa's formulation here, cultures that border each other will always be insinuating themselves into one another. It is clear too that the cultures are

[3] Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands: The New Mestiza = La Frontera*, 4th ed., 25th anniversary. (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 2012), 19.

doing much more than merely edging -- the copious descriptions of trade between Europe and Asia in the early modern period indicate robust interaction and mutual influence.

Given the resonances between Anzaldúa's description of the borderlands and the Hellespont, I want to further define what Anzaldúa means by the border. She writes:

> Borders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish *us* from *them*. A border is a dividing line, a narrow strip along a steep edge. A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition.[4]

Anzaldúa's formulation, "a dividing line, a narrow strip along a steep edge" reveals how paradoxical and precarious the existence of the border is. Geometrically, a line is merely the shortest distance between two points. It has no physicality or width, and yet when we represent it visually, it has physicality and width. There is no way to represent it otherwise. Similarly, a border is an abstract concept that has real manifestations. The implementation of the border has material and physical consequences. This tension between abstract and physical continues -- not all borders are along steep edges. Not all borders are necessarily narrow. But what Anzaldúa underscores is the sense of precarity on the border. There is constantly a sense of falling off the conceptual tightrope of the narrow strip onto either side of the steep edge. Furthermore, as Anzaldúa points out, there is something unnatural about this boundary. As a body of water, the Hellespont may seem like the most "natural" kind of boundary there is, but the demarcation between Europe and Asia, between white

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[4] Anzaldúa, 26.

and non-white is an arbitrary one. Anzaldúa theorizes that this arbitrariness and unnaturalness of the border itself then means that the borderland, the space that exists between, is constantly renegotiating itself. For Anzaldúa's Southwest, these constant transitions involve navigating racial and ethnic identity categories that have solidified but are still being amended: white, Chicanos, Indigenous Americans, Blacks.

These constant renegotiations that happen in the borderlands appear even in the first four few lines of the poem through the disorientation caused by the poem's meter:

> On Hellespont, guilty of true love's blood,
> In view and opposite two cities stood,
> Sea-borderers, disjoined by Neptune's might:
> The one Abydos, the other Sestos hight. (1.1-4).[5]

A quick scan of these lines shows that Marlowe is already doing much work in this seemingly simple declaration of the poem's setting. He foreshadows that the Hellespont is where Hero and Leander both eventually die. Marlowe also describes the two cities that are on opposite sides of the Hellespont, separated by the water (hence Neptune's might). I argue, however, that the meter is doing something more than exposition. Through the meter in these first four lines, Marlowe is already invoking all of the historical and literary uneasiness invoked by the Hellespont: the slippery boundary between Europe and Asia and the amount of human suffering that went into both maintaining and traversing this boundary.

The first two iambs lull the reader into metrical regularity. The rhythm seems familiar, perhaps suggesting the Hellespont for many readers would be a well-known location. Nonetheless, the meter jars the reader with the trochee that follows with

[5] Christopher Marlowe, *The Complete Poems and Translations*, ed. Stephen Orgel (New York: Penguin, 2007). All citations from Marlowe's "Hero and Leander" are taken from this edition.

"guilty," a word which invokes a sense of unease. The metrical irregularity then continues. What follows is an iamb and a spondee, further rhythmically disorienting the reader and slowing the reader down. Marlowe continues this rhythmic disorientation, though not as forcefully as in the first line. The third line opens with the difficult to scan "Sea-borderers" -- the only thing that is for certain is that "Sea" gets the strongest stress. Is the phrase a trochee followed by an iamb? Or, is it a spondee followed by an iamb or even a pyrrhic? The rhythmic uncertainty happens because of the word "Sea." "Borderers" would be a relatively easy word to scan (stressed-unstressed-stressed). But the seeming rhythmic clarity of the word is muddled when "borderers" neighbors the word "Sea." The meter itself hints at how water obfuscates borders, how landmasses separated by the sea may not be clearly separated at all. This muddledness of the Hellespont as a border is echoed in the word "disjoined." Though "disjoin" means to separate, the word "join" exists in the word itself, and that is the syllable the meter emphasizes. The meter is at cross-purposes with the definition of the word, suggesting that the Hellespont, which seemingly serves to disjoin Sestos from Abydos (and presumably Europe from Asia), actually joins them, a point Marlowe underscores when Leander swims across this border. Furthermore, "disjoin" also invokes the artisanal raft of joinery, which as Patricia Parker notes, "was also routinely employed in the period as the figure for other kinds of joining… from the joining of words into the constructions of reason, logic and 'Syntaxe'… to the joining of bodies into the one flesh of marriage and the joining of the body politic into a harmonious whole."[6] Disjoin not only then highlights the blurriness of the

[6] Patricia A. Parker, *Shakespeare from the Margins: Language, Culture, Context* (Chicago: University

Hellespontian border but also foreshadows especially the ways in which sexuality will figure prominently in the poem's representation of the border between Europe and Asia.

Other scholars have already remarked extensively upon the complexity of the Hellespont in this poem. Miriam Jacobson describes the Hellespont in the early modern English imaginary "as a geographical palimpsest, a text written over a partially obscured earlier text, a space layered with ancient loss, medieval betrayal, and early modern commercialism."[7]And indeed, the Hellespont is layered with renegotiated meanings and histories. Like Jacobson, I turn to the work of English travel writer George Sandys for a summary of the stories that inflected early modern English thinking on the Hellespont. In *The Relation of a Journey begun an. Dom. 1610*, Sandys opens his description of the Hellespont by explaining its nomenclature: it supposedly is named after Helle, the maiden who drowned in the water when trying to flee the machinations of her step-mother, Ino, who hated her step-children, Helle and her twin brother Phrixus.[8] Helle falls off the golden ram sent by her mother to rescue Helle and Phrixus and take them to Colchis, which is in the modern-day Asian nation of Georgia. Sandys also identifies the Hellespont as the location of Hecuba's grave. After the sack of Troy and the murder of Hector, her husband, Hecuba was divided up with the other women of Troy. She "fell to the hated share of Ulysses" and

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of Chicago Press, 1996), 89.

[7] Miriam Emma Jacobson, *Barbarous Antiquity: Reorienting the Past in the Poetry of Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 154.

[8] George Sandys, *A Relation of a Iourney Begun an: Dom: 1610 Foure Bookes. Containing a Description of the Turkish Empire, of AEgypt, of the Holy Land, of the Remote Parts of Italy, and Ilands Adioyning.* (London, 1590), 24.

"to free herselfe from shame and captivitie, shee leapt into the Hellespont."[9]

Sandys also makes a passing reference to the Hellespont as the scene of "the unfortunate loves" of Hero and Leander.[10] In Musaeus' version (which differs from Marlowe's in significant ways, one being that Marlowe's version is incomplete), Leander swims across the Hellespont every night to be with Hero. One winter night, however, the stormy sea makes crossing difficult, and the winds blow out the light that Hero has lit nightly to guide Leander across. Leander drowns, and Hero throws herself into the ocean in grief to be reunited with Leander. The fourth and last classical narrative Sandys invokes is perhaps the most famous ancient Hellespont story in today's imagination. Xerxes attemps to cross the Hellespont upon a "bridge of boates," has that plan foiled by "tempests," and retaliates against the Hellespont by lashing it with 300 whips.[11]

Jacobson is right to say that the classical narratives in Sandys' text indicate loss, but I want to draw some more similarities. All four stories are also about failed migrations across continental lines. Helle falls off the ram that is taking her from Boethius (Europe) to Colchis (Asia). Hecuba refuses to be taken from Troy (Asia) to Ithaca (Europe). Leander, though he makes the journey from Abydos (Asia) to Sestos (Europe), he eventually fails to make the journey and dies because of it. Xerxes fails to take his army across the Hellespont from Europe to Asia. Consequently, these stories establish the Hellespont as the border between Asia and Europe. Sandys even

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[9] Sandys, 24.
[10] Sandys, 25.
[11] Sandys, 25.

explicitly mentions that the Hellespont is "dividing Europe from Asia."[12] Sujata Iyengar argues that the Hellespont is also the place where the three sons of Noah, when dividing up the world, drew the line between Europe (which went to Japhet) and Asia (which went to Shem).[13] Consequently, Sandys' classical narratives not only invoke the Hellespont as a space of loss but also as a treacherous border, one that imperils individuals who try to cross it.

After recounting all these classical sources about the Hellespont, Sandys then moves to noting that both sides of the Hellespont have been under Ottoman control since the early-fourteenth century, which foreshadows the Ottoman Empire's conquest of Constantinople in 1453. According to Jacobson, "Sandys recounts that the defining moment of the loss of the Hellespont came when a Byzantine Christian woman living in Abydos (the city on the Asian side of the Hellespont) betrayed her people for the love of a Muslim Turkish general."[14] This idea of the Hellespont as a permeable boundary between the Christian and Muslim worlds was not an anomalous one. If the Hellespont is supposed to be a boundary between Europe and Asia, it's not a very effective one. Sujata Iyengar mentions how the Hellespont stands both as "a barrier for lovers" but also as "a metaphor for the spouse who separates a European lady and a Moor" in other early modern English works[15] The Hellespont is the spouse, whose function is to be the separation between the European woman and the Asian man, who share a forbidden attraction to each other. This characterization of the Hellespont is a

[12] Sandys, 25.
[13] Iyengar, *Shades of Difference: Mythologies of Skin Color in Early Modern England*, 109.
[14] Jacobson, *Barbarous Antiquity: Reorienting the Past in the Poetry of Early Modern England*, 156.
[15] Iyengar, *Shades of Difference: Mythologies of Skin Color in Early Modern England*, 109.

striking one for thinking about early modern race for two reasons. First, the anxiety and need to separate European women from Moorish men is something that is I've discussed already with Claribel in *the Tempest*. In that scene, the men mention that Claribel should have been married to a European man, almost as if that would have prevented her from being lost to African Moors. The racialization of the Islamic Empire is something that will become even more evident in my reading of *Paradise Lost* in Chapter 4. The Hellespont, then, is the preventive measure (marriage to a European man) for women being "lost" to the Moors. Given how Moor is also a raced term in the period, the Hellespont is not only a barrier to interfaith sex but also interracial sex. It is a border between Europe and Asia, as well as between Christianity and Islam. Second, this metaphor of the Hellespont as the spouse in the way of interracial sex shows how early modern conceptions of race, gender, and sexuality are bound up together. The Hellespont, in the metaphor Iyengar has identified thus serves to enforce racial, gendered, and sexual standards.

What makes the Hellespont such an ineffective border, though, is that it is a narrow body of water that can be crossed. The comparison Iyengar noted earlier acknowledges this permeability as well. The spouse that stands betwixt a European women and an Asian man is often cuckolded.[16] Marriage between European white women and European white men is not a foolproof way to prevent interracial sex, especially considering that the idea that women are "darkened" by sex within marriage is prevalent, for example, in Spenser's *Faerie Queene.* The spouse can be circumvented, similarly to how the Hellespont itself is traversable. As much as Sandys

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[16] Iyengar, 109.

bring up many famous tales of failed migration across the Hellespont, those examples of failed migration are in the minority. More people cross the Hellespont than die in it.

This traversability comes up in Sandys' final description of the Hellespont from the early modern era. He describes it as a customs port run by the Ottoman Empire. It is true that Sandys describes the port as heavily regulated and vigilantly watched by the Ottomans: "All ships are suffered to enter, that by their multitude and appointment to threaten no inuasion; but not to returne without search and permission."[17] It is also true that Sandys describes this control to be so suffocating that the landscape is imprisoned by the port.[18] But, the regulation of the Hellespont, reminiscent of border regulation today, exists because the Hellespont itself is so easily crossed. Trade items and people are ferried across from Europe to Asia and vice versa frequently each day. Given that the Hellespont serves as a prominent border, one that separates but also unites Europe with Asia (certainly more easily crossed than the Ural Mountains), in the early modern English imaginary, I argue that we should read the Hellespont not just as a static setting or location for the poem but an active force that shapes the racial dynamics of it. Furthermore, Marlowe's explicit articulation of this simultaneous uniting and separating, through his use of the verb "disjoins," shows how race, gender, and sexuality in this poem are already intertwined from the very beginning of the poem.

By reading with Anzaldúa's conception of border in mind, two features about

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[17] Sandys, *A Relation of a Iourney Begun an: Dom: 1610 Foure Bookes. Containing a Description of the Turkish Empire, of AEgypt, of the Holy Land, of the Remote Parts of Italy, and Ilands Adioyning.*, 26.
[18] Jacobson, *Barbarous Antiquity: Reorienting the Past in the Poetry of Early Modern England*, 157.

the Hellespont become more salient. First, it is a fraught site for thinking about gendered, racial, and sexual difference. Second, it carries material and metaphorical forces. Both of these observations about borders are key arguments of border studies scholars, and I turn again to a concept in Anzaldúa's theory to explain what happens to those who live in this fraught border space.[19] For Anazldúa, *los atravesados,* the people who do not fit neatly or refuse to conform to divisions on either side of the border, live in the borderlands, and the borderlands exist not just on either side of a geopolitical boundary but in the minds of those who do not fit neatly into groups on either side of the border. Anzaldúa turns to Spanish when she describes *los atravesados.* The most literal translation is those who are crossed, but it also carries a connotation of those who go against norms or traditions and colloquially refers to cross-dressers. Arguably, the closest English word in meaning is perhaps transgressor (to step across but also to flout norms). Anzaldúa's refusal to use transgressor is significant. "Transgressor" implies that someone is actively choosing to go against tradition or disobey the binary logic of the border (this side or that side). *Atravesado* is a past participle -- grammatically it is passive. It is not necessarily that *los atravesados* are choosing to transgress a border but that the arbitrary drawing of a border has put them in the position of flouting it. The people who ended up flouting norms existed *before* the border. The border is the violence that happened to them. They didn't choose to rebel but were placed into a status of rebellion once the border was drawn. Anzaldúa's list of *los atravesados* include: "the squint-eyed, the perverse, the queer,

[19] Mary Pat Brady, "Border," in *Keywords for American Cultural Studies*, ed. Bruce Burgett and Glenn Hendler, 2nd ed. (New York: New York University Press, 2014), 36.

the troublesome, the mongrel, the mulatto, the half-breed, the half dead; in short, those who cross over, pass over, or go through the confines of the 'normal'."[20] Included are terms that I've already discussed when thinking about the construction of early modern racial categories: mongrel, mulatto, half-breed, cross-dresser, queer.

It would be rash, however, to just say that the area surrounding the Hellespontian border (the setting for "Hero and Leander") is functioning exactly like Anzaldúa's borderlands between Mexico and the United States. It is true that both Anzaldúa's *frontera* and the setting for Marlowe's "Hero and Leander" contain bodies and behaviors that do not conform to racial and sexual binaries, stereotypes, and hierarchies. Anzaldúa's borderlands, as Mary Pat Brady puts it, allow people who are oppressed (Anzaldúa talks notably about queer Chicana women) "to insist that one can embrace multiple contradictions and refuse the impossible effort to synthesize them fully, thus turning apparent oppositions into sources of insight and personal strength."[21] In other words, the borderlands become a tool to write back against a dominant (i.e. white patriarchal) narrative, one that accommodates the messy and paradoxical experience of being a marginalized person in a world that is neither designed for nor hospitable to one's life. This is certainly not the historical and geographical context of Marlowe's poem, and the political work of the poem is not using the concept of the border or borderlands to resist and push back against colonial violence. Marlowe's borderlands do a different kind of work. Instead of pushing back against an ossified narrative of white dominance, the borderlands in "Hero and

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[20] Anzaldúa, *Borderlands: The New Mestiza = La Frontera*, 25.
[21] Brady, "Border," 35.

Leander" are a space in which this narrative of white dominance can gain more substance by working through and then occluding the contradictory identities that are present in the border space. By reading "Hero and Leander" through Anzaldúa's theory, I argue that Marlowe's poem shows how racial hierarchies are being formed and negotiated in early modern English poetry.

My argument is that the borderlands of the Hellespont are where European whiteness is articulating itself. It is a site in which what María Josephina Saldaña-Portillo calls racial geography, a racial divide along the border, is in formation. To clarify what she means by racial geographies, Saldaña-Portillo notes how the towns of Laredo (in the United States) and Nuevo Laredo (in Mexico) are described in such starkly different racialized terms in a novel by Jack Kerouac even though the towns are largely similar:

> I elaborate on this history here because it underscores the power of Kerouac's constructed vision of the border as a stark divide between two distinct racial geographies ("Just across the street Mexico began"). Situated along corresponding sides of the river, these arid towns are geologically, architecturally, and "racially" far more similar than dissimilar. Today, as in 1955 when Kerouac published his autobiographical novel, Laredo's population (like its architecture and environs) looks quite similar, if not identical, to the population of Nuevo Laredo: mestizos, Indian, and light skinned, 90 percent of the city's inhabitants are still of Mexican descent. Nevertheless, Sal saw radically different racial geographies on either side of the "mysterious bridge" rather than overlapped or crossed ones.[22]

The similarity between Laredo and Nuevo Laredo echoes that between Sestos and Abydos. The populations of Sestos and Abydos, at least in Marlowe's poem, arguably look similar. Hero, on the European shore of the Hellespont in Sestos, and Leander, on

[22] María Josefina Saldaña-Portillo, *Indian given: Racial Geographies across Mexico and the United States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 3.

the Asian shore in Abydos, are described using the same physical descriptors, especially in relation to skin color. Despite these similarities, the poem works to develop this arbitrary demarcation between white Europe and Asia. This demarcation then turns the waters of the Hellespont itself into a kind of borderland, the site of one of the most homoerotic and queer moments in all of early modern English literature. Nonetheless, "Hero and Leander" is not necessarily a border-propaganda project. Marlowe, unlike Spenser, has been touted as the counter-nationalist poet, and as to be expected, "Hero and Leander" both builds up but reveals the artificiality of the border along the Hellespont.

Race-ing Hero and Leander

These two forces, one of buttressing the distinction and hierarchy between Europe and Asia and the other of exposing the artificiality of this distinction, play out in Marlowe's poem most visibly in the descriptions of both Hero's and Leander's bodies. The poem highlights their similarities while also beginning the process of differentiating them — Hero is identified as European throughout the poem while Leander becomes Asian as the poem progresses. The similarities between the two characters are most prominent when the narrator describes their bodies in the beginning of the first sestiad. They are both described as having fair, white bodies. The whiteness (which refers currently just to the color of Hero's body) is startlingly aggressive:

> She ware no gloves, for neither sun nor wind
> Would burn or parch her hands, but to her mind,
> Or warm or cool them, for they took delight

To play upon those hands, they were so white. (1.27-30)

On one level, we can read this description of Hero's hands about her imperviousness to the elements. Neither sun nor wind can change her complexion because the sun and wind, which would darken and chap the skin, are so "delighted" by Hero's hands that all they want to do is "play" with them without marring them. But, given Kim Hall's assertion that words like "fair" and "white" and "dark" aren't just sensory or aesthetic terms but potentially racialized ones, it is curious that Hero's "whiteness" is described so adamantly in a text that takes place on the border between Europe and Asia.[23] Hero's white body (if we take hands as a synecdoche for the body) is immutable, and if a white body is associated with European whiteness as a race, then her race seems equally unchangeable. This observation is significant for a variety of reasons. For one, as I argued in earlier chapters, sexual behavior darkens women — it impugns their racial whiteness. Marlowe's description of Hero's body suggests that Hero's racial whiteness is not subject to darkening, even as the sun and the wind "play" with her body. Hero's race is both tied to the material (hence the quote about her white body being impervious to the effects of weather) but also not. Forces that would affect the material (such as the sun and wind) do not affect her whiteness. Second, it touches upon or even foreshadows the robust debates that happen later about whether race is something caused by climate or something inherent, a debate that Sujata Iyengar notes is already starting to coalesce.[24] Hero's whiteness seems to fall into the latter category (though other people's whiteness seems not to). Third, her whiteness is construed as a

[23] Hall, *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England*, 261.
[24] Iyengar, *Shades of Difference: Mythologies of Skin Color in Early Modern England*, 110.

protective measure — while the whiteness of other female characters I discussed in this dissertation is always under threat, Hero's extreme whiteness is precisely what protects her from these forces of darkening.

Lisa Hopkins goes as far to argue that Hero's white fairness marks an originary moment for thinking about race. In further describing Hero's beauty, the poet remarks:

> So lovely fair was Hero, Venus' nun,
> As Nature wept, thinking she was undone,
> Because she took more from her than she left,
> And of such wondrous beauty her bereft.
> Therefore, in sign her treasure suffered wrack,
> Since Hero's time hath half the world been black. (1.45-50).

Hopkins reads this passage marking "the originary moment at which 'fair' Europe, by virtue of Hero's beauty, will first assert superiority over 'blackened' Asia."[25] I agree with Hopkins to some extent. Hero's white body is being contrasted with people in another area of the world, and the other areas of the world are connoted as lacking beauty because of it. I depart from Hopkins' reading though in that I don't necessarily pinpoint Hero's time as the originary moment of racial difference. What makes the rest of the world "black" is not Hero's fair body. There are many bodies on the Asian side of the Hellespont that would have looked like Hero's (though the poem suggests that her white fair body is unique in its imperviousness to darkening forces). What begins to assert this superiority is this firm insistence on the beauty of Hero's body and the insistence on how fair her whiteness is. Consequently, I read Marlowe's description of Hero as not just constructing her as an aggressively white European character but also

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[25] Lisa Hopkins, "Marlowe's Asia and the Feminization of Conquest," in *English Renaissance, Orientalism, and the Idea of Asia*, ed. Debra Johanyak and Walter S.H. Lim (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 116.

as contributing to the idea that European whiteness renders the rest of the world black and less beautiful. By making Hero the lodestone of European whiteness, the poem provides a counterpoint to discuss what I find to be the more complex racialization of Leander in the poem. Though the blazon of Leander is admittedly more robust than that of Hero, Leander's body is described similarly to Hero's up to a certain point. His body possesses a similar kind of desirable whiteness:

> Even as delicious meat is to the taste,
> So was his neck in touching, and surpassed
> The white of Pelops' shoulder; I could tell ye
> How smooth his breast was, and how white his belly,
> And whose immortal fingers did imprint
> That heavenly path with many a curious dint
> That runs along his back, but my rude pen
> Can hardly blazon forth the loves of men,
> Much less of powerful gods: let it suffice
> That my slack muse sings of Leander's eyes,
> Those orient cheeks and lips (1.63-73)

The whiteness of Leander's body surpasses that of Pelops's shoulder and the whiteness of his belly clearly attracts the desire of the narrator and (presumably) the reader. But, while Hero's whiteness seems to protect her from the effects of sexuality in causing racial darkening, Leander's whiteness seems almost to invite it. When the sex is heterosexual, sexual behavior only seems to darken women — men are generally left untainted by these encounters. But, given my previous chapter's claim that same-sex desire and behavior seems to be associated with the foreign, the (presumably) male narrator's desire of Leander has curious effects on his racialization in the passage.

There is no doubt that this description of Leander is erotic, and the passage itself strongly suggests the writer's own attraction to Leander's body. Whose fingers

“did imprint” the heavenly path with “curious” dints along Leander’s back? In one sense, God, who molded bodies out of clay, but also, the poet. Marlowe’s fingers are writing the words that describe Leander’s desirously muscular back, and he is the one imprinting, or putting into print, Leander’s body. In a Pygmalion-esque move, the poem acknowledges that the writer is creating the body he desires. If that hint of homoerotic desire weren’t enough, the poet goes even further. After this description of Leander’s back, the poet talks about his “rude pen.” Metrically, rude pen scans as a spondee, which emphasizes the phrase but also slows the reader down. The “my” before rude pen is also stressed, which means “my rude pen” stands out even further. The poet not only wants the reader to think about a rude pen but *his* rude pen. One reading of this emphasis would be that it’s a move of false modesty. Marlowe is saying his pen (which stands for his ability as a writer) cannot properly blazon Leander’s beauty (even though Marlowe has just written a cultural touchstone for homoerotic desire).

But this reading seems curiously chaste for such an erotic description. I ask why the rude pen is interrupting the blazon. The force of its meter (3 stressed syllables) seems like an interruption. The blazon stops at Leander’s waist before the rude pen intrudes, and the description up to this point seems unconcerned with modesty. The interruption of the rude pen doesn’t read solely as a way to not mention what lies below Leander’s waist, especially since it opens the reader to fantasize about what Leander’s bottom looks like. The intrusion of the poet’s rude pen (a phallic object) right when the blazon is supposed to detail Leander’s lower backside also strikes me as not merely coincidental. James Bromley argues that the blazon's

"trajectory seems to be the penetration of Leander's body."[26] I turn my focus to what happens to the poet's... pen.[27] The enjambment immediately after my rude pen then leaves the reader in a moment of suspension — what does the rude pen do in the space between the lines? In the next line, we find that the rude pen, so stressed and lengthened because of the meter, is curiously devoid of power, barely able to blazon forth Leander's body. In subsequent lines, Marlowe even uses the word "slack," which Jenny Mann notes is a word Marlowe also uses in his translation of Ovid's elegies to indicate a "sudden loss of masculine vigor."[28] Whatever happened (or to be more specific, whatever was fantasized) between the lines has spent the rude pen so it is now slack, and Leander's body plays a key part. The ejaculations of praise mellow out in subsequent lines when the poet, rather than giving tumescent description, ends the description of Leander's body with a more understated "let it suffice."

I argue that this exposure to male desire then proliferates questions about Leander's gender (feminine or masculine), sexuality (active or passive), and race (white European or Asian). It is only after this homoerotic episode in which Leander is described in a way that marks him with racial otherness: "orient cheeks and lips." "Orient" is a word that has multiple resonances in early modern England, and for this reason, it's not immediately obvious how it works as a racializing term. I'll discuss the ambiguous racialization of the term later. I first want to note how "orient" also indexes Leander's complicated relationship to gender. Miriam Jacobson argues that it alludes

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[26] James M. Bromley, *Intimacy and Sexuality in the Age of Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 39.
[27] Bromley, 40.
[28] Jenny C. Mann, "Marlowe's 'Slack Muse': *All Ovids Elegies* and an English Poetics of Softness," *Modern Philology* 113, no. 1 (August 2015): 58.

to the early modern pearl trade, and she discusses the manifold connotations of the orient pearl. She notes that "in the symbolic vocabulary of medieval and early modern English poetry, orient petals are metaphors for female chastity, purity, and impenetrability" and mentions also that pearls, symbolizing sexual purity, were a prominent feature on images of Queen Elizabeth I.[29] Nonetheless, pearls were also associated with seminal fluid, as early moderns believed that pearls were formed from water when oysters rose to the surface of the sea at night to receive "seminal dew" from the moon.[30] Pearls, consequently, indexed both the feminine and the masculine, which makes it unclear what exactly Marlowe means when he calls Leander's cheeks and lips "orient."

Are Leander's "orient" features feminine or masculine? Is he more designed for active or passive love? Marlowe's list of Leander's suitors does a bit but not much to give some headway on this question:

> Had wild Hippolytus Leander seen,
> Enamored of his beauty had he been;
> His presence made the rudest peasant melt,
> That in the vast uplandish country dwelt;
> The barbarous Thracian soldier, moved with nought,
> Was moved him, and for his favor sought,
> Some swore he was a maid in man's attire,
> For in his looks were all that men desire, (1.77-84)

Leander is able to move figures that are commonly thought immune to erotic love. Hippolytus is described as having sworn a vow of chastity to Artemis. The Thracians are associated with Ares, the god of war. His appeal also extends across class backgrounds, able to attract not just princes and soldiers but also peasants. The last

[29] Jacobson, *Barbarous Antiquity: Reorienting the Past in the Poetry of Early Modern England*, 165.
[30] Jacobson, 161; 165.

two lines in the passage above would presumably serve to explain why Hippolytus, the rude peasant, and the Thracian soldier, paragons of rugged and active masculinity, would fall under the sway of Leander. They would not ordinarily desire men, but they desire Leander because he looks like a woman, though in the clothes of a man.

The logic of this argument, however, presupposes these men would desire women or the feminine. In the first place I push back because Hippolytus and the Thracian soldier especially are figures that do not find women desirable at all (though this could but doesn't necessarily mean that they are attracted to men or the masculine). Hippolytus declares a vow of chastity and scorns Aphrodite (to his great detriment). The Thracian solder is "moved with nought." It could be that these figures do not desire either men or women, the masculine or feminine, but something else entirely that Leander only possesses. I also resist the reading that Leander must look like an androgynous figure, one with an ideal blend of the feminine and masculine. A maid in man's attire could look feminine or masculine depending on how the clothing interacts with the body. There isn't necessarily a guarantee that one can identify on sight what the "proper" gender of that dressed body is. If anything, Leander's multiple gendered identifications reveal how the gender binary relies on the active/passive binary of sexuality and vice versa. To be masculine is to be active, and to be feminine is to be passive. Though this mapping might seem simple and all inclusive, Leander reveals how fragile this taxonomy is. Destabilizing the masculinity-femininity binary also destabilizes the active-passive binary and vice versa. To have someone who not only doesn't fall cleanly onto either side of the binary or even someone who encompasses all of it short-circuits the taxonomy. As I will discuss later, Leander's

destabilizing force is a threat to white supremacy and heteropatriarchy, and it will need to be neutralized somewhat at the end of the poem.

But for now, Leander upends both gender and sexuality by attracting the desire of all men. Furthermore, the declaration at the end, that Leander, "in his looks were all that men desire" sets up a representational paradox since all men do not desire the same thing. Yet, Leander possesses this je-ne-sais-quoi quality that seems to attract all men. His representation is thus paradoxical but also dependent on the reader of the poem. In other words, the reader of the poem (presumably male) is invited to participate in desiring Leander's body. In doing so, he is asked to project his own desires by imagining Leander's body as a desirous one, much like the poet with his rude pen. If Leander looks like to each man what he desires, that means his relationship to gender is almost in suspension. The poem identifies him as a man through pronouns, but it is unclear how feminine or masculine he presents and even what his body looks like. Is he indeed a maid in man's attire or a man with feminine features? Or neither of these? Even if we move to a conception of gender that associates female with passive and male with active rather than attire or bodily characteristics, this does little to solve the problem of Leander's femininity and masculinity. Jeffrey Masten notes that the epithet "Amorous Leander" seems to imply the active agent in love, but "amorous" also has an obsolete usage (that would have been relevant in the early modern period) as the passive agent (1.51).[31] Leander could be both loving and loved, masculine and feminine. As Judith Haber notes, "The blason of Leander… further confounds distinctions between male and female, anatomy and

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[31] Masten, *Queer Philologies: Sex, Language, and Affect in Shakespeare's Time*, 156–57.

costume, impotence and potency." We have little closure on what Leander's relationship to gender or sexuality is.[32]

"Orient," in addition to underscoring the paradoxes with regard to Leander's gender sets up a complex relationship with race. First and foremost, what color is an orient cheek and lip? Iyengar notes "orient" is usually glossed as ruby-red because of orient rubies.[33] Miriam Jacobson argues that "orient" means white because of orient pearls.[34] This opens up a range of interpretations of Leander's face. Is he white-cheeked and red-lipped? Are both his cheeks and his lips red? Are they (and I take this to be the least likely) both white? Regardless of how we gloss "orient" with reference to color, what I infer from this confusion is that the whiteness of Leander's body is more contentious than Hero's. As I noted before, Hero's body is aggressively white, but Leander's body is mostly white with some possible splotches of darkening red. Though this difference between Hero's body and Leander's body could just be an accident on the part of the poet, the very word that marks Leander's body as possibly a smidgen darker than Hero's, "orient," which already in the early modern period seems too vexed a term to use casually. Jacobson, in her glossing of orient as white, also acknowledges that "orient pearls are simultaneously bright white (which, in reference to skin color, marks one as Western) and foreign.[35] She then goes on to note how the pearl then has both "Western" and "Eastern" connotations, which is also true of Leander. His body is (mostly) white, which marks him as white European, but he also

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[32] Judith Haber, "'True-Loves Blood': Narrative and Desire in 'Hero and Leander,'" *English Literary Renaissance* 28, no. 3 (1998): 376.
[33] Iyengar, *Shades of Difference: Mythologies of Skin Color in Early Modern England*, 109.
[34] Jacobson, *Barbarous Antiquity: Reorienting the Past in the Poetry of Early Modern England*, 166.
[35] Jacobson, 166.

lives in Asia. This moment, I argue, is when the poem begins to racialize Leander as something other than white European, as Asian.

Some may argue that it would be inaccurate to describe Leander as "Asian," and that Jacobson's term "Eastern" or a more ethnically specific term would be appropriate. As to a more specific term, it is unclear what ethnicity Leander would actually belong to (and Hero for that matter -- would she be Greek or English?) and the stakes of identification in the poem seem larger than just distinguishing between the people of Sestos and Abydos. Furthermore, the Hellespont, as I mentioned before, was often seen by early moderns as the demarcating line between Europe and Asia, suggesting that these larger identity categories were already in play in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Furthermore, I use the term "Asian" to argue for a connection between early modern racial discourse and racial discourse today, but also because what I'm arguing for in this chapter is that the poem is articulating "the inaccurate *idée fixe* of [Asia as] a separable landmass and people."[36] "Eastern" seems more nebulous and less geographically specific while "Asian" references the land mass that is supposedly fixed and wholly separate from Europe. This idea of a fixed land mass with a distinct racial identity is also, as we recognize today, a fiction.

Another apt criticism of the term "Asian" is that it is extraordinarily baggy and indexes the elision of many different groups of people into one category. While this elision has been a mechanism for institutionalized racial oppression, it has also paradoxically been a source of potential solidarity and political action.[37] "Asian"

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[36] John Kuo Wei Tchen, "Asian," in *Keywords for American Cultural Studies*, ed. Bruce Burgett and Glenn Hendler, 2nd ed. (New York: New York University Press, 2014), 26.
[37] Yen Le Espiritu, *Race and U.S. Panethnic Formation*, ed. Ronald H. Bayor, vol. 1 (Oxford

acknowledges that the specific stereotypes and characterizations extant in this poem have influenced perception not just of Middle Eastern Asians but of South Asians, Southeast Asians, Central Asians and East Asians. I describe Leander as Asian both because it links him to present racial discourse *and* to racial discourse preceding the early modern. "Asia" links back to Greek concepts of the "Asiatic" and its associations "with vulgarity, arbitrary authority, and luxurious splendor, qualities deemed antithetical to Greek values" by the fifth century C.E.[38] "Asian" thus is a term that indexes a specific geographical place, the fiction of a continent inhabited by its own distinct race of people, an already extant history of hierarchizing from the Greeks, and a future racial taxonomy.[39]

Leander starts resembling to Anzaldúa's *atravesados*, the crossed subjects who exist in a borderland. At this moment in the poem, Leander has not yet chosen to cross the border, but he is still a crossed subject, one who does not adhere cleanly on either side of the feminine-masculine, Asian-European, or (as I will point out later) passive-active divide. The existence of this Hellespontian border itself has already put Leander in the position of presenting as an ambiguous, crossed subject. As Leander's blazon progresses, his relationships to gender and race become more and more complex. By the end of the blazon, Leander resists neat categorization both in terms of gender or race (arguably to a degree greater than Hero). This nebulousness makes sense. If the Hellespont is indeed the border between Europe and Asia (and European whiteness and racialized Asianness), figures like Leander, those that look like and share culture

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University Press, 2014), 2.

[38] Tchen, "Asian," 26.

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and language with white Europeans, are a problem. If the border really does separate two distinct categories of people, the similarities of people across the border pose a contradiction. Based on how Leander's blazon progresses, the poem seems to be trying to make sense of him, but in trying to make sense of him, it also starts questioning both Leander's masculinity and his whiteness in that order. It is only after Leander has passed through the desiring gazes and fantasies of the presumably male poet and reader that he gets the moniker "orient."

The poem then buttresses the claim that foreignness and queerness are linked together, a linkage that Jonathan Goldberg illustrates devastatingly in his analysis of how sodomy was used as a justification for the genocide of Native Americans.[40] Joseph Boone also corroborates this linkage when he details how the works of fourteenth-century French archbishop Guillaume Adam argues that a "perversion of both sexuality and gender… is not only the fate that awaits European men if the West falls to the Saracens; it is *already* the destiny of all those fair Christian youths enslaved by these infidels."[41] Leander provides a prominent example in which this linkage between foreignness and queerness occurs for men in addition to women, a connection supported by the observation that "European articulations equating Muslim cultures with male homoeroticism inspired some Europeans to 'turn Turk' for reasons not merely mercenary."[42] By reading "Hero and Leander" as a poem not just about the characters or the myth but specifically about the border between Europe and Asia, it

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[40] Jonathan Goldberg, *Sodometries: Renaissance Texts, Modern Sexualities* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010), 179.
[41] Joseph Allen Boone, *The Homoerotics of Orientalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 29.
[42] Boone, 29.

becomes apparent how much the poem is racializing Leander in multiple directions. What is astonishing though is that one aspect of Leander's racialization has to do with how he is subject to other men's desire. He seems to have no agency in this desire — he does not try to attract the men who fall for him. Being desired by other men then marks Leander as something akin to a border subject, someone who does not fit within the expected bounds of gender or sexuality, and it is only after he is marked as a queer subject that he also becomes a potentially Asian one.

Leaping Lively In

Though it may strike some readers as merely coincidental that Leander's subjection to queer male desire may also mark him as an Asian racial other, the blazon is not the only moment in the poem in which Leander's dalliances with a man are layered with his racialization as Asian. So to further understand how sexuality and race are calibrated in relation to each other, I turn to perhaps the most erotic scene in the entire poem, Leander's swim across the Hellespont:

> And, crying "Love, I come," leaped lively in.
> Whereat the sapphire visaged god grew proud,
> And made his capering Triton sound aloud,
> Imagining that Ganymede, displeased,
> Had left the heavens; therefore on him he seized. (2.154-158)

As perhaps one of the most erotic (and homoerotic) passages written in the English language, Leander's swim has (rightly) attracted much critical attention. Gregory Bredbeck reads it as a moment in which "Leander demonstrates a monocular devotion to one system of sexual relations" and is then "confronted with homoerotic physical

passion."[43] Leander, singularly driven in his heterosexual passion for Hero, is blindsided by Neptune's homoerotic desire. Bredbeck reads Leander's admission to Neptune that he is no woman demonstrates that Neptune's desire is outside the realm of Leander's comprehension and that he is consequently having difficulty making sense of this erotic encounter.[44]

Judith Haber notes this same non-sequitur quality of the homoeroticism, though her argument is that the point of the homoeroticism in the poem is that it is incomplete and unconsummated.[45] It resists narrative closure. James Bromley also reads this moment as one in which conventional understandings of sexuality are undermined, but he focuses more on the positing of a different system of sexual ethics. He argues that Neptune is more concerned with "cultivating the pleasures of the body's surfaces" rather than a more possessive penetration.[46] Furthermore, Neptune (as an older figure and a god) could easily overpower and dominate the younger man, but that is not what happens:

> Neptune nurtures Leander without being domineering. Though he protects Leander out of self-interest -- the advancement of his own pleasure -- he does not lay a claim such that Leander cannot experience other kinds of pleasure... Possession, penetration, and consummation eventually are linked in Hero and Leander's encounter, and what differentiates Neptune's seduction of Leander is its insistence on pleasure without possession, penetration, or even consummation.[47]

Neptune's encounter with Leander rewrites many of the scripts of sex more common

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[43] Gregory W. Bredbeck, *Sodomy and Interpretation: Marlowe to Milton* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 132.
[44] Bredbeck, 132–33.
[45] Haber, "'True-Loves Blood': Narrative and Desire in 'Hero and Leander,'" 380.
[46] Bromley, *Intimacy and Sexuality in the Age of Shakespeare*, 40–41.
[47] Bromley, 41.

during the period, advocating for a system of sexual ethics that invokes nurture over control and enjoyment over possession. What I draw from these three readings is that Leander's encounter with Neptune is pushing back against conventional understandings of sexuality in the period, whether it is confounding it, deliberately leaving it open, or rewriting the narrative of sexuality entirely.

This idea of the Hellespont as a space in which one may encounter alternative sexualities is not one that is unique to this poem. The historian Alison Games notes:

> in their manuscript and published accounts of the Mediterranean -- east and west, Catholic and Muslim -- Scots and English visitors described it, as a place where all sorts of sexual appetites could be satisfied and all sorts of domestic living and sexual arrangements were sanctioned, whether homosocial communities of men, women gathered under the protection of eunuchs but the sexual partners of a single man, or homosexual relations.[48]

While Games covers a wider geographical swath than just the Hellespont, the Hellespont is part of the Mediterranean (and the Mediterranean itself could be thought of a borderlands in that it is the boundary among Europe, Africa, and Asia). Nonetheless, historical accounts have also depicted the Hellespont as a place in which one could encounter many kinds of alternative sexualities. In this way, it functions similarly to Anzaldúa's borderlands, a space occupied by people who don't fit neatly into society's arbitrary and predetermined categories. Consequently, the Hellespont becomes a place in which alternative sexualities become associated with a certain geographic location, the borderlands between Europe and Asia.

I turn now to looking at how the swim across the Hellespont not only marks Leander in terms of sexuality but also in terms of race. As I mentioned earlier, the

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[48] Alison Games, *The Web of Empire: English Cosmopolitans in an Age of Expansion, 1560-1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 60.

Hellespont is not only known for Leander's swim across it. The classicist Elizabeth Minchin points out that:

> here, where the strait is relatively narrow, was the safest place at which to make a crossing between Europe and Asia. So, even as we remember the story of Leander's nightly swim, we also remember the account of Xerxes' bridge of boats (Hdt. 7.43) … The topography of landscape and waterscape bring some or all of these stories to mind; thus the setting becomes 'humanized.'[49]

Given Leander's swim across the Hellespont to "conquer" Hero, it is difficult not to draw parallels between him and Xerxes, the Persian king who attempts to cross the Hellespont (twice but only once successfully) to attack Europe. I will touch more upon the comparison to Xerxes later in the chapter when I discuss the closing consummation scene between Hero and Leander in the poem. But for now, I point out that in the act of swimming across the Hellespont, Leander invokes a connection to Xerxes, a figure who certainly invokes stereotypes associated with Asia: excess, tyranny, and rapaciousness.

The implicit comparison to Xerxes, though, is not the only force that is marking Leander as Asian in his swim. His dalliance with Neptune also invokes common tropes of the homoerotic East that would have been well established in the English and larger European imaginations in this period. As many historians and cultural scholars have pointed out in recent years, contact between Europe and the Islamic empires of Asia and Africa were manifold: monarchs called upon sultans for aid, scholars from Europe studied Arabic in Muslim universities, and Christians and Muslims visited each other's places of worship.[50] These manifold points of contact

[49] Elizabeth Minchin, "Remembering Leander: The Long History of the Dardanelles Swim," *Classical Receptions Journal* 8, no. 2 (April 2016): 278.
[50] Boone, *The Homoerotics of Orientalism*, 26.

meant that tropes of homoeroticism associated with the Asian Middle East would have been circulating, as evidence from certain travel narratives also confirms. While I will discuss some of these travel narratives more in detail later, for now, I wanted to clarify that homoerotic tropes associated with the Middle East (and more broadly, Asia) were likely present not only due to European travel narratives but also because of the cultural consumption of literature and art of the Islamicate world. In the first half of the sixteenth century alone, at least 1,000 books on the Ottoman Empire were published, with the number rising to 2,500 for the second half of the century.[51] Given this proliferation of material about the Islamicate world (and again, Asia more broadly) in Europe during the early modern period, I will now turn to demonstrating where the homoerotic tropes so reminiscent of Asia appear in Marlowe's description of Leander's swim.

After Leander "leapt lively in" to the water, Neptune imagines "that Ganymede, displeased, / Had left the heavens; therefore on him he seized" (2:154; 157-158). This likening to Ganymede opens up many homoerotic associations, especially given the famous myth. Zeus, enthralled by Ganymede's beauty, abducts Ganymede to become Zeus's cupbearer. Ganymede is also such a well-known trope in early modern England to the point where the myth has been (perhaps with anxiety) religiously scrubbed of its homoeroticism, though not successfully. As Richard Rambuss argues, "the figure of Ganymede had moreover been widely adopted in the Renaissance as an emblem of the soul's ecstatic ascent to God and its triumph over the

[51] Boone, 27.

temptations of the world."[52] Rambuss also mentions though that despite Ganymede's Christian allegorizations, "the devotional appropriation of this mythical figure hardly entailed a corresponding evacuation of all his original (homo-)erotic significances."[53] Moreover, Ganymede is not just a boy, but he is a Trojan boy, hailing from the other side of the Hellespont from Europe. Ganymede's Asian origins are invoked when travel writers refer to beautiful boys from Islamic Asia as "Ganymedes." Thomas Herbert, writing about his travels to Persia from 1626-1629 refers to the male youths who served the sultans cupbearers as "Ganimeds" and describes them as "in vests of gold, rich bespangled Turbants and choise san|dalls, their curl'd haires dangling about their shoulders, rolling eyes, and vermillion cheeks."[54] It is clear that Herbert understood the Ganimeds not just as cupbearers but also as effeminate sodomites: "for… these whores seldome goe without their wages: and in a higher degree of perfect basenesse, these Paederasts … affect those painted, antick roab'd Youths or Catamites in a Sodomitic way … a vice so detestable, so damnable, so unnaturall as forces hell to shew its uglinesse before its season."[55] With a much less moralistic bent, Richard Knolles also recounts how Mahmet II, so enraptured with the beauty of a Transylvanian youth (surname Dracula), pursued the youth. The youth initially resisted but relented "and so became his *Ganimede*; and was of him long time

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[52] Richard Rambuss, *Closet Devotions* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998), 54.
[53] Rambuss, 56.
[54] Thomas Herbert, *Some Yeares Travels into Divers Parts of Asia and Afrique Describing Especially the Two Famous Empires, the Persian, and the Great Mogull: Weaved with the History of These Later Times as Also, Many Rich and Spatious Kingdomes in the Orientall India, and Other Parts of Asia; Together with the Adjacent Iles. Severally Relating the Religion, Language, Qualities, Customes, Habit, Descent, Fashions, and Other Observations Touching Them. With a Revivall of the First Discoverer of America. Revised and Enlarged by the Author.* (London, 1638), 138.
[55] Herbert, 235.

wonderfully both beloued and honoured."[56]

The trope of the beautiful boy is not a distinctly Asian or Middle Eastern one. Jeff Masten has written extensively on early modern "boy-desire" which consider both the "early modern desire *for* boys and young men, which is taken as a rarely contested universal given" and "the desires of such young men themselves."[57] Joseph Boone notes that some European travel writers admitted that these young boys they encountered in Asia were beautiful and handsome, *and* that Europeans recognized that the Islamic Asian penchant for beautiful boys extended to those who were European (perhaps to their dismay and anxiety).[58] The trope of the beautiful boy in European literature isn't necessarily racialized (though I imagine some would argue differently). But, Marlowe's invocation specifically of Ganymede racializes Leander because of Ganymede's association with Islamic Asia. Though the beautiful boys associated with Ganymede are not exclusively Asian, many of them in the travel narratives seem to be, with only a few notable European exceptions.[59] At this point, the variety of Asian and Islamic associations that accrue around Leander (of which Ganymede is one example) are collectively distancing him from European whiteness and marking him as potentially Asian. Leander's race is further thrown into question here because his whiteness was so insisted upon earlier in the poem.

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[56] Richard Knolles, *The Generall Historie of the Turkes from the First Beginning of That Nation to the Rising of the Othoman Familie: With All the Notable Expeditions of the Christian Princes against Them. Together with the Liues and Conquests of the Othoman Kings and Emperours Faithfullie Collected out of the- Best Histories, Both Auntient and Moderne, and Digested into One Continuat Historie Vntill This Present Yeare 1603: By Richard Knolles* (London, 1603), 363.
[57] Masten, *Queer Philologies: Sex, Language, and Affect in Shakespeare's Time*, 166.
[58] Boone, *The Homoerotics of Orientalism*, 60–63.
[59] One question raised here is about what "Ganymede" is referring to. Is it referring merely to a beautiful boy or a specific social institution in which a boy is brought into the household to perform various kinds of… duties.

Admittedly, it may seem that Leander's race now becomes more uncertain, but his gender becomes clearer, especially since many of the European travel narratives portray the beautiful boys as being passive sexual partners. Joseph Boone argues that "male beauty needn't be only female identified to be appreciated; in fact, the desired object can be emphatically masculine in *both* appearance and behavior" in "Middle Eastern homoerotic expression" and in "Western travelers' observations."[60] After detailing stories of a desired "power wrestler boy… whose arms could chains destroy" and a younger male partner who "leaves in the morning full of machismo and smug with self-satisfaction," Boone also remarks that these narratives among others question current attitudes of what the age range for these male beloveds would be, opening up the possibility that "the clean-faced beautiful *boy*, in sum, may well be a full-fledged *adult*."[61] A closer examination of Asian homoerotic sexual practices provides significant counterexamples to the stereotype of the effete, effeminate Asian man, deficient of masculinity (though this trope, especially that of the Asian man as the passive partner – i.e. the bottom – persists to this present day).[62]

While many readings of the infamous swimming scene assume that Leander is the passive partner and Neptune the active one, the text resists a straightforward assignment of "top" or "bottom" to either figure. Part of this reading arises from Bromley's assertion that the Neptune-Leander encounter seems uninterested at all in penetrative sex. Neptune does not seek to possess or penetrate Leander. The grammar

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[60] Boone, *The Homoerotics of Orientalism*, 64.
[61] Boone, 64.
[62] Tan Hoang Nguyen, *A View from the Bottom: Asian American Masculinity and Sexual Representation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 18.

of the passage also resists an easy identification of active and passive partners. For example, "[Neptune] seized. / Leander strived" (2.158-159). Thus opens the homoerotic encounter between the two. Both figures are subjects of active verbs. Though Neptune admittedly does much more of the moving in the subsequent lines, Leander is not just lying still, taking all of Neptune's… actions:

> He clapped his plump cheeks, with his tresses played,
> And smiled wantonly, his love bewrayed.
> He watched his arms, and as they opened wide
> At every stroke, betwixt the would he slide
> And steal a kiss, and then run out and dance,
> And as he turned, cast many a lustful dance,
> And threw him gaudy toys to please his eye,
> And dive into the water, and there pry
> Upon his breast, his thighs, and every limb,
> And up again, and close beside him swim,
> And talk of love. (2.181-191)

While Neptune claps, plays, smiles, watches, slides, steals, runs out, dances, (possibly) turns, casts, throws, dives, pries, swims, and talks, Leander is not just motionless. Because Leander is in the Hellespont, he at the very least is treading water if not actively swimming (given that he's opening his arms). As Neptune is touching him, he is also touching Neptune back as he moves forward in the water. Furthermore, it is actually difficult to figure out who's doing what in the passage for two reasons. First, the antecedent of any male pronoun in the passage is hard to identify because Leander and Neptune are both male (the most ambiguous instance to me is "as he turned" in line 186). Second, many of the verbs have their subjects elided. The passage mostly consists of actions that aren't always attributed explicitly to a subject. This grammatical confusion then opens up a possibility of alternative readings of the passage, ones in which Leander isn't just swimming along while fending off the

advances of Neptune, but actively participating.

Even the declaration that Neptune is “deceived” because Leander is not a woman does not read as persuasively when considering the proliferation of narratives about rough trade. The “straight” partner, after having engaged in sex with another man, insists upon his heterosexuality sometimes vehemently and violently. It is not an implausible reading that Leander could both want to swim across the Hellespont to get to Hero but also enjoy his pit stop in Neptune’s embrace. Just because Leander sexually desires Hero doesn’t mean that he can’t enjoy his dalliance with Neptune for a bit, but then insist on crossing the river to get to Hero. I am not arguing that this reading is the definitive one for the poem, but that Marlowe’s poetry does not preclude the possibility that Leander enjoys his swim. This reading makes the end of Leander and Neptune’s encounter more poignant and more plausible. Leander does not react to Neptune with the virulent homophobia like what we find in Herbert’s descriptions of the Ganymede cupbearers. Instead, “his color went and came, as if he rued / The grief which Neptune felt” (2.214-215). Is this blushing merely caused by compassion for Neptune’s situation, or could some of it also be the sorrow and guilt that comes from indulging Neptune and then breaking his heart? Could also some of it be regret, another possible definition of rue, of choosing Hero over Neptune? Again, the text does not make this abundantly clear, rather leaving the possibility for these readings open.

While this possibility of versatility in terms of sexual roles may mark Leander as less Asian given the feminization of Asia, I argue that this fluidity in sexual roles actually makes Leander even more associated with Asia. Middle Eastern narratives of

sex between men were less prescriptive in terms of pederastic sexual roles than those in Europe. Boone comments on how many narratives of homoerotic love between men entailed both boys and adult men taking “pleasure in assuming both active and passive roles.”[63] Many displays of this sexual versatility took place in hamams, or public baths, and for this reason, foreign visitors flocked to hamams and took the trope of the hamam as a zone of great “homoerotic potential” back to Europe.[64] For Middle Eastern sexuality, “who is on top, who is on bottom, and who is between – all of these permutations turn out to be less than certain in the pre-modern world of homoerotic love and desire in the Middle East.”[65] This trope of the hamam as a site of fluid sexuality among men arguably also manifests in “Hero and Leander.” While Jacobson has read the bottom of the Hellespont as representative of Asian opulence, I argue that the Hellespont, with Neptune’s “azure palace,” “sweet singing mermaids,” “heaps of heavy gold,” and pearls, resembles the infamous pleasure-palace-like hamams in the early modern Middle East, the most infamous one built in the Ottoman Empire in the early sixteenth century (2.161-165).[66] Given this context, it is easy to reimagine the scene of Neptune and Leander occurring not just in the Hellespont but in the bathwaters of the hamam, which the Hellespont curiously resembles. The Hellespont then is explicitly linked to a site in Asia notorious for men taking on multiple sexual roles. Consequently, this vision of sexuality, one not obsessed with who is on top and who is on bottom, is not one that is unique to Marlowe’s poem. The fluidity and

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[63] Boone, *The Homoerotics of Orientalism*, 74–75.
[64] Boone, 81.
[65] Boone, 77.
[66] Boone, 80–81.

flexibility that so define Marlowe's sexual vision in Bromley's reading of the poem could very well be influenced by observations of homoerotic sexuality in Islamic Asia.

Leander Conqueror

Leander's involvement in queer homoerotic encounters in the Hellespont ultimately complicate his relationship to race. His character accrues more and more associations with Asia across the poem, which puts him in contrast with the more stable representative of European whiteness in the poem, Hero. This racial dynamic plays out even more in the consummation scene between Hero and Leander at the end of the poem. Hero's white Europeanness is still emphasized at the end of the poem in the consummation scene. She is described as having "white limbs," and she also covers herself with a white sheet on her bed to create an 'ivory mount" that Leander tries to conquer (2.242; 273). Hero shields her white body with whiteness.

Leander's appearance, by contrast, gets little mention, though I argue that he is racialized in other ways. I mentioned earlier that Leander swimming across the Hellespont evokes Xerxes, who invades Europe by traveling the same route. In the consummation passage, Leander is often likened to a conquering figure. As Leander first approaches Hero, "the nearer that he came, the more she fled, / And seeking refuge, slipped into her bed" (2.243-244). Later, "his hands he cast upon her like a snare" (2.259). The poet also compares Hero to defending a fort against a conquering force: "And every limb did as a soldier stout / Defend the fort, and keep the foreman out" (2.271-272). In perhaps the most explicit comparison between Leander and a conqueror, the appearance of Hero's body under a sheet is compared to a globe that

Leander is trying to capture: "the rising ivory mount… which is with azure circling lines empaled, / Much like a globe (a globe may I term this, / By which love sails to regions full of bliss)" (2.273-276). The poet seems well aware that the comparison he makes is a bit of stretch ("may I term this"), but it seems important enough to identify Leander with a conquering force. Because who he seeks to conquer (Hero) is so reminiscent of European whiteness, Leander's association with Xerxes, the excessive and rapacious Persian ruler (there is also a line about love being "deaf and cruel where he means to prey"), becomes stronger (2.288). "Where" is also a curious word in that it potentially turns Hero from an object into a place, and the place she seems most associated with is Europe. I do not find it coincidental that Leander's gender, sexuality, and race then all seem to cohere simultaneously in a moment of violence. Andrea Dworkin has noted the disturbing trend of representing heterosexual sex as an invasion of a woman by a man, and this violence is intertwined with the threat of Asia's assault on Europe, perhaps an early precursor to yellow peril.[67] Leander's masculinity, his activeness in sex as the penetrative partner, and his Asianness are all underscored together. The poem almost seems to want to get rid of previous ambiguities in this scene, one which plays into the trope of a non-European man penetrating a white European woman. As demonstrated earlier in my first chapter, this comparison has been a tool to justify white supremacy (as well as heteropatriarchy). To cast Leander as this threat to white supremacy then, he must be more coherent with relationship to gender, sexuality, and race.

And yet, the border, with its associated fluidity of identity, persists.

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[67] Andrea Dworkin, *Intercourse* (New York: Free Press, 1987), 79.

Admittedly, Leander is not only racialized as Asian in this passage. His description as a conqueror invokes not just the invasion of Greece by Xerxes but also the engine of European colonialism and imperialism that is coming to life in the early modern period (though I argue it invokes Xerxes more because of who Leander is trying to conquer). He is also compared to Hercules, who hails from Greece, pulling fruit from the garden of the Hesperides, most commonly located in North Africa. My most generous reading of the poem here is that it is gesturing towards the similarities in violence between multiple colonial ventures. Whether it is Asia invading Europe or Europe invading Africa, there is always an element of cruelty and violence. This possible intimation of opposition to colonial venture would be in line with what Patrick Cheney terms Marlowe's "poetics of counter-nationhood" in which he "foregrounds a bitter objection to the [national] power structure tyrannical, deterministic suppression of individual freedom" and "a cry for freedom from this suppression."[68]

Ultimately, the poem does not support such a clean reading of Leander's race. Given that Leander is a figure who shares much in appearance and background with Hero but finds himself on the side of Asia, his racializations pull him in different directions. His race remains complex and uncertain. I am cautious of the reading that Leander should be read as mixed-race, similarly to the reasons I am cautious of reading him as androgynous. The text doesn't seem to fully support a reading in which he blends two different races, but rather indicates a dynamic in which Leander's

[68] Patrick Cheney, *Marlowe's Counterfeit Profession: Ovid, Spenser, Counter-Nationhood* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 21.

different racializations don't necessarily reconcile (much like the ways in which he is gendered). Hero, too, becomes more complex in terms of race by the end of the poem when her face peeking through her hair is described as "a kind of twilight break… from an orient cloud" (2.319-320). Many of the racial complexities of "orient" that I mentioned earlier with Leander now start applying to Hero, and the idea that sex "darkens" women, which I discussed more robustly in Chapter 1 with *the Tempest* becomes present at the end of this chapter as well.

Though Leander's gender, sexuality, and race remain unresolved at the end of the poem, the gesture towards collapsing some of these ambiguities in the consummation scene with hero brings to light some important dynamics. First, Leander's destabilizing presence as a border subject is a threat to white supremacist and heteropatriarchal systems that must be neutralized somewhat. The poem attempts to fix him into more stable categories at the end (though not successfully). Second, tracing Leander's racialization and sexualization throughout the poem reveals that these are co-constitutive processes that aren't always distinct. The language of intersectionality sometimes implies that racialization and sexualization are distinct processes that occasionally meet, but the example of Leander shows how these processes can happen simultaneously and together.

Conclusion

This reading, in which both Leander's race is held in complicated suspension, seems to fit the spirit of the poem than one that tries to firmly establish who or what he is. Judith Haber points out especially in this final consummation scene, "Hero and

Leander" is marked by lack and displacement, by non sequitur and pointlessness."[69] I agree with Haber too on her reading of the end of the poem, that it "refuses the comforts of a conventional, mastering narrative" by leaving us not with an end but with a horrific image of Night, as she "danged down" to Hell (2.334).[70] Haber ultimately concludes that Marlowe's poem "simultaneously distances and denaturalizes" its "dominant fiction" of seduction and "acknowledges its own pointlessness, its own status as an incomplete artifact, acknowledges that (as the Latin tag appended to the end informs us) Desunt nonnulla , 'some things are lacking.'"[71]

This is not the only fiction that the poem seems to leave incomplete and open-ended. Marlowe's poem demonstrates how the fiction of a border between Europe and Asia creates complicated racial situations for the characters that reside on that border, especially with Leander. It also suggests the fictionality of the border itself – clean distinctions between what is white European and what is Asian do not exist. It reveals the difficulty of pinning down gender, race, and sexuality, especially in the fraught geography of a border, but also shows how a dominant system of white supremacy starts eradicating these fluidities of identities. It shows that the complexity of border theory, so precisely articulated by Anzaldúa, can illuminate spaces and times beyond the contemporary U.S.-Mexico border. But, it does little to resolve anything besides making apparent the numerous complex power dynamics in play as European whiteness seeks to construct itself on and through the border of the Hellespont. I turn now to further explore the complex racial dynamics that emerge when European

[69] Haber, "'True-Loves Blood': Narrative and Desire in 'Hero and Leander,'" 384.
[70] Haber, 385–86.
[71] Haber, 386.

whiteness seeks to articulate itself in the work of a writer with a very different flavor from “Hero and Leander” – John Milton’s *Paradise Lost*.

CHAPTER 4

Universality: John Milton's *Paradise Lost*

Introduction

In Milton's epic *Paradise Lost*, Adam and Eve begin their morning prayer in Book 5 by pointing directly to the beautiful things within Paradise: "These are thy glorious works, Parent of Good, / Almighty, thine this universal frame / Thus wondrous fair" (5.153-155).[1] What exactly are Adam and Eve praising here when they commend the "universal frame"? A more contemporary notion of the word frame would encourage us to think in the sense of a framework – the structures and laws that order and organize the universe. With this interpretation, Adam and Eve would be appreciating the architecture or design of the universe. In fact, this excerpt of *Paradise Lost* appears as a citation for one of the Oxford English Dictionary's definitions of frame as "the universe, the heavens, the earth, or any part of it, regarded as a structure."[2] This reading aligns with some of the other references to God the Father, such as "Universal Maker" (3.676). But, "frame" carries material connotations in the early modern period. Rayna Kalas argues that "*frame* did not strictly refer to the design, planning, or structure of a thing but to its presence as matter: to its manifestation within temporal, or worldly, reality."[3] With this in mind, "universal frame" refers not just to the design of the universe but the universe itself. There is one

[1] John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Gordon Teskey (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2005). All subsequent citations from *Paradise Lost* come from this edition.
[2] "frame, n. and adj.2". OED Online. March 2020. Oxford University Press. https://oed.com/view/Entry/74151?rskey=KRHCYx&result=1&isAdvanced=false (accessed April 06, 2020).
[3] Kalas, *Frame, Glass, Verse*, x.

other interpretation of frame that I want to bring up. Kalas's study of Renaissance framing also notes the word's importance in the craft of poetic language. Framing refers to "the special orchestration of language," the tempering and shaping of a "frame of words."[4] The "frame" here then indirectly brings up Milton's own "special orchestration of language," *Paradise Lost* itself. In that case, "universal frame" acknowledges also Milton's project of creating a universal epic, one that applies to all humankind.

One need only look at the beginning of the poem to find Milton's gesture towards universality in *Paradise Lost*. Milton wishes to speak of "Man's first disobedience," he "intends to soar above th'Aonian mount," and he wishes to "assert Eternal Providence / And justify the ways of God to men." (1.1; 14-15; 25-26). The stress on "Man's" in the first line and "men" in the twenty-sixth brings to attention the lack of modifier. Milton is not intending to speak to or tell the story of a particular population of humankind. He also seeks to "soar above th'Aonian mount", which underscores his desire to exceed his classical forebears but also to take in a birds-eye view of the world, to speak of it from a perspective that can see all. Milton's universal aims are acknowledged by scholars even beyond analyses of the famed, twenty-six line opening. For example, Barbara Lewalski notes that Milton, among other early modern writers, wrote this epic "along inclusivist lines" as the epic was considered in the early modern period as "a heterocosm or compendium of subjects, forms, and styles."[5] Consequently, Milton seeks to tell (what to him was) the universal story of

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[4] Kalas, x–xi.
[5] Barbara Kiefer Lewalski, *Paradise Lost and the Rhetoric of Literary Forms* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985), 4; 6.

humanity, the fall of Adam and Eve, in a sufficiently universal genre, the epic.

Keeping the universal aims for *Paradise Lost* in mind, I also invoke the historical context of Milton's epic as a call to turn to race as an analytical lens. In other words, how does early modern race interact with Milton's aims to create a universal epic? Indeed, it is undeniable that "by the end of the seventeenth century, several European city-states and provinces were trading in slaves, plantations were well under way in several parts of the world, and the native populations in the Americas had already been subjected to genocide."[6] The colonizer/colonized dynamic does not map neatly onto what's happening in the early modern period: "Europeans desired to re-enter the powerful economic networks of the Mediterranean, the Levant, North Africa, India, and China; feared the military might of the Turks; and were dazzled by the wealth and sophistication of many Asian kingdoms."[7] Consequently, Milton's epic is positioned to be an important racial text in the period, and I propose a way to read it as one.

I argue that Milton's epic is attempting to be a universal story for humankind, but the depiction of the universal human in *Paradise Lost* is European and white. This depiction, in turn, means that the epic runs into some tensions, especially because racial othering becomes a way in which Milton indicates fallenness in a character. I read these tensions as indications that the epic is struggling with race in the period, but in its attempts to unify humankind through a condition of fallenness, it ultimately ends up reifying racial differences because of its insistence on a prelapsarian body that is

[6] Ania Loomba and Jonathan Burton, eds., *Race in Early Modern England: A Documentary Companion* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 8.
[7] Loomba and Burton, 8.

distinctly white. In other words, Milton's epic makes whiteness universal, which in turn sabotages the epic's claims to universality. To make my argument, I will first discuss the way in which Milton lays out his objective of writing a universal epic, uses racial difference to indicate fallenness through the character of Satan, and then establishes the prelapsarian body as white through Adam and Eve. I will then move to arguing that these contradictory moves set up racial paradoxes in other points in the epic, moments in which Milton's universal aims and his association of fallenness with racial difference clash. Specifically, I will point to the narrative of the Fall, the representations of queer sexuality, and the survey of the fallen kingdoms. Ultimately, I argue *Paradise Lost* is a significant racial fiction because in attempting to cohere a racially diverse world into a single depiction of universal humanity, it instead exposes what an unruly and complex amalgam race in the early modern period is.

Satan

As I briefly stated earlier, Milton's universal ambitions become clear in the first few lines of the poem. The famous opening relies heavily on references to "mankind" and the use of the first-person plural:

> Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit
> Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
> Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
> With loss of Eden, till one greater man
> Restore us, and regain the blissful Seat (1.1-5).

Though "man" especially to readers today would highlight significant claims about how included women were when using "man" to stand in for "humanity," Milton's use of "man" especially in the first five lines seems to include all people considering the

significant role Eve plays in "man's firs disobedience." The "woe" is modified also by the first-person plural "our" and Christ's crucifixion is what restores "us," the members of the humanity tainted by original sin. This is a very open, very expansive sense of humanity, one in which seemingly every person is united in that all humans are fallen, marked by original sin, and need of salvation. The antagonists of the epic are not even human -- they are devils. Despite this seeming desire to write an epic that applies universally to all of humankind, Milton's efforts to differentiate Satan and his demon horde from humanity, the angels, and God, first reveal that Milton's image of the universal human is one that is firmly European and white. Many of the ways in which he attempts to mark Satan and the other demons as "different" is to equate them with tropes that are related to non Europeans.

For example, Satan's body is perhaps the darkest in all of *Paradise Lost*. In his first speech, Satan remarks that he is “changed in outward luster” (1.97). These associations between Satan and darkness continue throughout the epic. He and his followers are deemed “sons of darkness” by God the Father (6.715). He is described as “darkened” later in Book I (I.599), as possessing “dark intent” right when he finds the serpent (9.162), as a “black mist low-creeping” when he inhabits the serpent in Paradise (9.180), and as the “prince of darkness” when triumphing to Sin and Death about Adam’s and Eve’s fall (10.383). Satan’s fall has made him less bright, more evil, and uglier. Admittedly, darkness is not always relevant to race -- especially in these passages taken in isolation, darkness seems to be more of a moral or an aesthetic quality. But, my analysis in Chapter 1, especially with the examples of Desdemona and Lucrece, demonstrated that a darkness that seems tied wholly to morality can still

carry racial baggage. In the case of Satan, the darkest figure in the epic, is also the one most strongly tied to foreign empires. Satan is a figure in which darkness, evil, ugliness, and foreignness become intertwined, and "dark" or "black" could be used to describe all of those qualities.[8]

Satan's racialization happens most explicitly through his comparison to foreigners, most notably to Turkish leaders. In his examination of the presence of Eastern empires in Milton's work, Walter S. H. Lim notes that "Satan's infernal throne is directly tied to the immense wealth and sensual luxury associated with the Islamic Orient – the seraglio of the 'Great Turk' in sexual and economic excess."[9] We see this comparison most obviously in the beginning of Book 2:

> High on a throne of royal state which far
> Outshone the wealth of Ormus and of Ind
> Or where the gorgeous East with richest hand
> Showr's on her kings barbaric pearl and gold
> Satan exalted sat (2.1-5).

Book II opens with a transgression – that of meter. The word "high" demands a stress, breaking the iambic pattern and indicating that Satan's ambitions for eminence and authority (he is sitting high on a throne) are disruptive and wrong. Ending the line with "far" primes the reader to imagine themselves in distant lands, and indeed, the second line confirms that the reader is imagining a scene from Ormus, both the name of a kingdom and a port in the modern Middle East, and (Mughal) India. The association

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[8] It is worth nothing also that many Black revolutionaries in the early United States identified with Satan, who they read as a messianic rebel. For more on this reception history, see Wilburn, Reginald A. *Preaching the Gospel of Black Revolt: Appropriating Milton in Early African American Literature*. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: Duquesne University Press, 2014.

[9] Walter S. H. Lim, "John Milton, Orientalism, and the Empires of the East in Paradise Lost," in *English Renaissance, Orientalism, and the Idea of Asia*, ed. Debra Johanyak and Walter S.H. Lim (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 209.

of the Islamic East with decadence, wealth, and excess is obvious, and another metrical transgression against iambic rhythm in line 4 implies the wrongness of this Eastern decadence. The verb “Showr’s” demands a stress as well, which impugns the subject of that verb “the gorgeous East.” And, if we had any doubt about associating metrical transgression with moral transgression, Satan’s name disrupts the iambic rhythm in the fifth line and what he does in that line is an action normally associated with God: “exalted sat.”

What is most remarkable about the above lines, though, is that Satan is not just being compared to the Islamic sultan. He is one. If we excise the first term of “or,” we get “High on a throne of royal state… / where the gorgeous East with richest hand / Showr’s on her kings barbaric pearl and gold / Satan exalted sat.” Because of the “or,” Satan exists both in Pandemonium and the Islamic East. He is the ruler of both. Satan not only then becomes marked as different from humankind by his association with the sultan but also with the governmental form of tyranny:

> Milton’s Islamicization of hell makes clear the point that the political organization of the infernal abode affords the most revealing example of the workings of tyranny. Milton’s meaning is a politically resonant one – every tyrant in human history finds his great original ancestor in the devil; also tyranny is a defining hallmark of the governments of the East and should not be emulated by any civilized nation that prizes the values of true liberty.[10]

For Milton, there is a direct political lineage from Satan to the Islamic East, which explains why he conflates Satan with the figure of the sultan in the poem. Milton heightens Satan's association with the dangerous foreigner when we encounter Satan in Book I. After Beelzebub prompts him to speak, Satan cries to his fellow fallen

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[10] Lim, 213.

angels, “Awake! Arise, or be for ever fall’n!” (1.330), and the angels respond to this cry as when a “sultan” waves his spear to direct his troops (1.348). What happens next is curious:

> A multitude like which the populous north
> Poured never from her frozen loins to pass
> Rhene or the Danaw when her barbarous sons
> Came like a deluge on the south and spread
> Beneath Gibraltar to the Libyan sands. (1.351-355).

Teskey notes here in his edition that the landing of the fallen angels in Hell is compared to the Northern barbarians’ destruction of the Roman Empire. In three lines we move from sultans to barbarians, presumably from Germany. What is Milton accomplishing with this shift from Muslims to barbarians? It heightens the sense of threat from Satan – his troops have the power to wreak destruction like the barbarians did upon Rome.

It is worthwhile to parse both comparisons here a bit more. For Milton, Satan is as threatening to humankind as the barbarian hordes or the Islamic Orient is to England. Undergirding that sense of threat is also a sense of foreignness. Satan is as foreign to and different from humankind as the Islamic Orient or Barbarian nations are to England. This comparison not only marks Satan as a foreigner who is dangerous but a foreigner whose threat needs to be neutralized (in Satan's case, by the intervention of the Son). Milton's use of racial difference to mark an entity as needing to be ordered and subjugated is not unique to Satan. Eric Song notes how "In *Paradise Lost*, Chaos is a simultaneously feminized and Eastern space that must be subjugated before order can prevail. The Miltonic world is neither stable nor immutable, but established

against a primordial opponent marked by both sexual and racial difference."[11] Similarly to Chaos, Satan, marked by racial difference, is foreign to the known (Western) world and a threat to it that needs to be neutralized and circumscribed into his proper place.

Eden, Adam, Eve

Milton's efforts to establish Satan as a foreign outsider, tinged with characteristics of the East, opens up the question of what exactly Satan is an outsider to. I argue that Satan is constructed as an outsider to Paradise, which is significant because of Paradise's ties to the English landscape garden. Much of this casting of Satan as an outsider happens even before he steps foot in Paradise. As he flies toward the Gates of Hell in Book II, Satan is compared to the merchants who bring "their spicy drugs" from India to Ethiopia:

> they on the trading flood
> Through the wide Ethiopian to the Cape
> Ply stemming nightly toward the pole. So seemed
> Far off the flying Fiend. (2.640-643).

Satan's journey out of hell is compared to the circuitous route that spice merchants had to travel around the Cape of Good Hope. While Satan is presumably the first being to travel out of Hell and is making up the route as he goes, the comparison to the merchants suggests that the route, while circuitous, is purposeful. Like the merchants who navigate towards the South Pole, Satan has some idea of where he's supposed to be going. Though Milton does not explicitly indicate where the merchants are headed

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[11] Eric B. Song, *Dominion Undeserved: Milton and the Perils of Creation* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 138.

after they round the Cape, it seems obvious from the text alone– the only reason to round the Cape would be to head back North along the coast of Africa to reach Europe, a hunch affirmed by David Quint's reading that Milton is referring to Vasco da Gama's voyages in *the Lusiads*.[12] One reading of this passage would then be that Satan, in traveling to Europe, is marked as an outsider to Europe since traveling to a location implies that one starts on the outside of it. While this reading is certainly in play, I also want to dwell on the liminal space that merchants occupy. It is unclear from the passage where the merchants originate and if that even matters. Are the merchants returning back home or going to Europe for the first time? Consequently, the passage does not seem to go any farther than identifying Satan as like someone who travels well outside of the bounds of Europe. This traveling though is not aimless wandering. It is purposeful movement that crosses known boundaries. The merchants cross from India to Ethiopia to the Cape and presumably to Europe, trading goods that serve as markers of colonial wealth but also incorporate the foreign into the domestic, an anxiety detailed in my first chapter. Merchants, while serving colonial aims, are also forces of transgression with the potential to cause harm. And though there is no requirement for consistency among similes, Satan’s comparison to both merchants and the Islamic sultan amplifies the notion that he is not only an outsider but a dangerous one.

This potential for harm at the hands of a traveling outsider becomes apparent when Satan is compared to another traveling figure: the vulture. He is also compared

[12] David Quint 1950-, *Epic and Empire: Politics and Generic Form from Virgil to Milton* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1993), 253–56, http://newcatalog.library.cornell.edu/catalog/2202016.

to a vulture that migrates from Northern Asia to India and crosses through central China in search of prey:

> As when a vulture on Imaüs bred,
> Whose snowie ridge the roving Tartar bounds,
> Dislodging from a region scarce of prey
> To gorge the flesh of lambs or yeanling kids
> On Hills where Flocks are fed, flies toward the Springs
> Of Ganges or Hydaspes*,* Indian streams;
> But in his way lights on the barren plaines
> Of Sericana*,* where Chineses drive
> With Sails and Wind their cany wagons light,
> So on this windy sea of land the Fiend
> Walked up and down alone, bent on his prey. (3.431-441).

Unlike the previous passage, Satan is compared to a figure that is firmly located outside of Europe: northern Asia in the realm of the Tartars. As Richard Cogley notes, the term "Tartars" would have encompassed in Tudor-Stuart England "the Mongols, the Turks, the Tatars, and the Timurids," with the inclusion of the Mongols and Turks being especially significant as active threats against European power on the borders of the continent.[13] Satan's comparison to the Tartar is also unsurprising considering the common tropes about the Tartars' historical origins. They are linked both to the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel, "who supposedly had degenerated from Mosaic observance into incivility and idolatry in the centuries after their disappearance from the Bible" and the Scythians, "who had epitomized benighted barbarism in Western sources at least since the time of Herodotus" and also especially for Spenser, who used the Irish's alleged Scythian origins to call for their genocide.[14] Satan is the outsider character used to demarcate and establish a European racial identity. This comparison, given Satan's

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[13] Richard W. Cogley, "'The Most Vile and Barbarous Nation of All the World': Giles Fletcher the Elder's The Tartars Or, Ten Tribes (ca. 1610)," *Renaissance Quarterly* 58, no. 3 (2005): 783.
[14] Cogley, 784.

role as the racial outsider against which a European racial identity coalesces, is unsurprising.

If we are tracking the ways in which Satan is located in the epic so far, then he is now located in the Middle East/South Asia to his comparison with the Islamic Orient and North Asia through his comparison to a vulture of Tartarus. The vulture's travel, unlike that of the merchants, though is marked as dangerous. The vulture feeding on prey is not characterizes as a fact of nature, but almost cruel. Gorging on the flesh of lambs and kids activates the idea of the sinful eating the innocent. While the vulture's travel is restricted to Asia (Northern Asia to China to India), the vulture still strikes as a threatening figure. It seems that the vulture is less going to a specific destination but searching for prey, and prey can be potentially be anywhere, including Europe. The vulture's location in Tartary links it to the Genghis Khan's threatening invasions of Europe. In other words, Europe is not safe from this vulture. Satan, like the vulture, is hunting for prey, and any reader of the Bible would know that his prey is humankind in the Garden of Eden. Consequently, through the comparison between Satan and the vulture, Eden and Europe also become intertwined.

This simile foreshadows the links between Milton's Eden and the European landscape garden. This is a connection that scholars have already abundantly explored. Roland Frye notes the similarities between Eden and the famed Italian gardens during the Renaissance, which inspired many English travelers. The walks that thread through the garden as well as the use of the fountain as a blending between artifice and nature are strongly reminiscent of Italian Renaissance gardens.[15] Charlotte Otten has also

[15] Roland Mushat Frye, *Milton's Imagery and the Visual Arts: Iconographic Tradition in the Epic*

noted how Milton's Eden resembles actual English gardens from his day.[16] John R. Knott notes that while Eden certainly has resonances with Italian and English gardens, "Milton's Garden has other, more exotic aspects that make us recognize it as a version of the earthly paradise and not simply a Christianized Arcadia. It offers trees, fruits, and flowers of all kinds, fragrances beyond our normal experience, and growth more luxuriant than one would expect to find."[17] Knott argues that this plenitude and luxuriousness locates the Garden outside of Europe, and to some degree, it does. But this very plenitude and luxuriousness that suggest a foreign locale also paradoxically and simultaneously suggests a European locale. Based on my analysis of this same plenitude and fecundity in Spenser's Garden of Adonis, European gardens also were characterized by containing trees, fruits, and flowers imported from all over the world. This comparison to the Garden of Adonis, furthermore, is affirmed by the text since Milton describes Eden as even more lush, "more delicious then those Gardens feign'd / Or of reviv'd Adonis" (9.439-440). A European garden would be the most likely place one would encounter global flora in one location. Otten points out that English herbalists also found delight in the English garden's bringing together of plants of all different varieties and colors — the phenomenon is not just an Italian one, and she also suggests that the fragrances that permeate Eden associate Eden just as much with England as they do with the East.[18] English gardens, too, were designed to contain many fragrances. Consequently, even the more foreign and seemingly unlocatable

Poems (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1978), 223–24.

[16] Charlotte F. Otten, "'My Native Element': Milton's Paradise and English Gardens," *Milton Studies* 5, no. Journal Article (1973): 253.

[17] John Ray Knott, "Milton's Wild Garden," *Studies in Philology* 102, no. 1 (2005): 67.

[18] Otten, "'My Native Element': Milton's Paradise and English Gardens," 251.

aspects of Paradise associate Paradise with Europe, even when taking into account the numerous classical and Christian allusions in the description of Eden. Eden is indeed a Christianized Arcadia, but in *Paradise Lost,* the Christianized Arcadia is not just distinctly European and even more distinctly English.

The location of Paradise is significant because Paradise is the birthplace of humankind, and God the Father is described as the "sovereign planter" who crafts Eden (4.691). Milton's Eden suggests universality by incorporating aspects paradisal gardens from many different literary antecedents. Otten alone names Homer, Ovid, Stephanus, and Conti.[19] As for biblical sources, Frye mentions the books of Genesis, Song of Songs, and Revelation.[20] Nonetheless, these references are woven into a landscape that suggests a strong similarity to gardens in Europe and England. Milton's Eden is making gestures to something universal but also geographically particular. Given Milton's mission of making the biblical epic a distinctly English one, one could argue a similar move is happening here. *Paradise Lost* makes the Garden of Eden, the birthplace and origin of all humanity according to the Bible, European. Moreover, God the Father, as Eden's architect and primary landscape gardener, authorizes this European origin point for humanity. Consequently, the image of the original and universal human is a European one, and Milton further reinforces this image through his descriptions of Adam and Eve.

When Satan first spies Adam and Eve in Paradise, he deduces much about Adam and Eve's character from their appearance: "And worthy seemed for in their

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[19] Otten, 253.
[20] Frye, *Milton's Imagery and the Visual Arts: Iconographic Tradition in the Epic Poems*, 220.

looks divine / The image of their glorious Maker shone: / Truth, wisdom, sanctitude severe and pure…" (4.288-293). A "look" refers not just to appearance but the appearance of the face, and it is Adam and Eve's faces that indicate their truth, wisdom, and sanctitude. The image of God lies in the way they appear visually, and their appearances are even termed "divine." So, what does a divine, worthy face and body look like? First, we get Adam:

> His fair large front and eye sublime declared
> Absolute rule; and hyacinthine locks
> Round from his parted forelock manly hung
> Clustering, but not beneath his shoulders broad: (4.300-303).

With three stressed syllables in a row, Milton takes care to emphasize not just Adam's forehead but its size and its color – it is large and light-colored. I argue that Adam's hair is also golden. Gordon Teskey glosses "hyacinthine locks" as "rich, dark hair," but if we trace the hyacinthine hair reference back to Homer's *Odyssey*, we get this line: "κόμας, ὑακινθίνῳι ἄνθει ὁμοίας," which translates to "hair resembling the hyacinthine flower" (*Odyssey* VI.231).[21] The line occurs when Athena is giving Odysseus a makeover after his bath, so he could better impress Nausicaa and her maidservants. Her work in touching up Odysseus' hair is described as pouring gold onto or around silver: "ὡς δ᾽ ὅτε τις χρυσὸν περιχεύεται ἀργύρῳι ἀνὴρ / ἴδρις…" (*Odyssey* VI.232-233). Emily Wilson, in her new translation of Homer's *Odyssey,* affirms this translation by describing Athena's makeover of Odysseus. She translates Homer as comparing a "knowledgeable craftsman" pouring "gold on silver" as Athena

[21] Homer, *Odyssey: Books VI-VIII*, ed. A. F. Garvie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). All subsequent references to *the Odyssey* refer to this edition unless specified otherwise.

pouring "attractiveness across [Odysseus'] head and shoulders."[22] While Teskey seems to think Adam is a brunet, he could be blond because of the Homeric comparison of Odysseus' hair to gold and silver. The body and face that reflects the divine image of God arguably looks white and European (regardless of Adam's hair color).

Eve's appearance corroborates this reading, with less contention than that of Adam. Eve is blonde because of more direct comparison of her hair to gold:

> She as a veil down to the slender waist
> Her unadornèd golden tresses wore
> Disheveled, but in wanton ringlets waved
> As the vine curls her tendrils… (4.304-307)

Her hair also marks her as distinctly white and European. Consequently, *Paradise Lost*'s description of Adam and Eve makes the white, European body the one most associated with the image of God, as it is through the appearance of these bodies that Satan and the narrator pick up on the traces of the divine within the human. Through the bodies of Adam and Eve, whiteness becomes imbricated with moral rectitude, divinity, and beauty. But perhaps most importantly, both the prelapsarian body, the universal human body (Adam and Eve are the stand-ins for humanity in this epic), and the original human body (Adam and Eve are the predecessors of humanity) are all portrayed as white and European.

As Lisa Lowe mentions, "the question of aesthetic representation is always also a debate about political representation."[23] Later on in the same introduction, Lowe details the history and representation of the ideal U.S. American citizen as white and

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[22] Homer, *The Odyssey*, trans. Emily Wilson, First edition. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2018), 6.232-236.
[23] Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996), 4.

male, which results in the exclusion or disassociation of other kinds of bodies from the label of "citizen."[24] Lowe's book thinks about who gets to be called a "citizen" and what are the consequences and implications of being excluded from the label "citizen," as many Asian American communities are. For this reason, it is important to dwell on how Milton's choices for representation of the ideal prelapsarian, universal, and original human body and the implications of it. By portraying this body as white (though Milton at least takes care to include a male and female body), Milton is delineating which kinds of bodies get to be included and which kind of bodies are not despite his assertion that *Paradise Lost* has universal relevance for humankind.

I do not want to argue that Milton, while aiming to be universal, is actually excluding bodies of color from his idea of humanity -- the text and its contexts are too layered for such an easy (though temptingly elegant) reading. Milton's choice to represent Adam and Eve as white creates a dynamic of inclusion and exclusion that lies at the heart of Roderick Ferguson's definition of race, which centers around race as a category that demarcates who is included and excluded in institutions and has been a touchstone throughout this dissertation. Furthermore, this tension of inclusion and exclusion results in three significant racial paradoxes in the remainder of Milton's epic. Through exploring these three examples, I will argue that the racial landscape of *Paradise Lost* is a complex and vexed one and that the epic uniquely demonstrates the tensions between declarations of a universal humanity and the unevenness of experiences among bodies that are racialized differences. This tension is one that is acutely felt in our own contemporary moment and fuels much of the political

[24] Lowe, 11–12.

discussion we have today, but what I want to demonstrate is that this racial tension is also one that is acutely resonant in many key moments in Milton's epic.

The Fall

The first racial paradox in *Paradise Lost* I'd like to explore exists in Milton's narrative of the fall. Because Milton has chosen to demonstrate how Satan is different from Adam and Eve by associating him with non-white, non-European races and picked white bodies to represent the universal, prelapsarian human, Milton runs into problems when Adam and Eve fall. If whiteness is prelapsarian, what happens when white bodies fall, especially considering fallenness is now associated with non-white bodies? When Adam and Eve fall in Book 9, Milton invokes both the Indian herdsman and the indigenous American, and I want to argue that Adam and Eve's comparisons to people of color turns the fall into a loss of whiteness and Europeanness. Balachandra Rajan notes that while "the general disposition is to the treat the handful of references to India as unrelated excursions into the exotic," viewing them together yields a different interpretation: "their most conspicuous characteristic is that nearly all of them occur in infernal or postlapsarian contexts."[25] Specifically in the episode of Adam and Eve's fall, Rajan argues that the serpent (which is associated with India) and the banyan tree which provides the leaves for Adam and Eve to cover themselves after their Fall are part of a greater trend in Milton's infernalization of India. I'd like to examine this episode more closely to figure out the multiple racializations happening

[25] Balachandra Rajan, "Banyan Trees and Fig Leaves: Some Thoughts on Milton's India," in *Milton and the Climates of Reading: Essays* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 73–74.

in this episode.

Milton is careful to note that the fig tree from which Adam and Eve take leaves to cover their "middle parts" is not the one most known to his audience:

> There soon they chose
> The fig-tree: not that kind for fruit renowned
> But such as this day to Indians known
> In Malabar or Deccan spreads her arms
> Branching so broad and long that in the ground
> The bended twigs take root and daughters grow
> About the mother tree, a pillared shade
> High overarched and echoing walks between. (9.1100-1107)

"Fig-tree" is a spondaic word, and the two stressed syllables following each other makes us pause, which would allow Milton's audience to settle on the more familiar Mediterranean fig tree. It is only after this caesura when the image has had time to cohere that Milton banishes it and transports the reader from the more familiar Mediterranean to India. Milton distinguishes this particular fig tree from the more well-known variety by what Rajan calls "its expanding assault on hierarchical order."[26] Branches, normally reaching upward, wander and err into the ground in which they become roots for new trees – this mixed directionality and unruliness of the tree ("branching so broad and long") is reminiscent of Chaos (also dark) – significant because Eric Song argues that "God's confrontation with chaos" is representative of "the imposition of Western order upon Eastern peoples," even going so far as to argue that Milton mandates that "civilized empires must impose order on preexisting, chaotic realms."[27] The representation of India is also the representation of chaos. So, what Adam and Eve choose for hiding their shame are leaves from a tree with strong

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[26] Rajan, 83.
[27] Song, *Dominion Undeserved: Milton and the Perils of Creation*, 31.

associations not just to India but to the chaotic unruliness of the East. They cover their own error with emblems of error itself.

What is even more striking is that Milton seems so invested in using a tree from India that he ignores botanical knowledge from the period. Rajan notes, regarding the banyan tree, that "its leaves are not really as 'broad as *Amazonian* Targe,' and if bodily concealment were the objective, other trees in India would have served the purpose better. But other trees would not have lent themselves to the emblematization delighted in by Renaissance herbalists and compilers of dictionaries."[28] Rajan reads Milton's revision of botany as evidence that Milton wanted India invoked in the moment Adam and Eve cover their shame. In a similar way to how God wrangled chaos into creation, Milton is twisting India to fit the purposes of his own narrative – India becomes associated with chaos, Satan, and fallenness. This emblem of India is what Adam and Eve use in an attempt to hide their guilt and shame from each other and God.

The banyan tree, however, is not unequivocally a symbol of evil. As much as the tree is unruly and resistant to standard hierarchies, it is also a place of shelter: "There oft the Indian herdsman, shunning heat, / Shelters in cool, and tends his pasturing herds / At loop-holes cut through thickest shade" (9.1108-1110). The Indian herdsman here is standing under the shade of the tree and watches his flock through the holes in the tree's cover. While I will mention later a reading that interprets the Indian herdsman as a figure of indolence, I read this passage differently. Indeed, I agree that the indolence reading is present, but it's difficult to see the figure of the

[28] Rajan, "Banyan Trees and Fig Leaves: Some Thoughts on Milton's India," 83.

farmer as wholly negative. He still is tending to herds, reminiscent of pastors and Christ. Tying back to the unruliness of the tree itself, I see this moment as indicative of the multiple meanings present in this tree. Milton has twisted the tree into both a marker of India and of shame, but this tree means something entirely different to the Indian farmer. The tree can't mean one single thing – clearly its own chaotic unruliness resists such a single-minded reading. In fact, even the positive connotations of shelter become nuanced because of shelter's association with fallenness. As Nyquist notes, "the '*Indian* Herdsman' is a representative of the life of labor, while the intricately roofed and pillared walkway created by the banyan trees is an example… of the shelter required in postlapsarian climates."[29] Both the tree and the Indian herdsman sheltering within it acquire new meanings, twisting and growing out of each other.

Nonetheless, the all-reaching nature of the tree is what allows poets like Milton to turn it into whatever they need it to mean. It can provide shelter from the heat for a herdsman tending to his flock, but it can also become the emblem of fallenness and India, even if that means ignoring botanical observation. I read these divergent and simultaneously existing representations of the banyan tree as evidence of how complex Milton's racial vision has become. The banyan tree, India, and the Indian farmer are, for Milton, part of the universal humanity that falls and attains the possibility of redemption through the Son's crucifixion. But, they are also markers of fallenness, echoed both in the passage of the fall and in the comparisons drawn between Satan and the sultan of the Orient. This tension, like the tree itself, is never untangled (perhaps it cannot be). And Milton makes no effort to untangle this racial

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[29] Nyquist, *Arbitrary Rule: Slavery, Tyranny, and the Power of Life and Death*, 249.

quandary but instead complicates it further by invoking a figure of a different race.

Milton transports his readers to the other side of the globe by comparing Adam and Eve covered with leaves to Indigenous Americans:

> Such of late
> Columbus found th'American so girt
> With feathered cincture, naked else and wild
> Among the trees and isles on woody shores. (9.1115-1118).

Before discussing this rapid move from India to America (which, knowingly or not, reflects the slippage in which Europeans, thinking they found India, called Indigenous Americans "Indians"), I want to spend some time on the Indigenous American. I read Milton here as attempting to resolve an important theological issue. The New World is not mentioned in Genesis, and its "discovery" provoked a monumental reconsideration of Biblical origin narratives, specifically with regard to the status of Indigenous Americans – are they fallen? Here, Milton firmly indicates that the Americans Indians are fallen by giving them clothing (which flies in the face of many other depictions of Indigenous Americans as completely naked). They share a "common participation in the Fall."[30] As Sauer notes, "In Eden, nudity – innocent and noble – is distinct from American nakedness, discovered 'of late' in the New World, a land originally mistaken for India."[31] Furthermore, while we get an intricate, even heartbreaking, discussion of Adam's shame, we get very little about the Indigenous American who is also compelled to cover nakedness. Nyquist remarks that "the absence of even the most oblique commentary on the American's motivation… suggest that readers are to

[30] Nyquist, 251.
[31] Elizabeth Sauer, *Milton, Toleration, and Nationhood* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 124.

find a corresponding lack of subjective complexity in the concealment of sexual parts with 'feather'd Cincture.'"[32] The poem then affirms the "wild" state of the Indigenous Americans while also making them fallen. Thus, the only representation of the Indigenous American we get in all of *Paradise Lost* (if I'm not mistaken) is inextricable with Adam and Eve's fallenness, especially since the suggested lack of interiority (unlike the example of the banyan tree) gives us little to work with otherwise. They are the syntactical objects, "found" by Columbus, the specimens of European knowledge-production rather than any kind of agent. In describing the Indigenous American in the text without giving them any interiority or complexity, Milton effectively defines them – he forecloses any possibility for the Indigenous American to be anything but what the represents in *Paradise Lost*. This act of definition is significant because Carol Warrior argues that it is a key strategy of settler colonialism: "definition as a discursive act — even if the group "defines" itself— uses one of the most effective strategies of colonization because the act of definition fixes the object of definition and renders it (in this case, Indigenous peoples) controllable, domitable, and, ultimately, consumable."[33] By giving the Indigenous American no interiority in the epic, the Indigenous American becomes controlled, dominated, and consumed by Milton's simile. They only exist within the comparisons to fallenness that Milton uses them in, becoming merely a means to Milton's rhetorical ends.

Consequently, in this narrative of the Fall a hierarchizing of different races does seem to occur. What the yoking of America to India does is manifold. Elizabeth

[32] Nyquist, *Arbitrary Rule: Slavery, Tyranny, and the Power of Life and Death*, 251.
[33] Warrior, "Indigenous Collectives," 386.

Sauer argues that "The descriptions of the 'pillared shade' of the tree under which the Indian herdsman shelters himself and of the 'feathered cincture' used by the Americanized Adam and Even to cover themselves rely on an architectural trope that bridges and binds the worlds of the Indian and Amerindian."[34] For Sauer, what indicates the high point of the tragedy of the Fall is the combination of two racist emblems of degeneracy: the naked savagery of Indigenous Americans and the laziness of the Indian herdsman. The combination of these two figures is what Adam and Eve have fallen to. Furthermore, this binding establishes Europe as somehow less fallen than the lands around it. It precludes from Indigenous Americans of any possible immunity from original sin. It tempers any possible thoughts about the economic diligence of Indian empires. And, it groups non-white peoples together as emblems of fallenness and primitiveness.

Though it is up in the air how much Milton was for or against the colonial project (a point I will address more later in the chapter), Milton's depictions of the Indigenous American and the Indian farmer here set up what Carol Warrior termed "interpretive accidents." Milton, presumably without any firsthand and genuine engagement with Indigenous or Indian epistemologies and histories, is nonetheless shaping what people think about Indigenous Americans and Indians or at the very least reinforcing erroneous interpretations that are already circulating. Warrior cautions us that:

> interpretive accidents can be destructive, especially when it comes to Indigenous texts, the people who create such texts, and the Indigenous peoples who are purportedly represented by figments of the collective European or European American imagination in other texts; these sites are where evaluative

[34] Sauer, *Milton, Toleration, and Nationhood*, 124.

judgments are made, propagated, and sometimes internalized.[35]

Though Warrior is specifically discussing this in relationship to Indigenous stories and representations, I believe her theorization here can extend to the Asian Indian farmer in this moment in Milton's epic as well. By so closely aligning both figures with a fallen Adam and Eve, *Paradise Lost* makes likely evaluative judgments about Indigenous Americans and Asian Indians, if not actively participating in their creation. It certainly opens up space for these negative moral judgments about both groups to be propagated because of their connection to the Fall in Milton's similes.

What this comparison with Indigenous American and Asian Indian bodies also does is establish firmly that the only pure, natural body is the European one – only fair-complexioned, light-haired bodies were created without original sin. The text emphasizes the difference between pre-lapsarian and post-lapsarian bodies: "Oh, how unlike / To that first naked glory!" (9.1114-1115). This exclamation brings us back to the first description of Adam and Eve in Book IV, in which their nakedness is much emphasized; "Nor those mysterious parts were then concealed" (4.312). I bring us back to the natural comparisons of Adam and Eve's naked bodies because I think there's an important point about prelapsarian natural and postlapsarian modified bodies. Adam's hair is compared to flowers, and Eve's hair is compared to vines. The prelapsarian, European body is like nature. But, the postlapsarian body is not. It is visually most associated with the darker body of the Indigenous American since we get very little visual description of Adam and Eve's bodies after the Fall, and its most prominent feature is actually a modification (i.e. a covering) of the body: the feathered

[35] Warrior, "Indigenous Collectives," 378.

cincture. The pure, natural body that retains all its associations with the divine, unmarked by original sin through clothing, is presented as white and European and knowing (Adam is for contemplation and valor formed). The first image we get of a postlapsarian body is that of an Indigenous American, and this body does not carry any suggestion of interior complexity. If Satan's fall was a physical darkening, it seems here that Adam and Eve's fall is a kind of physical darkening as well. Their postlapsarian bodies are now like that of the Indigenous American, with its darker skin tones. Consequently, the implications of the racial dynamics present in Milton's narrative of the fall cause tension. While the beginning of the epic suggests that it is written for all humanity, the narrative of the fall suggests otherwise. Not only do white bodies get to stand in for the universal, but white bodies are better than others in that they are the only bodies that are ever untainted by original sin.

Queer Sexuality

Another racial paradox that comes up in unexpected ways in *Paradise Lost* has to do with its treatment of queer sexuality. Given that *Paradise Lost* positions itself as a human origin story and given Milton's indebtedness to Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, one would expect the racial logics undergirding Spenser's epic romance to recur. Chastity's link to the creation and maintenance of a white European identity is seemingly upheld in Milton's epic. As Thomas Luxon notes, "it claims to tell the originating story of human sexuality and its corresponding categories of identity: the story of the first man and the first woman, the first marriage, even the first coupling,

and so on."[36] Furthermore, Adam and Eve are portrayed as white European bodies, which would further reinforce the link between heterosexual patriarchy and white supremacy. Nonetheless, Milton's epic seems to depart from such an easy reading of intersecting oppressive structures since the link between whiteness and heterosexuality in Milton's epic is stated less explicitly than Spenser's intertwining of the two in Britomart's genealogy. One way in which the primacy of heterosexuality is questioned is through what Luxon refers to as "supplemental first beings," the angels and demons who precede Adam and Eve in the narrative of *Paradise Lost* but do not actually exist in the Genesis story.[37] Luxon notes that while these angels and demons serve primarily "to make the first married couple and their first home underwrite heteronormative conventions of Protestant Christianity," their preexistence actually undermines this very purpose.[38] If heterosexuality is indeed so natural and so right, why does it need such insistent justification? Why didn't it exist first? The poem doth protest too much, or at least enough to open space for queer readings of a seemingly heterosexual epic.

Stephen Guy-Bray picks up on this paradox as well and takes it further. While noting that the marriage of Adam and Eve has typically been understood as "the ideal that everyone should follow," the first example of heterosexuality in the poem is actually that between Sin and Satan, which complicates readings of heterosexual primacy in the epic.[39] He points out that this incestuous heterosexual union results in

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[36] Thomas H Luxon, "Queering as Critical Pratice in Reading Paradise Lost," in *Queer Milton*, ed. David L. Orvis (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 47.
[37] Luxon, 47.
[38] Luxon, 47.
[39] David L. Orvis, ed., "'Fellowships of Joy': Angelic Union in Paradise Lost," in *Queer Milton*, by Stephen Guy-Bray (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 139–40.

the creation of Death and that there are uncanny resonances between Eve and Adam and Sin and Satan. The female figures are begotten from the male figures. If Satan and Sin are to some degree incestuous, then so are Adam and Eve. Guy-Bray also reads Death's raping of Sin, which results in her birthing monsters, as a portrayal of "the miseries of family life," especially since Sin, the maternal figure, suffers the most.[40] Guy-Bray then argues that the more ideal examples of the sexuality in the epic are between the angels, which further destabilizes the pedestal upon which heterosexuality sits within the epic. While Guy-Bray points out that the angels in *Paradise Lost* are genderless and their love surpasses the physical by being a union of souls, he mentions it is still important that the angels present as masculine in the epic and that there still is an element of physicality to their sexual union.[41] Masculine beauty holds sway in the epic, especially for example in Raphael's appearance to Adam, which critics from Linda Gregerson to Jonathan Goldberg note as a prominent example of homoeroticism in the poem:

> For while I sit with thee, I seem in heaven,
> And sweeter thy discourse is to my ear
> Than fruits of palm-tree pleasantest to thirst
> And hunger both, from labour, at the hour
> Of sweet repast; they satiate, and soon fill,
> Though pleasant, but they words with grace divine
> Imbued, bring to their sweetness no satiety. (8.210-16)

What I find significant here is that not only homoerotic desire exists but that it exists so powerfully. Adam clearly enjoys all of his contact with Raphael but craves more. Raphael satiates him but brings "no satiety." Gregerson notes that the passage in

[40] Orvis, 143.
[41] Orvis, 146.

which Adam describes his relationship with Raphael contains "deliberate invocations" of erotic love poetry from the period.[42] Goldberg comments on how the passage indicates a love that is not bound just to the soul -- the physicality of Adam's love for Raphael is invoked in the references to the sense of taste and the corporeal sensations of hunger and thirst.[43] This is a bodily love, one that is not so easily dismissible as a friendship devoid of bodily desire. Homoeroticism, furthermore, is something that pervades Milton's oeuvre, and as Gregory Bredbeck in his landmark reading of the homerotics in *Paradise Regained* points out, that "the ease with which homoeroticism can be detected in Milton's canon" is matched in the criticism with "the urgency with which it is written away."[44] Male homoeroticism is clearly an active thread running through Milton's work that has only recently been tackled in earnest.

Less discussed but just as puzzling is the portrayal of female homoeroticism in Milton's work, with the prime example being Eve's infatuation with her own reflection after her birth. While female homoeroticism in Milton has gotten much less attention for reasons mentioned more thoroughly in my discussion of Valerie Traub's work in a previous chapter, it still serves as an important triangulation point for thinking about queerness in *Paradise Lost* more broadly. It is difficult to disregard the latent eroticism in the passage:

> As I bent down to look, just opposite
> A shape within the wat'ry gleam appeared
> Bending to look on me. I started back,

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[42] Linda Gregerson, *The Reformation of the Subject: Spenser, Milton, and the English Protestant Epic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 174.
[43] Goldberg, *The Seeds of Things: Theorizing Sexuality and Materiality in Renaissance Representations*, 189–90.
[44] Gregory W. Bredbeck, "Milton's Ganymede: Negotiations of Homoerotic Tradition in Paradise Regained," *PMLA* 106, no. 2 (March 1991): 262.

> It started back, but pleased I soon returned,
> Pleased *it* returned as soon with answering looks
> Of sympathy and love. There I had fixt
> Mine eyes till now and pined with vain desire,
> Had not a Voice thus warned me, “What thou seest,
> What there thou seest fair Creature is thyself:
> With thee it came and goes. (4.460-469)

What prevents the passage from being merely non-erotic narcissism (if such a thing exists) is that Eve feels desire, sympathy, and love towards the figure looking back in the water before she realizes she is looking at herself. For Eve, the reflection is another being before it becomes the self, emphasized the word "opposite," which occupies a significant position at the end of a line. The line break following "desire" provides space for this queer desire to cohere before jumping into the next line in which Eve is warned that she is seeing herself. Despite the warning, this queer desire lingers and also predates Eve's heterosexual desire towards Adam. Erin Murphy, in detailing the history of this queer reading, notes that this passage allows for queer female-female desire to exist even though it is represented "primarily in order to be left behind.”[45]

Seemingly then, *Paradise Lost* to some degree is subverting the hierarchy that places heterosexuality prior to homosexuality, even when it insists upon this hierarchy through the example of Adam and Eve. In key instances, homosexuality exists in *Paradise Lost* prior to heterosexuality. The angels were having sex before the creation of Adam and Eve (and presumably, Sin and Death), and Eve is enthralled by her own reflection before even seeing Adam. This fraught notion of the priority of homosexuality and heterosexuality reflects much of the work by queer theorists

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[45] Erin Murphy, “Rude Milton: Gender, Sexuality, and the Missing Middle of Milton Studies,” in *Queer Milton*, ed. David L. Orvis (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 17.

working in historical periods. Karma Lochrie, for example, encourages scholars in historical periods to never assume that heterosexuality was the default:

> By disabusing ourselves of this stubbornly intransigent notion of heterosexuality's transhistorical normativity, we can begin not only to remap past sexualities more historically but to dismantle heterosexuality's entrenched place in contemporary American culture as a mystified norm that reaches into the past, permeates the present, and sets the parameters of the future.[46]

What I read here especially is to disabuse ourselves of the notion that heterosexuality reaches "into the past" and is thus always prior to homosexuality (supported by the fact that "homosexuality" as a term existed prior to the term "heterosexuality," supporting Lochrie's claim of the "infancy of heterosexuality").[47] Furthermore, heterosexual sex in Milton's epic is often explained by or tied up in notions of homosexual sex. Adam is supposed to figure a more appropriate object of attention for Eve's erotic gaze, first directed at herself. Adam's understanding of sex is informed by Raphael's description of angel sex. Homosexual sex in *Paradise Lost* does not exist merely to be punished. It instead functions much as how Carolyn Dinshaw argues it functions in late medieval texts: "even the most orthodox formulations circulating in late-medieval England of normative heterosexual relations are not free of perversion. They are haunted by phenomena that have been marked as other to them."[48] Furthermore, unlike in *the Faerie Queene*, there is less obsession in *Paradise Lost* between heterosexuality and the line of succession. Indeed, reproduction is not portrayed in an overwhelmingly positive light in the epic, especially given the

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[46] Lochrie, *Heterosyncrasies: Female Sexuality When Normal Wasn't*, 14.
[47] Lochrie, 20.
[48] Carolyn Dinshaw, *Getting Medieval: Sexualities and Communities, Pre- and Postmodern* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 12.

monsters that Sin births and that Eve's punishment for the fall is to experience pain during childbirth.

While it is important to think about all the ways in which the different sex acts in *Paradise Lost* are nuanced and defy the hierarchies we expect Milton to reinforce, there is one kind of sex that does seem to be condemned consistently. Walter Lim's reading of *Samson Agonistes* perhaps articulates this best:

> Within the context of Milton's rhetorical and ideological binarism, cultural intermingling brings about a contamination and a compromising of the integrity of the people and the nation – a point powerfully underscored and dramatized in Samson Agonistes. Much is made in Samson Agonistes of its protagonist fracturing the integrity of Israel's exclusivist identity by entering into sexual relations with the women of foreign tribes.[49]

Lim's reading of *Samson Agonistes* demonstrates that at least in this Miltonic work, the primary anxiety surrounding sexuality is racial. Israel's "exclusivist identity" is compromised when Samson has sex with Dalila, a foreign woman. This fragility of Hebrew identity in the face of interracial sex mirrors the fragility of a white, European identity when confronted by the same thing, a vulnerability I also touched upon in my readings of *the Tempest* and *the Faerie Queene.* This moment in *Samson Agonistes* reveals that gender and sexuality here are bound up with notions of racial purity and the need to preserve it. Drew Daniel makes a similar point in his reading of *Samson Agonistes:*

> For my purposes, "manhood" should be understood not only in relation to boundaries of gender but also to boundaries of ethos, polis, and species; in early modernity, the opposite of manhood is not (only) "womanhood" or "femininity" but also in-civility, brutality, animality, in-humanity. The conceptual space of the "un-manly" thus constitutes a negative reserve in which class, ethnicity, species, and gender differences mutually figure each other, and reservoirs of meaning from any of these separate registers can flow

[49] Lim, "John Milton, Orientalism, and the Empires of the East in Paradise Lost," 217.

into the space opened up within manhood by effeminacy.[50]

Daniel's point is an important one that resonates with much of my arguments in earlier chapters. First, he indicates that gender is interanimated by other identity categories and does not exist in a vacuum. Second, he argues that the early modern conception of gender is different from the way we view it today – gender has less firm boundaries between it and ethnicity, class, or even species, to the point that he is pushing for the use of different word (manhood) instead of what we would use today (masculinity).

I agree with Daniel that "manhood" is tied up in constructions of class, species, gender, and ethnicity, but I would also add to this list race, considering that my previous chapters are indicating that some form of racial ideologies are beginning to cohere at very least in some major literary works of the period. The fact that *Samson Agonistes* is categorizing certain ethnicities as better (or better to procreate with) than others is setting up a hierarchy, and it is this ranking of ethnicities (as indicated in my first chapter on *the Tempest*) which points towards a form of racial ideology in the text. This combination of power difference and a system of inclusion/exclusion from institutions (in this case, the nation of Israel) is very much in line with Roderick Ferguson's definition of race, which I discussed in previous chapters.

This vexed interanimation of gender and race (among other aspects of identity) discussed in *Samson Agonistes* then helps clarify some of them questions about sexuality in *Paradise Lost.* How are different kinds of sex being hierarchized in the epic, especially since looking at the distinction between gender of sexual object choice

[50] Drew Daniel, "Dagon as Queer Assemblage: Effeminacy and Terror in Samson Agonistes," in *Queer Milton*, ed. David L. Orvis (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 231.

brings about conflicting results? Especially considering Sedgwick's provocation that the gender of sexual object choice is a curiously arbitrary mechanism to taxonomize human sexuality, *Paradise Lost* suggests a hierarchy of sexual behavior that revolves around race as much as (if not more) than gender. Sex with white, European bodies is often lauded while sex with darker bodies is maligned.[51] Even in the case of Adam and Eve, their prelapsarian sex is celebrated (as indicated earlier) while their postlapsarian sex is not (though I concede that scholars like John Savoie and Thomas Luxon have demonstrated the fraughtness of this moral characterization). After the fall, Adam and Eve's bodies are racialized to some extent as non-white by comparison to an Indian farmer and the Indigenous American person. Consequently, also with sexuality, Milton's aims to create an epic that speaks to a universal humanity run into unexpected problems. Surprisingly, the epic stays somewhat silent about condemning queer desire provided that queer desire is projected towards a white European body. But, because Milton is marking sinful bodies (such as those of Satan and postlapsarian Adam and Eve) as racial other to differentiate them from a more natural state of communion with God (which is represented through white, European bodies), the dividing line between appropriate and inappropriate sex in the epic seems to hinge more on race than on gender at least in *Paradise Lost*.

I am not arguing that Milton's point is that the race of the sexual partner is the most important concern for determining whether or not a sex act is sinful or not sinful.

[51] I first want to indicate that Sin and Death, based on my discussion of Sycorax in Chapter 1, must also be non-white because they both have the same non-white father. I also want to mention here then that the seduction of Eve could be read as signifying the potential danger caused by interracial sex, which would warrant its own argument and analysis in another project.

There are many other factors that play into this determination. John Savoie, for example, argues that what makes prelapsarian sex not sinful and postlapsarian sex sinful is that Adam and Eve's postlapsarian sex has no possibility of reproductive futurity because it is oral sex rather than vaginal sex.[52] I will also note here that Savoie's metric of potential reproductive futurity works when distinguishing why Adam and Eve's postlapsarian sex is sinful and their prelapsarian sex is note. It, however, does not work as well when considering the sex of Satan, Sin, Death, and the angels. What I am arguing is that in *Paradise Lost*, sex with darker bodies usually ends up on the side of sinful and sex with white bodies usually ends up on the side of not sinful. This association itself is troubling, regardless of whether or not Milton intentionally had this in mind. Furthermore, it arises from the paradox that Milton is working with in making the universal human look like a very particular kind of human. If Adam and Eve look white, Satan has to look different (I.e. Not white), which then proliferates into these complex and racially fraught representations of sex in the rest of the epic.

The Survey of Fallen Kingdoms

The third paradox that arises from the tension of Milton's aim of making *Paradise Lost* a universally human epic and his choice to portray the universal and prelapsarian human as white occurs in the survey of fallen kingdoms that Michael gives Adam. Because the universal, prelapsarian human is white and European, the

[52] John Savoie, "'That Fallacious Fruit': Lapsarian Lovemaking in Paradise Lost: Milton Quarterly," *Milton Quarterly* 45, no. 3 (October 2011): 161.

survey of fallen kingdoms ends up leaning on portraying the fallenness of humankind by depicting a world that is primarily non-white. Michael takes Adam to the top of a hill, with the following purpose:

> To show him all Earth's kingdoms and their glory.
> His eye might there command wherever stood
> City of old or modern fame, the seat
> Of mightiest empire, (11.384-386)

The first thing Michael wishes Adam to do is survey the world's kingdoms, but the text indicates that Adam is not supposed to marvel at these kingdoms. The words "glory" and "fame" are loaded words in *Paradise Lost*, for they are distinctly associated with a hubris in which the created seek to usurp the rightful place of God, the Creator. The first use of the word "glory" in the poem is in a summary of Satan's crime:

> … aspiring
> To set himself in glory 'bove his peers,
> He trusted to have equaled the Most High,
> If he opposed, … (1.38-41).

"Aspiring" modifies Satan, and if we sort out the thorny syntax here (which is part of a sentence with still thornier syntax), we get the following paraphrase: Satan, wishing to glorify himself above his peers, assumed he would have equaled God if he opposed God. What pushed Satan to rebel then was a thirst for glory. As much as glory is associated with God the Father and the Son, a desire for glory is distinctly infernal. The other moment in the poem in which earthly people, glory, and fame are brought together is in the Paradise of Fools episode in Book 3:

> … when sin
> With vanity had filld the works of men:
> Both all things vain, and all who in vain things

> Built their fond hopes of glory or lasting fame,
> Or happiness in this or th' other life, (3.446-450).

Humankind's obsession with glory and fame is built upon vanity, which originates from sin. And indeed, the structures that come soon after this passage in the Paradise of Fools episode include structures like the Tower of Babel, in which humankind echoes Satan's aspirations to equal and usurp God. The diction already indicates that what Adam is surveying is a fallen world, one at least partially built upon a vain and sinful desire for glory and fame.

Given this purpose and the connection between falling and racial othering with Adam and Eve, Adam's surveying of the kingdoms in Book 11 accrues new valences. In 11.381-411, Adam's sight goes from Asia to Africa to Europe and (in spirit) to America. Why is it then that we start with Asia? Lim's reading of this opening focus on the world outside of Europe is as follows: " By first showcasing the world of the Orient as exemplifying the hollow fruits of all fallen human ambition, Milton appears to be saying that if one wanted to witness the most dramatic consequences of Adam and Eve's transgression, one only needed to turn to the East for compelling historical examples." And indeed, Milton includes historical figures when discussing Asia. While of course histories are invoked even with place names, the historical actors from Asia that Milton specifically mentions are not known (especially during the early modern period) as benign individuals: "from the destined walls / Of Cambalu, seat of Cathaian Khan, / And Samarkand by Oxus, Temir's throne," (11.387-389). "Cathaian Khan" is a reference to Genghis Khan, and Temir refers to Tamerlane, whose viciousness is most foregrounded in Marlowe's play. Lim argues that with these

names, “Milton’s reader is reminded of the brutal history of human cruelty informed by the voracious expansionist ambitions of such conquerors as Genghis Khan and Tamerlane – both infamously associated with Smarkand, both significantly having their origins in the East.”[53] The origin of expansionist ambitions is attributed to Asia. The jury is out on whether or not Milton approved the European colonial enterprise. Balachandra Rajan remarks that:

> Milton’s multiple constructions of India place strikingly before us the relativity of constructions and their entanglement with one another in a confused amalgam that both represents the texture of the imperial discourse and lays its prevarications open to scrutiny. Milton is complicit in some of the prevarications. He is also committed to the scrutiny.[54]

I would expand Rajan’s comment to encompass not just India but Milton’s representation of all areas of the world outside of Europe. Milton’s views of non-Europeans (and perhaps race in general) is a “confused amalgam” of ideas and tropes brought together in the service of a poetic project to universalize humankind. Given the confusion in Milton’s amalgam, I concur that to think that Milton has a simple, one-sided view of empire is folly, but the invocation of Genghis Khan and Tamerlane seems to link the sheer brutality of colonialism with the East.

From Asia, we move to Africa. Michael mentions the various kingdoms of Africa, surveying them from East to West (getting closer to Europe), encompassing both the kingdoms in the north and the ones in the south of the continent. Milton's treatment of Africa and Africans seems merely cursory when looking just at the survey of Africa's fallen kingdoms -- there are no references to actual people, but it is

[53] Lim, “John Milton, Orientalism, and the Empires of the East in Paradise Lost,” 227.
[54] Rajan, “Banyan Trees and Fig Leaves: Some Thoughts on Milton’s India,” 80–81.

important to think about Milton's seemingly surface-level engagement with Africa in the context of his allusions to black chattel slavery elsewhere in the epic. Steven Jablonski has covered much ground in piecing together Milton's position on slavery. According to Jablonski, Milton made a distinction between peoples who occasionally act slavishly (like the English after the Restoration) and peoples who are Aristotelian natural slaves, inclined towards subjection.[55] Milton makes the distinction between these groups in Book 12 of *Paradise Lost*, and as an example of a people who are natural slaves, Milton refers to Africans through the Curse of Ham:

> Witness th' irreverent son
> Of him who built the ark who for the shame
> Done to his father heard this heavy curse,
> "Servant of servants," on his vicious race. (12.101-104).

Michael is referencing a passage in Genesis 9:20-7 in which Noah gets drunk, falls asleep, and exposes himself. Ham looks upon his father's nakedness before alerting his brothers, Shem and Japhet, who cover their father's body without looking at him. Upon awaking, Noah (puzzlingly) curses Ham's son Canaan for Ham's offense as "servant of servants" or in the Geneva Bible, "most vile slave." Jablonski remarks that the story "makes little sense as a display of either divine or parental justice in action" but functions more understandably as a justification for slavery, which became heavily references when early modern European Christians began "enslaving black Africans in significant number."[56] Biblical apologists for Black slavery said that Noah's curse also extended to Ham and that Ham also meant "black."[57]

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[55] Steven Jablonski, "Ham's Vicious Race: Slavery and John Milton," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 37, no. 1 (Winter 1997): 178.
[56] Jablonski, 179.
[57] Jablonski, 179.

Jablonski then points out that Milton's interpretation of this biblical story are similar to those of pro-slavery apologists: Michael does not specify that Noah pronounced the curse (allowing it to be attributed to God), identifies Ham as the object of the curse rather than Canaan, and references the "vicious race" that descends from Ham.[58] Admittedly, Milton's position on slavery overall (beyond Black chattel slavery) is more complex than what I presented here -- much of this complexity is covered in Mary Nyquist's study on early modern slavery. Nyquist affirms Milton's stance towards institutional slavery, which would include the large-scale operations that fueled and conducted the African slave trade.[59] Consequently, Milton's characterization of "Ham's vicious race" solidifies a conception of Black Africans as servile, abject, and fallen. Arguably, this description of Black Africans exists to contrast with what Milton believes humans should be. For example, Nyquist makes the case that Milton's discussions about slavery in *Paradise Lost* are to foreground and defend political freedom.[60] Nonetheless, the characterization of Africans as servile and slavish, even if the ultimate aim of the characterization is not the wholesale support of slavery, is still uncomfortably present in Milton's epic. This presence, furthermore, would be invoked in Milton's description of the fallen kingdoms: "Congo," "Niger," and "Angola" are all evocative place names in that a significant percentage of enslaved Africans would have come from those regions.[61] These are place names Milton specifically names in his description of Africa (11.401-402).

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[58] Jablonski, 180.
[59] Nyquist, *Arbitrary Rule: Slavery, Tyranny, and the Power of Life and Death*, 139–40.
[60] Nyquist, 139–40.
[61] Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Slavery and African Ethnicities in the Americas: Restoring the Links* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 22–58.

After this description of Africa in Book 11 which is supplemented by the discussion of slavery in Book 12, Milton moves on to a brief reference to Europe and a more robust description of the Americas. His allusions to Mexico and Peru invoke both the Spanish and English campaigns to the colonize the New World. In his important study of *Paradise Lost*, J. Martin Evans notes how *Paradise Lost* contains both pro-colonial and anti-colonial positions, almost to the point that the epic "contains almost every conceivable permutation of the colonial experience available in the seventeenth century."[62] I would qualify Evans's position by saying it contains every permutation of the colonial experience from the perspective of Europeans. These colonial references in the epic appear beyond the invocation of the Indigenous American in Book 10 and this reference in the survey of fallen kingdoms. Rodger Martin traces the references to the Aztecs and the New World exist not only in the survey of fallen kingdoms and the fall but scattered throughout the epic. For example, Pandemonium, in addition to resembling the kingdoms of the Islamic Orient and Rome, also resemble European accounts upon seeing Tecnochtitlan.[63] The allusion to Mexico and Peru consequently reminds the reader that Indigenous Americans are linked multiple times (like Asians and Africans) to fallen figures, which means the epic ends up taking a less complex position on Indigenous Americans than current debates during the time. *Paradise Lost* seems to suggest that Indigenous Americans are fallen in that they are always connected to fallen figures rather than prelapsarian ones.

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[62] J. Martin Evans, *Milton's Imperial Epic* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 142.
[63] Rodger Martin, "The Colonization of Paradise: Milton's Pandemonium and Montezuma's Tenochtitlan," *Comparative Literature Studies*, 1998, 350.

While we get sizable descriptions of Asia, Africa, and America, we only get one line on Europe, with a passing reference to Rome. Why such a disparity in lines? Lim makes a strong claim that I'd like to build upon: "In *Paradise Lost*, the East and the Orient are directly related to the world of the Fall. Asia appears particularly susceptible to the wiles of the devil."[64] I would add to this point that Africa and the Americas are detailed as susceptible to fallenness as well. If Michael is showing Adam the fallen world, then it is remarkable that Milton takes great care to catalogue the empires and cities of Asia, Africa, and even America with more care than he does for Europe, which Milton also notes "sway[s] the world" through Rome (1I.405-406). It makes sense that Milton includes Rome in his list of fallen empires considering its association with the Catholic Church, but Milton even seems to prefer Rome over the other areas of the world. Rome is distinguished from the other cities and empires because it holds "sway" over the rest of the world. So, we get a hint of European exceptionalism and superiority in addition to the curious distribution of emphases when detailing the fallen geography of the world. Furthermore, in linking the kingdoms of Asia, Africa, and the Americas together in their presumed fallenness, their propensities for tyranny and slavery both in the survey of fallen kingdoms and in other parts of the epic (such as the description of Pandemonium and the twining of the Asian Indian farmer and the Indigenous American in Book 10), Milton starts flattening non-European, non-white racial groups together in opposition to the prelapsarian white bodies of Adam and Eve. By the end of the survey of fallen kingdoms, it is clear that Milton's aims to write universally about humanity but also to represent the universal

[64] Lim, "John Milton, Orientalism, and the Empires of the East in Paradise Lost," 225.

human body are at odds with each other, and this tension reveals the racial ideologies that are undergirding the epic as a whole.

Conclusion

Milton's efforts to create a universal human epic is ultimately at odds with his method of distinguishing the prelapsarian with the postlapsarian. The examples of Satan, Adam, and Eve show that the prelapsarian is linked with a European whiteness while the postlapsarian implies a non-whiteness located in Africa, America, or Asia. These complex racial paradoxes, which come to prominence in Milton's account of the Fall, his representations of sexuality in the epic, and the survey of fallen kingdoms, demonstrate how mightily Milton's epic struggles with race. While it attempts to unify all of humankind with a Biblical origin story, it also divides humanity by reifying racial divisions between white, Europeans and other races represented in the epic.

Surprisingly, *Paradise Lost* in its flattening of people of color as fallen suggests an interconnectedness among non-white races. *Paradise Lost* suggests that there is a common thread that runs through the unfavorable representations of Africans, Indigenous Americans, and Asians. These linkages (or as Lisa Lowe might call it, "intimacies") suggest how the distinct ways in which these different groups were oppressed even during the early modern period were interconnected. Lowe comments on how in the British colonial archive of the 18th and 19th centuries,

> such intimacies between contracted emigrants, indigenous people, slaves, and slave-descendant peoples are referenced by negative means, in cautionary rhetorics and statements of prohibition with respect to possible contacts between colonized groups, all implying the fear and anxiety of racial proximity in a context of mixture and unstable boundaries.[65]

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[65] Lisa Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents* (Durham [North Carolina]: Duke University Press,

At the very least, the existence of these intimacies in Milton's 17th-century epic imply that there was something to be hidden in later centuries. But a further exploration of the racial dynamics in *Paradise Lost* might help provide frameworks through which to think about race that are not as compromised "by existing fields and by our methods of disciplinary study."[66] Lowe argues that many current studies of race are conducted in ways that regions of the world are disarticulated from each other (e.g. U.S history being separated from studies of the Americas at large) and in which the "the study of slavery" is disconnected from "immigration studies of Asians and Latinos; the histories of gender, sexuality, and women."[67] This is not to say that scholars should abstract themselves from the important theoretical work that comes from thinking through and honoring the experiences of specific groups of oppressed people. I am not arguing that we should obliterate the boundaries between these fields and create what Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui describes as a "multiculturalism" that ends up neutralizing the political aims of decolonization, in early modern studies or otherwise.[68] But, given that Milton's depiction of fallenness is *multiracial* (while his prelapsarian Eden is tacitly just white), it opens up space to think about how early moderns conceived of the interaction between different racial groups beyond the binary of white and people of color. While Milton's "confused amalgam" of race does not cohere cleanly into a universal humanity, it does provide a starting point to think about early modern race in

2015), 34.
[66] Lowe, 37.
[67] Lowe, 37.
[68] S. R. Cusicanqui, "Ch'ixinakax Utxiwa: A Reflection on the Practices and Discourses of Decolonization," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 111, no. 1 (January 1, 2012): 104.

more complex and nuanced ways.

AFTERWORD

Anachronisms

When I began this dissertation project on early modern race, race was marked as an "anachronistic" topic by many early modern scholars to the point where they shied away from using the term "race" in their own work, often putting the word in scare quotes or avoiding it entirely. The justification for this anachronism argument mainly was that racial difference has not yet been reified into a scientific taxonomy during the early modern period. Thus, to call anything in the early modern "race" was a misnomer because it was pointing to a phenomenon that did not yet exist.

As I am finishing up graduate school, it is becoming widely accepted that the medieval and early modern periods were being used to justify white supremacy. Medieval and early modern studies supposedly illuminated "the foundational texts of a so-called Western civilization" and thus served as a source for intellectual and cultural heritage for the alt-right movement.[1] In other words, some white nationalists were using medieval and early modern texts to justify their racism. In some ways, the alt-right movement is not wrong to turn to these periods for an historical and cultural justification for white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, settler colonialism, and capitalism. As Kimberly Anne Coles, Kim F. Hall, and Ayanna Thompson have articulated in their recent call to action:

> The colonial project is stitched in and through the language and literatures of the pre- and early modern periods; the politics and economics that ultimately

[1] Kimberly Anne Coles, Kim F. Hall, and Ayanna Thompson, "BlacKKKShakespearean: A Call to Action for Medieval and Early Modern Studies – Profession," *MLA Profession* (blog), accessed January 20, 2020, https://profession.mla.org/blackkkshakespearean-a-call-to-action-for-medieval-and-early-modern-studies/.

> produced settler colonialism, chattel slavery, the forced migration of peoples, and the development of the British empire animate these early English texts.[2]

Coles, Hall, and Thompson implore medieval and early modern scholars to consider how sidestepping race in our scholarship ends up aiding and abetting white nationalists and the alt-right movement more broadly. This call has become the foundation of premodern critical race studies, which not only interrogates race in the past but examines its impact today.[3]

If I want to respond genuinely to the anachronism argument against studying race in the early modern period, I echo Vanessa Corredera's position – to propagate scholarship that suggests that "modern constructions of race are somehow more stable and emphatically biological than early modern ones" is dangerous.[4] Not only does it present early modern constructions of race as too nebulous to study, but it also reinforces the false idea that the constructions of race we have today are coherent, unchanging, permanent, and grounded on scientific "fact." By lending solidity to the concepts of race today, we then also make it more difficult for scholars, educators, and activists to change the discourse around race and reveal the extents to which it is socially constructed and socially pervasive.

But, I also think that the anachronism argument against studying early modern race is now itself anachronistic – it belongs to another era of scholarship that is less attuned to the power dynamics and structures of oppression that pervade the academy

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[2] Coles, Hall, and Thompson.

[3] Margo Hendricks, "Margo Hendricks — Coloring the Past, Rewriting Our Future: RaceB4Race," Text, Folger Shakespeare Library, September 25, 2019, https://www.folger.edu/institute/scholarly-programs/race-periodization/margo-hendricks.

[4] Vanessa Corredera, "' Not a Moor Exactly': Shakespeare, Serial, and Modern Constructions of Race," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 67, no. 1 (2016): 32.

and our world more broadly. Protesters in 2020 tore down statues of Christopher Columbus. To affirm Black life and Indigenous life meant tearing down his image. To argue that we can't talk about race in the early modern is to deny the racist impact of our period, both historically and in scholarship. The historical acts of those like Columbus and the literary acts by those such as Shakespeare, Spenser, Marlowe, and Milton consolidated both whiteness and white supremacy. And, much of the scholarship and teaching of the period ignored or erased this impact. I was taught in high school that Columbus was a hero and that Shakespeare was the writer who spoke most authentically about the human experience. Even in college, both these ideas were largely unquestioned.

I don't find it coincidental then that as more scholars, teachers, and students argue for the relevance and importance of race in the early modern period, the statues are being torn down. There can no longer be an early modern literary studies that is ignorant of race, identity, and power. We can no longer feign ignorance to the social movements around us and the power structures that have existed centuries before us. Race is the fulcrum that will not only shift dramatically our understandings of our own field, but it is also the fulcrum by which we can make our scholarship more relevant for a broader audience. It is important for everyone to know how entrenched white supremacy is, how effectively it hides, how insidiously it is articulated. If indeed the English language did cohere into what we know today during the early modern period, it is our expertise that can show how white supremacy is stitched into our language and our culture. To imagine more just and equitable futures, we must also acknowledge how encumbered we are by our racist histories and our racist language.

My project has taught me that the acts of imagining and acknowledging must occur simultaneously. Doing the first without the second puts one in danger of perpetuating the very systems one seeks to abolish. Doing the second without the first risks a kind of inaction that steadily evolves into complacency. I worry about this complacency a lot because I have and still do experience it. In many ways, I felt most of my education in English language and literature has been characterized by complacency, and it is truly with this project that I have pushed myself out of it.

At the end of my dissertation, I am left with a feeling of responsibility. My work has equipped me to explain how white supremacy, in conjunction with heteropatriarchy, have been articulated and brought to life. And, it has also pushed me to imagine our field in new ways. I started this project amidst a field that was at best indifferent and at worst hostile to my scholarly questions. To make the project more sustainable and less discouraging, I had to write for the audience that I wanted rather than the one I had. As I was writing, I felt more and more responsible because the way I could change the audience I had into the audience I wanted was to be more persuasive and incisive about how power is articulated through language. Whether in the academy or elsewhere, this is the work I hope to continue doing by confronting the oppressive ideas I myself have internalized and challenging others to do the same.

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